Workers of all countries, unite!

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SOVIET PHILOLOGISTS RAISE THEIR VOICE AGAINST NAZISM

(Anti-fascist Session of the Philological Department of the Moscow University)

The Moscow University is continuing its work and is mobilizing progressive thought against nazism. It is from this point of view that the recent session of the Philological Department of the University should be regarded.

A number of papers were read on the subject of Russian and Western literature and art, those branches of intellectual activity which arouse the supreme hatred of the nazi barbarians.

German classical literature was essentially hostile to chauvinism, reaction and cannibalism. It arose and developed in opposition to Frederick the Great, whom Hitler calls his father. This thesis was convincingly presented by Prof. Metallov in his lecture on "German Classical Literature *versus* Nazism."

German classical literature was born in the latter half of the XVIIIth century, when Germany's political development was mainly determined by Prussia with its barrack-room atmosphere and mulish persecution of all free thought. Byron, in his *Don Juan*, aptly described Prussia as follows:

. . . To Germany, whose somewhat tardy millions
Have princes who spur more than their postilions.

Klopstock, Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Schiller,—all the brightest minds of German classical literature were keenly aware of the disastrous influence of Prussianism on the German people. In the stifling atmosphere of German philistinism they possessed the spiritual strength to create profoundly humanistic works and by their poetical ardour to lead the people along the path of progressive development.

In contrast to the oppressive despotism prevailing in Germany, the events of 1789 in France resounded in advanced German literature as a clarion call to liberty and fraternity. One can easily understand Lessing's state of mind when he wrote to his friends in 1778: "How can one be healthy living in Berlin? Everything one sees on every hand exasperates one and poisons one's existence." Do we not find here the prototype of modern nazi Berlin? Lessing, in his dramatic works, revealed himself as an ardent spokesman of the idea of love of mankind *(Minna von Barnhelm)*; he protested against despotism *(Emilia Galotti)* and voiced the idea of racial equality *(Nathan the Wise)*.

Wolfgang von Goethe, who wrote his great works in the midst of the blackest reaction, repeatedly raised

his voice on behalf of the equality of nations and the ideals of progress and liberty. "True universal tolerance," he wrote, "will be achieved only when every nation possesses the right to preserve its own distinctive features and at the same time understands that the distinguishing feature of true worth is that it is part of general human worth."

These humane ideals of liberty and progress are also voiced in the work of another representative of German classical literature—Friedrich Schiller. The Marquis of Posa in *Don Carlos* voices the poet's thoughts when he says: "I love mankind." The tragedy *Wilhelm Tell* still rings as a call to resist alien oppression. Lessing, Schiller and Goethe expressed their social views in literary works which are the pride of the German nation. Hitler and his clique will always be branded as the despicable persecutors of true German culture, the culture of the Germany of Goethe, Leibnitz and Hegel. The finest works of German classical literature are an indictment of the modern rulers of Germany, who have poisoned the soul of the German people and plunged the country into an abyss of death and disgrace.

Prof. Metallov then dealt with one of the most eminent creative minds of a later period in German classical literature, the XIXth century, Heinrich Heine. He stressed the modern validity of his work. Heine clearly foresaw the "Prussian path" of development into which Germany was entering; with all the power of his sarcasm he lashed the narrow-mindedness of Teutonism, the man-hating proclivities of the "Old Germans" and their brutal nationalism. We recall the scathing humour with which he described a meeting of "Old Germans" in a *Bierhalle* in Goethingen, where they drew up lists of persons to be proscribed on the day they achieved supreme power. "Every person who was related, even seven times removed, to a Frenchman, Jew or Slav, was to be condemned to exile or to execution,—execution by the axe." As we see, the nazis display no particular originality in their ferocious persecution of other nations, but only surpass in villainy their predecessors, the German militant reactionaries.

But try as they will to suppress Germany's foremost literature and to deprive the people of access to the progressive culture of other countries, the hitlerite misrulers are unable to prevent the rallying of the liberty-loving and democratic elements of the German nation. A manifestation of this process is the growth of German anti-fascist literature. The speaker who read a paper on this theme, made a general survey of the development of this literature before the war and at the present time. The most outstanding of Germany's modern writers were forced to leave the country; many of them, like Erich Mühsam and Karl Ossetsky, were tortured to death by the nazi hangmen. Ernst Toller, Stefan Zweig and others committed suicide,—and their deaths lie at the door of the nazis. But most of the writers continued their work, many of them having found a second fatherland in the Soviet Union, where every facility has been given them for the continuation of their work. Among these may be mentioned Johannes Becher, Willi Bredel, Erich Weinert and many others. One of the most successful anti-fascist books is Lion Feuchtwanger's *Success*, written before the nazis had come to power. The novel describes the conditions which led to the nazis' "triumph" over the German people. Although he realizes the connection between nazism and large-scale German finance capital, Feuchtwanger in this novel gives a rather circumscribed account of its origins. His second novel, *The Oppenheim Family*, presents a vivid picture of the position of the German intelligentsia under nazism. Bitter ex-

perience gradually brings it home to Oppenheim senior that it is impossible to stand aloof and that a life-or-death-war must be declared against nazism. Young Berthold Oppenheim perishes in the struggle, refusing to bow in submission to nazism; but his death is a call for the unification of forces against the enemy.

Willi Bredel, in his novels *The Test* and *Your Unknown Brother*, gives a harrowing picture of nazi ferocity, and at the same time shows us the process of formation of the anti-fascist warrior.

A number of historical novels have been written in recent years by the exiled German writers (Feuchtwanger: *The Jewish Wars* and *The False Nero*; Heinrich Mann: *Henry IV*; Stefan Zweig: *Erasmus of Rotterdam* and *Magellan*; Bruno Frank: *Cervantes*). In these novels they invoke against nazism the great traditions of human history, love of liberty, freedom of thought and respect for reason, which are all so repulsive to the mind of Goebbels.

The German anti-fascist writers living in the Soviet Union have developed extensive political activity; in fact, in the case of many of them it may be said that it is in this country that their work has acquired essential depth and scope. Johannes Becher's play *Battle of Moscow* is interesting from this standpoint. His two principal characters are the tankman Gerhardt Nohl, in private life an architect, and the poet Johannes Hörder. Both participate actively in the war. True, neither of them indulges in an orgy of rape, robbery and violence, but this does not make them any the less responsible for the German atrocities. Nohl arrives at the firm decision that his way is not the nazi way, and he surrenders to the Russians together with his tank. More complex is the process of enlightenment of Johannes Hörder. He is affected by a personal tragedy: the death of his brother at the walls of Warsaw. He is made to believe that the Poles are responsible for this, but gradually it comes out that this is not true, that his brother refused to bomb Polish women and children, and died from a German bullet. Hörder's waverings come to the notice of the Gestapo, and a watch is kept on him. He is forced to attend the execution of two Russian partisans, and it is he that is to give the order for them to be buried alive. Hörder refuses to act as executioner, and on New Year's eve he is arrested and slain at the orders of the Führer. The final scene shows Hörder's funeral which is attended by a group of soldiers opposed to fascism.

Much interest was aroused at the session by Professor Morozov's paper on Shakespeare, this brilliant representative of the literature of another great nation fighting with Hitlerism, the people of Great Britain.

Shakespeare's works enjoy an enormous popularity in the Soviet Union. His plays are translated into twenty-four languages and performed on Soviet stages throughout the whole vast country.

Shakespeare's humanism, his faith in the noble loftiness of the human spirit permeate all his creations. Shakespeare's love for mankind manifested in *Hamlet* and *Pericles*, in Miranda's utterances, his idea of the equality of races brought to light in the immortal tragedy *Othello*,—these traits even today mobilize the audience to defend the most humane ideals of mankind, among them the equality of all peoples and the rights of women, in short—all that which is persecuted by the nazis, those vandals of the XXth century.

On the second day of the session a series of papers were read on the history of Russian literature. The first was by Prof. Egolin on the "Emancipatory Traditions of Russian Literature in the XXth Century." Egolin's main thesis was that it is

the task of philologists to awaken new sources of energy in the Soviet people for the struggle against fascism. Such sources are to be found in the immense spiritual treasures of Russian literature.

Only fascist dolts and ignoramuses can disparage the contribution of the Slav peoples to world culture, and the best reply to this slander is a reference to the works of Russian literature from Lomonosov to Gorky. Romain Rolland, Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig and many other outstanding writer of Western Europe drew upon the sources of Russian literature, as represented by the works of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Turgenev and Gorky. In 1908 Gorky wrote: "Our literature is our pride and the finest thing that has been created by us as a nation. It contains all our philosophy and bears the impress of great upsurges of the spirit; in this marvellous and enchanting temple, to this day gleam minds of great beauty and strength, and hearts of holy purity, the minds and hearts of genuine artists. And all of them, honestly and truthfully illuminating what they have apprehended and experienced, say: 'We have built the temple of Russian art with the tacit help of the people; they were our inspiration, love them.' " We know how highly Lenin appreciated the creative work and activities of the precursors of Russian Social-democracy—Herzen, Belinsky and Chernyshevsky. Of Leo Tolstoy he said that he "succeeded in rising to such hights of artistic power, that his works rank among the greatest in world literature. The epoch of preparation for revolution in one of the countries under the heel of the serf-owners became, thanks to its brilliant illumination by Tolstoy, a step forward in the artistic development of humanity as a whole." Russian literature exercised an immense influence in stimulating the social consciousness of the people and in forming the progressive outlook. In the works of the Russian classic writers, Prof. Egolin said, we find "a fierce hatred of oppression, a revolt and protest against the stifling social atmosphere, a passion for enlightenment, a contempt for banality, an ardent sympathy for the oppressed, and faith in the creative power of the masses. Russian literature was born, grew and developed in the struggle against tsarism and reaction, and this, as Rosa Luxemburg correctly pointed out in her *Soul of Russian Literature,* explains "the richness and depth of its spiritual contents, the perfection and originality of its artistic form, and, chiefly, its creative social driving force."

Russian literature has always voiced the idea of the brotherhood of nations and considered this to be the historical mission of the Russian people. We recollect Pushkin's prophetic words that a high and magnificent destination is fated to Russia. Russia's boundless plains absorbed the shock of the Mongols and halted their onmarch at the very edge of Europe, for the barbarians dared not risk leaving unsubjugated Russia in their rear and returned to their eastern steppes. Nascent enlightenment was thus saved by Russia from destruction. If, in the period of the Tartar yoke in the XIIIth and XIVth centuries, weak and dismembered Russia was able to bar the path of the Tartar-Mongolian invaders, who can doubt that the mighty Soviet Russia of today will defeat the hordes of the modern vandals, Hitler's fascist army?

The progressive nature of Russian literature is particularly apparent today, in this period of bitter struggle between the forces of reaction and the forces of culture and reason. Russian literature was always a fiery champion of humanism, liberty and readiness for self-sacrifice in the cause of truth. When our Soviet soldiers set out to do away with fascism, their path was illuminated by the bright torch of Russian literature. Of the young Russian girl Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, who died

the death of a heroine in the fight against fascism, *Pravda* had every reason to say: "Before Zoya's mind's eye was always the great and heroic past of the Russian people, as revealed in the pages of Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Belinsky, Turgenev, Chernyshevsky, Herzen and Nekrassov. It helped to nourish her mind and form her character. It determined her aspirations and enthusiasm and spurred her with irresistible force to deeds of valour for the sake of the happiness of her people."

Russian literature had a stimulating influence on the literature of the other nationalities inhabiting Russia. The reactionary tsarist regime had turned Russia into a prison of nations, but Russian progressive literature unnoticeably unbolted and unbarred the doors of this prison, brought the nations to a closer mutual understanding and pointed out the path to their emancipation. Ukrainian literature is a vivid confirmation of this, as Professor Nenadkevich showed in his analysis of the work of Taras Shevchenko. He pointed to the significance of Shevchenko's poetry in the present war against fascism. Shevchenko was a Ukrainian patriot, but he was none the less an all-Slavist and a sincere and consistant internationalist.

No sooner had the nazis reached the Ukrainian town of Kanev, than they hastened to desecrate Shevchenko's tomb and to destroy his memorial. But the nazis cannot crush the freedom-loving Ukrainian people, who have been reared on Shevchenko's works. Shevchenko described the heroic struggle of the Cossacks together with the population against the alien enemy and his agents within the country, the hetman and his entourage. He denounced the germanophillsm of the Ukrainian intelligentsia of the bourgeoisie and landowner classes, and was an indefatigable opponent of Germany's "Drang nach Osten," for he realized what a menace German reaction offered to the Ukraine. "The Ukrainian poet's familiarity with the history of the Slavs," said Nenadkevich, "led him to the firm conviction that the German feudal barons, the Prussian Junkers, were the hereditary foes and oppressors of the Slav peoples." In *The Heretic*, Shevchenko describes the courageous struggle of Huss and the Hussites against the German oppressors, and it seems as if, although a century has gone by, he were responding to the present struggle of the Czechoslovakian people against the forces of occupation.

Shevchenko's voice continues to resound in our days in the works of the Ukrainian poets—Pavlo Tychina, Maxim Rylsky, Mikola Bazhan, Sosyura, Pervomaisky and others. Rylsky's *Our Motherland*, Tychina's *Stalin's Call to Battle* and many another ardent patriotic work written during this war are in the Shevchenko tradition. Shevchenko's champions "for glory and freedom" have been resuscitated in the Ukrainian partisans, who are today dealing such heavy blows at the hitlerite miscreants.

When the war broke out, Soviet poets and writers tuned their lyre to the theme of war. A brief review of the subject was given by Prof. Timofeyev in a paper on "Soviet Literature and the War."

"Soviet literature," he said, "opposes fascism by its direct and practical adherence to its creative principles, by its striving for mankind's loftiest ideals, and by its denunciation of the repulsive, anti-human implications of fascism. The works of Gorky, Sholokhov, Fadeyev and Mayakovsky are the productions of genuine humane aspirations. Soviet writers are making an active contribution to the cause of national defense: one third of them are at the front. The newspapers *Soviet Byelorussia* and *Soviet Ukraine*, in the respective languages of these republics, are dropped from airplanes in the German-occupied territories. Since the outbreak

of the war Soviet poets have written a number of patriotic works of which Soviet literature may be proud, such as Tikhonov's *Kirov Is With Us*, his *Poem of the Twenty-Eight Guardsmen* and Simonov's *From the Black to the Barents Sea*. Alexei Tolstoy, Ehrenburg and Sergeyev-Tsensky have successfully invaded a field of writing new to them,—the newspaper sketch. Pavlenko has written *A Russian Tale*, a story of the partisans, while Vsevolod Vishnevsky has done a good deal to popularize the exploits of the Russian navy. Thus a chronicle of the supreme days of the patriotic war and a current history of the heroic Red Army is being created. Soviet writers are active fighters against fascist barbarism."

At the third and concluding meeting two papers were read which are also of considerable interest. Prof. Alpatov spoke on the "Traditions of Humanism in the History of Art and the Struggle for Liberation of the Soviet people," and Prof. Lazarev on "Medievalism or Renaissance," piece of research on anti-humanist tendencies in the history of art.

The problems discussed in these papers served as a call to literary scholars to combat fascist obscurantism, which denies the humanistic significance of the arts, distorts the meaning of the Renaissance and destroys all artistic traditions. Fascist ideology strives to replace reason by instinct, Renaissance by gloomy medievalism, liberty by the blind obedience of submissive slaves. Their hatred of all free thought has even led the fascist leaders to declare that "life is essentially a parody on death, and death alone—the true reality."

Prof. Alpatov convincingly showed that genuine art was always inspired by humane ideals and celebrated the triumph of life over death. This is true of the monumental sculpture of classical Greece, of the art of the Renaissance, of the immortal creations of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, Velasquez and Goya, of the Russian painters Surikov and Repin, and of all great artists.

Prof. Lazarev, as it were, supplemented the preceding speaker by showing how the fascist historians misrepresent the Renaissance and argue that the Middle Ages were the most important landmark in the history of human development. This idealization of the Middle Ages runs on all fours with the political views of the fascist cannibals. Philological thought must combat these reactionary, anti-humanistic tendencies of fascist "learning."

Professor Blavatsky read a detailed report on the devastation wrought by the fascist vandals on Russian memorials and architecture. Professor Blavatsky was a member of the commission of the Academy of Sciences which carried out the investigation. His authoritative communication supplemented the facts contained in the reports of the Soviet Information Bureau and in the notes of People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs Molotov.

Splendid specimens of Russian architecture in the Moscow and Smolensk regions, in Pskov, Novgorod, Leningrad and other places, the Tolstoy Museum in Yasnaya Polyana, the Pushkin Museum in Polotnyanyi Zavod, the Turgenev Museum in the village of Spassk and many other memorials of Russian culture have been reduced to ruins. The Germans pillaged and then destroyed the New-Jerusalem monastery at Istra, an outstanding specimen of the Moscow baroque style, rebuilt by Rastrelli and then by Kazakov. This was also the fate of the monastery of Joseph-Volotsky, near Volokolamsk, founded in 1479. One of the towers of the monastery was used by the Germans as an ammunition dump which they afterwards blew up. In motor-vehicles subsequently captured from the Germans, Soviet troops discovered articles stolen from the monastery. In

the village of Yaropoletz, the mansion of the Goncharov family, to which Pushkin was related by marriage, was used by the Germans as a latrine.

This is by no means a complete list of the sinister deeds of the fascists. New acts of wanton and cynical destruction by the Germans are being brought to light every day.

Greetings were received and read at the session from German anti-fascist writers, from the All-Slav Committee (Prof. Nejedly) and from the Yugoslavian poet Radule Stiyensky.

In winding up the session, Prof. Metallov declared that in the past and present culture, art and science of Russia and the West, Soviet philologists find ever new sources of energy for their struggle against fascism.

G. GEILER

THE MUSE AND GUNS

The Seventh Symphony is a program composition inspired by the formidable events of 1941. It is in four parts. The first describes how the threatening forces of war broke into our beautiful, peaceful life. It was not my intention to depict military operations in a naturalistic way (the roar of planes, the clatter of tanks, the salvoes of cannons), and I did not compose so-called battle-music. I wanted to convey the inner significance and meaning of those grim events.

The first movement of the symphony tells of the happy life of people who are confident of themselves and of their future. It is a simple, peaceful existence, such as thousands of Leningrad citizens now under arms, the whole city and the entire country lived before the war.

The theme of war permeates the entire middle part.

The second part is a lyrical scherzo. Here are recollections of pleasant events and happy episodes. All this is clouded in a light haze of melancholy and dreaminess.

The third part is a pathetic adagio, expressing a rapturous intoxication with life and worship of nature. It blends into the fourth part without interruption. The fourth part together with the first form the core of the whole composition. The first shows the struggle, the fourth—the coming victory.

These are the thoughts which I wanted to share with those who listen to my symphony. I have put much strength and energy into this composition, and never before have I worked as ardently as now. There is a current saying: "When the guns roar, the muses are silent." This may truly be said of the guns which by their roar suppress life, joy, happiness and culture. Such is the roar of the guns of darkness, violence and evil. We are fighting in the name of the triumph of reason over madness, of justice over barbarity. There are no nobler and loftier tasks than those which inspire us in our struggle against the dark forces of Hitlerism.

Today I have learned that my last symphony has been awarded the highest reward—the Stalin-prize. This news lends me new strength.

During the great war for our fatherland, our writers, artists and musicians are working excessively, intensively and fruitfully, for their creative activity is armed with the most progressive ideas of our era. And when our guns roar, our muses also raise their mighty voices. Never will anybody succeed in striking the pen out of our hands.

D. SHOSTAKOVICH,
Stalin-prize Winner

Soviet Caricatures

BERLIN RAG-PICKERS

Old clothes will be confiscated from the German population. According to Funk, Minister of Economy, this constitute Germany's "raw material reserves" on which depends the "preservation of the ablebodiedness and might of German economy."
(*From a news item*)

Methods used by hitlerite ministers to stock up "raw material reserves"

Drawn by Boris Efimov

GÖRING'S PROGRAM

Drawn by Boris Efimov

PAVEL NILIN

THE LINE OF LIFE

Before our eyes our comrades died, tearing open,
As Russians do, the shirts upon their bosoms.

K. SIMONOV

Late in the evening of October 16th, 1941, Mitya Popov learned that he was at length to be sent to the front. He asked for permission to absent himself from the barracks for three hours and, very early next morning, went home to say good-bye to the grandmother with whom he had lived for fifteen years in the little room in Bell-ringers' Alley.

It was six o'clock in the morning. An autumnal Moscow morning, dark, chilly and damp. The blue blades of the searchlights that had watched and guarded the Moscow sky all night long still swept across the dusky heavens.

As Mitya walked along Arbat, he kept glancing up to where the rays crossed, swung apart and re-crossed in a feverish search for something. At last they found it.

And Mitya stopped and stood still at the corner of Nikitsky Boulevard.

Against the intersection of the blue blades appeared a barely noticeable milky speck. And immediately the stillness of the morning was broken by the roar and thudding of anti-aircraft guns, spattering the dark sky with the sparks of numerous explosions.

Mitya was about to take cover in a nearby doorway, but thought the better of it. He wouldn't be able to watch the sky from the doorway. And there was plenty to see up there just then.

What had been at first a tiny milky blur expanded instantly to a thundering German plane, probably loaded with bombs. The German wanted to drop them on Moscow, but the anti-aircraft guns gave him no chance. Now they hit him, it seemed. Curling, smoky whiskers and a long smoky tail blossomed out suddenly on the enemy plane. A moment more—and enveloped in flames it turned three somersaults in the air, and casting a sudden lurid glare over that part of the fathomless dark sky, dropped like a ball of fire to earth.

Mitya Popov stood spell-bound at the corner of the boulevard, trying to figure out the spot where the plane would probably have crashed. Then he strolled across the road and on his leisurely way narrowly escaped being run over by a huge motor-lorry.

The lorries seemed to have gone crazy during these early morning hours. Stacked with bundles and

passengers, they were dashing goodness knew where. The streets were full of their clatter, and in all this uproar the clanging of the trams that were unusually heavily loaded for this time of the day could scarcely be heard, and passers-by hurried about their business, looking particularly preoccupied and worried.

Moscow, alarmed now, not by the bombing raids but by the troubling news from the front, had not slept that night at all. It had been announced over the radio yesterday that the position of our troops had become suddenly worse, that the enemy had broken through the front-line of our defenses and was making a frenzied onslaught towards Moscow.

Mitya turned back to the tram-stop and, making a grab at the hand-rail of a tram as it was moving off, hung on by sheer strength of muscles, like a dozen other passengers. In another minute, however, he was already pushing his way into the car.

Though the jam inside was terrific, there was no fuss or squabbling that morning. As if by tacit consent, they all held their peace. It was an unusual, an indescribably mournful silence.

A great sorrow had descended upon the people; the moment had arrived when they had to make haste and leave Moscow, or else. . . or else check the German advance at all costs. At all costs.

Mitya entered the vestibule of the house where he lived. In the depths of it a blue lamp gleamed like a sleepless eye over the staircase, and sandbags were piled in the corners. The sand was for extinguishing incendiary bombs. All these details spoke of the war. Mitya fitted the key into the lock, opened the door and stepped into the long dim corridor, which struck him as strangely quiet after the noise outside.

Ten years ago he used to play in this empty corridor, galloping astride a stick in the mornings, pretending to be a fearless rider and disturbing a slumbering neighbour, a book-keeper, who invariably asserted in his wrath that a boy like this was certain to grow up a robber, a horse-thief, or at best a cabby, and they would live to see his, the book-keeper's, words come true. At this hour, as Mitya Popov, who had become neither a horse-thief nor a cabby, was passing through the dark corridor, the book-keeper, worn out by the air-alerts of the night, was very likely sleeping as soundly as ten years ago. And Mitya had come home to say good-bye. Who knows,—perhaps he might be passing through that corridor for the last time.

The switch was right at the door. He groped for it in the darkness, and the little lamp over the table went on.

His grandmother woke up at once. As soon as she saw who it was, she hastily thrust her feet out from under the blanket, and, just as she was, in her flannel dressing gown, she hurried and scurried about like a mouse.

"Don't fuss, granny," Mitya begged her, frowning. "I'm not going to have breakfast with you anyhow. I've come to say good-bye."

"So you're going away?" she said with a sigh. "My own bright little fledgeling—going away! . ."

She looked up into his grey eyes.

"Are you going far, Mitenka?"

"Just to the war, like everybody else. . ."

Though he had said he wanted no breakfast, she hurried into the kitchen and put on the kettle. When she came back, she squatted down by her grandson who was kneeling before the open wardrobe, rummaging in the drawers. A brisk and inquisitive old woman, she was anxious to find out all she could from him.

"And will they give you a gun, Mitya?"

"Why, of course they will. I'm to be in a mine-thrower detachment, you know."

After a while, growing tired of

squatting beside him, she rose and began to set the table. Then it occurred to her that there was something more she wanted to know.

"Is it true, Mitya, what they say: that the head of those Germans, Hitler or whatever he's called, is all out against the volunteers? I've heard he kills them first of all, before anybody else. He can't abide them at any price. . ."

"Maybe you think I can abide him?" Mitya retorted angrily. Still rummaging among the clothes in the wardrobe, he warned: "You'd better not meddle with politics, granny, you know. . ."

"It's not that I'm meddling with them," she protested, "I'm only just saying while we were talking about it. Supposing all of a sudden—why, you never know what might happen!—what if he should catch you, God forbid! They'd tell him you were a volunteer. . ."

"And I'm telling you, granny, as plain as I can speak, don't you meddle with politics," Mitya entreated her again.

"I tell you I'm not meddling at all," she declared, "but after all, I'm not made of stone either, you know. Even a dog feels for its own pups. And I'm your own flesh and blood, your grandmother."

She gave way to tears very quietly and softly.

At that Mitya got up, squared his shoulders and, growing very red in the face, demanded:

"What do you propose I should do then? Run away and hide?"

"Now God forbid you should do any such thing," she said all in a fright. "We're Russians, thank goodness. Where should we run to out of our own country? I'm only saying, as we were talking about it,—a lot of people are going away. Folks say the Germans are coming straight for us in iron tanks. . . And that they have forces the like of which were never seen, any amount of soldiers and guns and arms of all sorts."

Mitya was pacing up and down, saying nothing. Then he asked her gently:

"Would you like me to evacuate you somewhere?"

"Now what would I be doing—'acuating?" was her prompt rejoinder. "I wouldn't have gone in for this 'acuation business even when I was young. And now, at my age. . ."

After that they had breakfast in silence. The tap dripped loudly in the kitchen sink, and the book-keeper shuffled slipslop along the corridor, coughing and clearing his throat.

Mitya suddenly remembered his childhood and how he used to sleep on that short little trunk on which his great-coat lay now. He could no longer remember how he had been brought here as a child of three, after his father's death. But he had not forgotten yet how he used to sleep on that trunk. When he was older, he had slept on the floor. And when he had left school and started to work, they had bought that couch, and he had slept on it since then.

It had been very comfortable sleeping on the couch. There was a lamp just by it, and you could shade it with a newspaper and read all night. And as you dropped nicely off to sleep towards morning, granny would suddenly give you a tug and call: "Mitya! I say, Mitya! Get up, or you'll be late. . ."

She did feel sorry for Mitya, though.

He was grown-up now, and very strong, he could pick up this grandmother of his just like a baby. But granny always thought of him lovingly as the little, frail creature of fifteen years ago, when she had taken him from the arms of some tender-hearted stranger and pressed him, warm and trembling, to her heart for the first time.

People said he had a girl, they had seen him with her in the Culture and Rest Park. The neighbours even used

to joke about it: "You just wait, he'll be bringing his children home to you one of these fine days. And his wife into the bargain." She had laughed together with them, thinking in the innocence of her heart: "It's all nonsense. The lad is too young yet."

And now this lad was going to the war.

"Mitya," she said as she filled up the teapot with boiling water. "How did they come to clip your hair like that? Did you ask them to do it yourself or were those your orders? And you had such lovely hair. Aren't you sorry?"

"What is there to be sorry about?" he asked.

"True enough," she said with a little sob. And suddenly burst into tears and cried as though her heart would break.

At that moment the roar of an airplane, as it skimmed over the roof, was heard. The book-keeper knocked at the door.

"Bear in mind," he said, opening it just a crack, "the house-manager warned us that in case of anything we all have to go to the shelter. All, without exception."

"I've no time to go," said the old woman, wiping her eyes. "I'm seeing my grandson off to the front."

The book-keeper opened the door a little wider and finally entered the room. He was in his house-slippers and undershirt, with the braces dangling behind him like a split tail.

"A-ah, Dmitri Vassilievich. . ."

It was the first time he had called Mitya by his full name—Dmitri Vassilievich. The book-keeper's face grew very solemn. He held out his hand to Mitya, who stood up.

"So you're going to the front?" the book-keeper asked, since there seemed to be nothing else to ask him.

"He volunteered," said his grandmother, and there was a note of pride in her voice this time. She wiped her eyes with the towel.

The book-keeper scrutinized Mitya very attentively as though he were seeing him for the first time. And it was plain that he liked everything about this young fellow—his bright, grey, stubborn eyes, his splendid shoulders, his broad, full chest.

"Ay," said the book-keeper sighing, "Russia is sending forth the best of her sons. . . the very best ones. . ."

He was silent for a moment. Then, suddenly clasping Mitya in his arms, he said, quite overcome with emotion:

"Well, let's say good-bye to each other, Dmitri Vassilievich. Don't bear me a grudge for anything I may have said some time. . . or thought. . ."

Tears shone in the faded old eyes. He neither brushed them away nor hid them, but for some incomprehensible reason said:

"I feel ashamed when I look at you, Dmitri Vassilievich. . . I'm ashamed because I'm an old dodderer. And because I'm terrified of their bombs. And I'm ashamed of my whole life. . ."

Mitya grew quite perplexed and embarrassed.

The book-keeper shook hands with him once more and went out of the room as abruptly as he had come in, leaving behind him an indefinable melancholy that weighed on the lad's spirits and somehow disturbed his equanimity for the first time.

In the kitchen his grandmother was crying softly.

Mitya glanced at his watch and then began his packing—that is, he stuffed the three pairs of socks, half-a-dozen handkerchiefs, and a razor he had taken out of the cupboard, into his pockets. Then he glanced round the room to see if there was anything else he should take.

His guitar was hanging on the wall; he took it down and laid it on his knees. Then quite suddenly, without even thinking what he was about, he

began to play a gypsy-song he had heard somewhere a long, long time ago.

The words were odd, absurd, and yet something of a lingering sadness clung to them.

. . . You went, and I watched your dear shoulders
Dissappear in the evening gloom. . .

He sang the lines softly, and fancied it was a girl singing about himself, Mitya, going away to the war. Perhaps Nadya Khmelyova was singing it. He wondered where she was now—Nadya Khmelyova?

His grandmother emerged from the kitchen; she had had a good cry and now was as brisk and ready for action as if nothing had happened.

"What would you like to take along with you, Mitya?"

"I've taken what I'll need. I don't want anything else, I've got everything that's necessary."

"You might take a few sweets and those cracknels."

"What do I want with them?" he remonstrated, but not crossly.

"Oh, but you can't go without even a few sweets," she persisted, tying up the sweets and the cracknels into a handkerchief of gay print. "I saw your father off to the front the same way in 1914," she said reminiscently. "He wasn't married then. As handsome a young fellow as you could wish to see, same as you are. A fine man he was. In a cavalry-regiment. . ."

Many and many a time had she described the father Mitya only knew by his photographs.

The war had crippled his father. His mother married the cripple out of pity, but soon left him. No one knew where she was now. Perhaps she was dead also.

Mitya hung the guitar back on the wall. "I'll revenge my father as well," he said to himself in a sudden fit of anger and bit his lip savagely as he thought of the Germans. "I'll kill as many as ever I can, and then we'll see. We didn't start it. Both times, we weren't the first to begin it." But, turning to the old woman, he said something quite different:

"I'd ask you, granny, to take care of my guitar for me. Those girls from the neighbours will be running in and out and asking for it, but don't give it to them on any account. They'll only put it out of tune."

He took it down again, spread two newspapers on the table and wrapped the instrument carefully in them.

"I'll play it again when I come back."

Then he hung it up very carefully once more, put on his coat and, holding his cap in his hand, said:

"Now, don't you worry about anything, granny. You'll be receiving my wages, you know. Have proper food the same as always. Don't deny yourself anything."

"What do I want with your money?" she said. "I'll go to work myself. They say all the old women can be employed knitting mittens for the Red Army."

Mitya stooped, put his arms around the old woman and kissed her heartily, three times.

She was not crying any more. Her eyes were dry, and there seemed to be an angry light in them as she looked straight at him. But her voice was kind and very sad when she spoke:

"Forgive me what I'll say, Mitenka, but I mean well. I've never given you any bad advice yet. And I'm telling you: as you're going to the war—well, go. And remember one thing: I brought you up, Mitya. A puny sickly little fellow you were. And when you were down with diarrhoea, I nursed you back to health; you might have died but for me. And see how sturdy you've grown up, thank goodness. The government paid for your schooling, and gave you an allowance to live on. You've cost a great deal, Mitya. Remember that," she said with a sudden passionat

emphasis. "And if a bullet should fly at you, never flinch. Go for those devils, those blood-suckers, beat them till there isn't a sound spot left on their filthy hides." Then, in a confidential tone: "You must have tremendous strength, Mitya, as compared to the Germans. You're more than a match for ten of them. Remember that, Mitya. There's good Russian blood in you."

She went out to see him a little way down the street.

"And another thing, Mitya, be sure to remember," she began again. "You must never disgrace us. So that in case of anything, Comrade Stalin himself could say: 'See what a fine Red Army man old Popova has sent us. Even though he hasn't been called up yet.'"

Mitya smiled. And his gradnmother smiled in response. They kissed again. And suddenly Mitya felt quite brightened up as he sauntered down the street.

It was a sunny autumn day, somehow festive, in spite of the general and widespread feeling of anxiety.

But as he strode along, Mitya Popov was thinking of another day, still brighter than this, one of the last golden days of autumn, when he and his friends had gone to sign up as volunteers. Then they had strolled through the streets in their jackets and summer sandals, strong, healthy boys from the plant, all of his own age and everyone of them highly indignant that they had not been accepted in the regular army because of their being too young. They went, the whole crowd of them, to enlist as volunteers.

And now Mitya Popov was going alone through the streets. He had heard that some of the boys had gone to the front already. There was no news of the others. He could not understand, for instance, where Pashka Trubilov, Afonka Vorobyov, Petka Shchelkonogov, Seryozhka Knyazev or Arkashka Devyatin could be. Some said that Arkashka had been killed. "That's a lie, I'm sure," Mitya thought to himself. "He couldn't have been killed!"

He refused to believe that his best friend had been killed. He thought of Arkashka again, so lively and gay he had been on that hot day, one of the last days of the golden autumn, when they had gone together to volunteer. So hot it was that the very asphalt under their feet was melting then, he remembered.

Now the asphalt was cold, and he walked slowly, absent and preoccupied with his own thoughts, among the hurrying throng.

He reached the barracks at the appointed hour, however.

Mitya found no one there but Voistinov, a man no longer young, an ex-bricklayer. He was sitting beside his cot in the big bright room, fixing the tapes on his kit-bag and humming a song to himself. He had a gaunt, strongly tanned, dark face that reminded one of those on very old ikons, but the eyes were clear and good-natured like a child's. When he saw Mitya, he smiled.

"Well, sonny, what's going on in Moscow? Heard anything?"

"People are leaving," Mitya said, sitting down by Voistinov on the low cobbler's bench.

"Quite right, too," said Voistinov in a conciliatory tone. "The children have to be taken away. . . All those and anyone who isn't wanted here should go immediately. Whoever's wanted will be called up."

"But you haven't been called up, Uncle Kostya. You went as a volunteer," Mitya reminded him.

"That's nothing," said Voistinov. "You can't compare me with other folks. I've got my own ideas about life. For instance, I hate to think that other people are fighting for me. You understand what I mean?"

"Well, not exactly everything," Mitya admitted, smiling.

"Oh, well, you can't expect to

understand everything, my boy," Voistinov said with a sigh. "I don't suppose even an elephant—big as his head is—understands everything, and yet the Turks ride on them in hot countries."

That was his way to pass it off with a joke whenever people showed any curiosity as to the reason why at his age—he could almost be called elderly—he had volunteered.

"I'm not so very old after all," he would say, his eyes twinkling mischievously. "Let's do a bit of wrestling."

And suddenly he would straigthen up his body which was as supple as a young man's, and stretch out long, muscular arms with heavy fingers like pincers.

He was an unfailing source of surprise to Mitya. He resembled no one in his looks, his manner of speaking, his ways and the sly twinkle that sometimes sparkled in his childlike eyes. His name—Voistinov—was an uncommon one, too. And he was extremely proud of it:

"It comes from Siberia, our family. That's where our great-grandfather was from. All of us Voistinovs have been stone-masons, right from the very beginning. To think of all the churches in Russia which we've bestowed with bell-towers. . ."

And again he smiled his innocent, half-ironic smile.

"Have you a family, Uncle Kostya?" Mitya asked him once.

"Why shouldn't I have a family?" Voistinov demanded. "What do you think I am?—a saint or some queer kind of a sectarian? What do you want to know it for?"

"Oh, I was just wondering," said Mitya. "I thought maybe you hadn't any family."

"I've got one all right. Six girls and two boys. Both stone-masons. They're fighting just now. One's a lieutenant."

"It would be a good thing if you could be together with your son now," Mitya said, "A lieutenant of your own."

"Why should I have one of my own?" Voistinov asked. "I'm not getting on so badly as it is. I've never had my own children bossing me yet. And it isn't as though I were ill, or anything. I can manage for myself. . ."

Herein lay the reason, perhaps. It might be pride that had sent him to the war.

There were many people in the barracks. Some were young like Mitya, some elderly like Voistinov. They all had their own cozy corners, their own homes, their own work, and many of them had children. And they had left all and everything voluntarily to take up arms in the defense of Moscow at the moment of greatest danger.

Engineer Katelin, for example, had joined the battalion of volunteers with his whole family. He himself was a machine-gunner, his daughter Vera a first-aid nurse, his two sons, Ivan and Zhora, riflemen, his wife, Evgenia Vassilievna, a nurse.

Although Mitya Popov did not wonder in the least why he himself had volunteered, he was very interested to know what had prompted other people, who did not in the least resemble him, to do the same. Probably each had his own motives. Or perhaps a common motive prompted them all.

After parting with his grandmother, Mitya had come to the barracks much excited over all he had seen and heard. The unexpected emptiness of the enormous room where the volunteers lived disturbed him, too. So he sat down beside Voistinov, poured out his doubts to him and, little by little, began to draw out this astonishing person on all the subjects that were stirring at the present time perhaps not only Mitya alone.

Voistinov rose from his seat and wandered down the big room; he seemed to be looking for something

suitable for those long, tenacious hands of his to do. Noticing that the blankets on two of the beds were rumpled, he straightened them, as though he had to look after things here. Then he went up to Mitya and said almost angrily:

"Russia will not flinch. I can tell you that for certain. This is my third war. You know the way it is with us Russians? Strike me once, maybe I'll seem a bit taken aback, although I'll give blow for blow, of course. We gave the Germans a good thrashing the first time. The second blow gets my blood up, and I start to knock them about properly. But if someone goes for me the third time, and I see my own blood shed, then I won't forgive anything. I'll take anyone you like by the throat, and either he'll do for me or I'll do for him. That's certain. That's our nature. Whoever has been at war with the Russians knows it. And according to my reckoning, the Germans are hitting us now for the third time. They're threatening to take Moscow. And just look—the people are bristling. Look at the women—they never cry now. Their rage has dried their eyes. I went to see a pal in a military hospital yesterday, and you know what: women were lining up to give their blood for transfusion. And if any of them were refused, they kicked up a row. 'They won't let us go to the front,' they shouted, 'but we can help here, anyhow.' And they do help. They're digging trenches along with the men. They were digging yesterday, they're digging today and they'll be digging tomorrow."

Mitya was curious to know one more thing: where had all the people from the barracks gone, if they had been told that they were to go to the front today?

Voistinov replied without waiting for the question:

"They've gone to make their farewells," with a jerk of his head in the direction of the cots. "After all, it's not just dropping in to have tea with your mother-in-law. It's off to the war we're going. Anything may happen there—you may be wounded or killed. Some of the boys will never come back. What can you expect? So they've gone to say good-bye."

Voistinov went towards the broad window, and, leaning his elbows on the sill, stared out thoughtfully into the street and the little square. Then, with something almost like exultation, he exclaimed:

"But what a battle is going all over the world, on land and sea, and in the clouds! You'd die of fright if you dreamed such things. But when it's real and you're taking part in it yourself, it's tolerable, somehow. Even if you're killed, it's all right. And even if you're wounded—it's tolerable. Everything is tolerable to a Russian. Yes, it's a vast country—this Russia called the Soviet Union, Mitya. . ."

Mitya was looking out of the window now. A Red Army man came towards them across the square. Mitya recognized him, it was engineer Katelin. His step was as firm and even as though he were on the drill ground, but he was a little stooped; he had his kit-bag strapped on. Altukhov the barber appeared from round the corner.

"Why didn't you go to say good-bye, too, Uncle Kostya?" Mitya asked.

"I said good-bye yesterday," the other replied, "so today I didn't go. What's the point of it? Only upsetting myself and my old woman as well. The girls are married. What do they care? But the old woman is sorry for me. After all, we've lived for twenty-seven years together. . ."

The barracks gradually filled with people. Engineer Katelin sat down on his cot and tried to squeeze two thick books into his haversack.

Mikhliudov, the cook, watched him in silence for some time from his

cot. Then, unable to restrain himself any longer, he asked:

"What do you want those books for, Stepan Stepanovich? You don't mean to say you're taking them to the front with you?"

"That's exactly what I'm going to do," replied the engineer.

"Funny," remarked the cook, who was lying on his back with his hands clasped behind his head. "Folks are throwing away whole valises of things—I've seen them doing it just now. And here you are collecting books."

"There are folks and folks," said Katelin. He had succeeded in pulling a big mug out of the sack and stuffed the books down in its place. Then he tied the mug on to a strap outside the sack.

Mitya went over to him.

Taking no further notice of the books, Katelin said to Mitya:

"Well, young fellow, so we're off?"

"Yes. Have you been to say goodbye to your people already?"

"Yes," the engineer replied cheerfully. "My wife's coming together with me, and my daughter and the boys have gone to the South-Western front. My girl was awfully sorry she couldn't take the cat with her. We've got such a nice cat—Axinya. Had to leave her in the house-manager's charge along with the keys. And we gave him forty rubles to buy her particular kind of victuals."

. . . Dusk was falling when they got into lorries and set out in the direction of the front. The highway was wet from the recent rain and gleamed dully through the evening mist. A thin fog spread over the road. The sky was alive with the drone of airplanes.

Mitya Popov sat in the lorry between Voistinov and Katelin. Mikhliudov, the cook, was in front, and kept looking up into the sky trying to make out whose machines they could be—Soviet or enemy.

"They're ours," he said at last, guessing the truth from some sign, scarcely discernible in the gathering dusk. He turned towards the last row where Voistinov, Katelin and Mitya were sitting. "They're our planes, I'm saying, they're guarding us."

"Naturally," said Voistinov in his usual half-innocent, half-ironic way. "Supposing the Germans should drop a bomb on us all of a sudden. It'd be pretty unpleasant, I bet!"

"They aren't going to drop any just now, I'm sure," said Mikhliudov confidently.

The rest said nothing. The lorries crawled slowly along the highway. Ahead of them the rumble of tanks was heard. Or perhaps it was the artillery.

The men strained their eyes into where the dusk and fog were thickening. But in their hearts they were still inseparably linked with all that had been left behind.

Behind them lay Moscow. The Kremlin, the Red Square, Lenin's Mausoleum. Behind them lay the clean, rain-splashed streets, broad new streets along which, as yesterday and a month ago, the trolley-cars were swishing, sending out blue sparks from the wires, and the trams clattered and clanged.

No, what remained were not merely empty shells of houses, as Mitya had thought today. At this hour Moscow, having adjusted itself to the new conditions, was living as full and many-sided life as ever.

In the darkened, camouflaged cinemas new pictures were being shown. One was a lively comedy, *The Swineherd and the Shepherd*, the other was *Anton Ivanovich Gets Cross*. And *Great Life* was being shown as well.

Mitya regretted that he had not found time to go to the cinema. There would be different pictures running when he came back.

He was perfectly certain he would come back. And that Moscow would be standing as it was today. And

new pictures would be shown in all the cinemas. And if he didn't come back. . .

He did not want to muse about that. He continued thinking of Moscow.

He had always been lucky. Why, it was only a little while since he had been at the plant wondering when and how he would be able to get out to the front. And now he was on his way there.

In peace-time, at his plant, they had made parts for agricultural machinery. Now they were turning out shell-buffers. At this very moment, while the lorries were moving on through the autumn twilight, the turners were hard at work.

How cold one's feet got! It was a chilly night. Mitya stamped his feet on the floor of the lorry to warm them, and heaved a sigh. Voistinov pulled out a piece of felt he had been sitting on and threw it under Mitya's feet.

"Here you are. Take this. It'll be a bit warmer to your feet. Anyhow you don't wrap your feet up properly in those puttees and that's why they freeze."

The lorries came to a standstill, and most of the men were glad of the chance to get down and walk about. As though from nowhere there appeared a woman dressed in a tight-waisted, gathered coat of reddish, tanned sheep-skin—the old-fashioned country kind—and a heavy looking shawl, from under which she drew out a store of still warm baked eggs and distributed them among the men.

"How much do they cost, mother?"

"I don't want anything for them, laddie."

"You think we havent't any money? We've got plenty, we're not poor."

"What do I want with your money, boys? I've plenty of my own. But I'd like to ask a favour of you. Maybe some of you might happen to meet Mikhail Pushkariov out there at the war. If you do, will you kindly tell him that his aunt,—auntie Vera,—hopes he'll beat up the Germans, and, yes, do tell him not to worry about anything."

Catching sight of Mitya Popov, she seized him by the sleeve and thrust a warm egg into his hand.

"The living image of my nephew, Mikhail Pushkariov," she exclaimed, looking into his eyes. "Maybe you'll meet him. . . And the same height, too."

The men clambered into the lorries again. Mitya followed their example, somewhat embarrassed by the interest the strange woman had taken in him. She made the sign of the cross over him and his comrades in farewell.

"Of course, I know you're not religious. But I want to give you my blessing, anyway. Do your best, my boys, beat that Herod out of here!"

The lorries started off again. About six kilometers further on they stopped again: ambulances with wounded were coming from the opposite direction, and some of men whose wounds were not so serious were walking behind the ambulances.

This time three old men appeared among the volunteers and began to talk to them. One particularly attracted their notice. He was extremely thin and had evidently had a drink or two. He explained that he was going somewhere on business connected with the public dining-rooms, and treated them all to sunflower seeds, of which he had a sackful. When the men refused them, he was highly offended.

Several of the wounded who had been walking behind the ambulances lingered beside the group from the lorries, and the old man got into conversation with them, and offered them his sunflower seeds. He was particularly interested to know how the Germans fought.

"First of all they make a breach, don't they?" he asked and without waiting for their reply, went on: "That's right, isn't it? Then they send all their troops through this breach. I'm right again, amn't I? And straight away they make a loop round you to close you in. Isn't that correct?"

On receiving confirmation, he informed them that the Germans had done just exactly the same in the last war, but the Russians had seen through this trick and pinned them down where they wanted them.

"The chief thing is to get used to it, get the knack of it, you see," said the old man, flinging down his sack and trying to show them how to get the knack of it. "The Germans, you know, they always try to win by frightening you. That's the trade they're best at—frightening folks. But once you've hit them good and hard, you'll see they act quite different. Never fear them, lads. You're Russians, remember, and they are no match against the Russians. What if they have taken a few towns? We'll get them all back again. And we'll start on theirs as well. I'm not just babbling rubbish, don't you imagine it. I'm Mikheyev. Everybody knows me around here. I've been in two wars and lost my leg in them."

Here they all noticed that the old man really had only one leg, the other was a wooden one. He was now all fussed up and warming to the job, explaining how best to beat the Germans.

"Been on the booze just now, haven't you?" Voistinov suggested in a reproachful tone. "Anyone can see you have."

"Well, so what about it?" the old man said. "Drunk or sober, I'll say the same thing. And I can't do without a drop of drink just now. It's for the heartache. . . You're all going to the front, and I've got to stay behind. I'd be only too glad to go if my legs would let me. I'd show you how to fight them properly then. I was given the Order of St. George four times in the last war. If you should be coming back this way, drop in and see me. Here's where I live, the village of Mukhino. Everybody round here knows me. I can show you my four orders—they're lying in my trunk."

For the first time Mitya Popov felt displeased with Voistinov. Why had he hurt the old man's feelings by accusing him of boozing, when anyone could see that even if he did have a few drinks in he was one of the right sort? And he was really agitated and worried that the Germans might dismay them at first—young, inexperienced fighters as they were. Mitya found nothing absurd or strange about this mild peaceable old man hopping ridiculously to and fro, trying to teach the volunteers the art of warfare, advising them and manifesting touching anxiety as to their fate.

When the lorries were well started, he was still standing there, waving his cap and calling:

"He'll try the loop-trick on you, but you give him two for that. And never fear him! He can't stand out against the Russians. . . nix!. . ."

Airplanes were droning over the highway all the time. Then there was a dull ripping sound. The men in the lorries watched the sky and saw the fiery threads of the tracer-bullets against the dark heaven. An air-battle began.

Now the lorries went on without stopping. They had to hurry, for they were going to the war. But the war itself was coming out to meet them.

The noise of the big guns ahead grew more deafening. An artillery duel was soon in full swing. And even from the highway flaring rockets and the glare of fires could be seen.

Somewhere quite close at hand a stiff and stubborn battle was being fought. But for the young country lad standing watching the lorries go by, the war had not really started

yet. He was still only dreaming of joining the army, and he looked enviously at the men in the lorries rushing away in the direction of the front, in the direction of the fires of the explosions and the cold menacing flare of the rockets.

The glow in the sky was growing brighter.

Engineer Katelin, who had dozed off in spite of the big guns, was awakened by a jolt. The lorry sank ponderously into a deep rut. It appeared that it was a crater made by a bomb; it had just been filled in but not very evenly.

Katelin pulled out his watch and tried in vain to make out in the darkness what time it was. But he could not see a thing.

"Here, you have a look, Mitya," he said, "your eyes must be sharper than mine."

"It's getting on for eight," Mitya informed him. Then looking closer: "Twenty past seven."

"I thought it would be about that," Katelin remarked with a sigh. "It's long past my time for waking up."

"How's that?"

Katelin smiled.

"I ought to have had a nap after my dinner. And at half past seven we usually had tea. The whole family used to gather for it."

"The things you remember. . ." growled Mikhliudov, waking up at that moment. "You can't mind the things that used to be. Why, at this time of the day I was usually going to bed. I had to be up very early in the morning. And now there's no difference between night and day. It's war-time. . ."

Soon the lorries with the volunteers turned off the highway and took a path through the woods. Somewhere beyond these woods the war must be going on, the war to which Mitya and his comrades had been driving so long and so impatiently. It seemed that a week at least had passed since they left Moscow.

The woods were pitch-dark. The lorries stopped at last and the men got down. Mitya Popov stood for a few moments in indecision. Then they all moved off into the depths of the woods, and he went with them.

The ground was sodden after the recent rain and squelched under foot.

The newcomers were distributed among the dug-outs; Mitya, Voistinov and Mikhliudov happened to be put in the same one.

The dug-out was lit by a candle and heated by a tiny stove built of a few bricks. On the straw spread in the corners men who had probably arrived some time before were sleeping, covered with their greatcoats. Boots and puttees were drying by the stove.

Voistinov, who entered first, courteously wished everyone the best of health and started to undress, all as simply as though he had left the dug-out that morning and had just come home.

Mitya followed his example. He took off his boots, and finding that the puttees hanging near the stove were dry, took them down and hung up his own.

"Look here," came in a disapproving tone from a dark corner, "what's the idea of throwing other people's things around?"

"They're dry," Mitya replied calmly.

"That's not the point," said the angry voice. "I put them here before you came. . ."

Mitya peered into the dark corner and advised the speaker:

"Why don't you buy yourself a ticket then for this particular spot? . . . That's what you ought to do. Then you can dry your things as long as you like."

"Gosh! if it isn't old Mitya!" the same voice exclaimed in a delighted tone, and Petka Shchelkonogov jumped up and ran barefoot out of the darkness. "I didn't recognize you at first," he said, sitting down by Mitya.

Mikhliudov, who was taking off his boots and puttees as deliberately and carefully as though he were at home, glanced at them, and, true to his habit of saying unpleasant things, remarked:

"If one friend doesn't recognize the other, it's a sign that the one who isn't recognized will be wounded or killed. Or get very rich," he added as an afterthought when he had taken off his boots.

"All right, I'll be rich then," said Mitya.

Petka Shchelkonogov told him that Pashka Trubilov and Afonka Vorobyov had been here for some time. Pashka had been wounded, but he had got over it. And Seryozha Knyazev had been killed.

"That's a great pity," said Mitya; "he was a fine chap."

"It was his own fault," Shchelkonogov explained. "He popped his head up out of the trench after he'd been told he shouldn't. Got excited and forgot."

"It's a terrible pity, just the same," Mitya said. He wanted to ask what had become of Arkasha Devyatin, but did not. It was too hard to speak of it. "I'll find out later on," he thought to himself. He had no doubt at all now that his best friend was dead. Otherwise Petka would surely have said something about him as well.

While they were talking, Pashka Trubilov came in. Then Afonka Vorobyov, a rather puny and insignificant-looking, but extraordinarily lively little chap, always up to some mischief, whose nickname—Sparrow—suited him to the letter. He burst into the dug-out, squatted down by the stove and fired away questions at Mitya, while Pashka Trubilov listened, interrupting occasionally to ask a question too.

Everybody wanted to know what was going on in Moscow. Mitya told them that things were pretty much as they had been. Only there were more shop-windows protected by ply-wood, and more sand-bags. Otherwise there was nothing new.

"And they say an awful lot of people have left Moscow. Is it true?" Trubilov asked.

"Well, of course, some of those who have children have left," Mitya told him. "And those who aren't on war service. But nearly all the people have stayed."

"And are the Germans bombing Moscow?" Trubilov asked. "Is the bombing very bad?"

"No, not too bad," said Mitya with perfect sincerity. "Our airmen don't let the enemy through, they bring down an awful lot of them."

"When we hear them overhead every evening we start worrying, thinking that they're passing over on their way to Moscow," Afonka Vorobyov told him. "And every evening we think he's going to knock the town to bits, the swine! We say to ourselves sometimes—it would be better if he dropped his bombs on us out here and left Moscow alone. . ."

"Never mind," Pashka Trubilov consoled him. "We'll soon get to grips with him properly and pay him out for Moscow and for everything."

The tarpaulin that served as a door was raised at that moment and Arkashka Devyatin entered the dug-out.

No one, except Mitya, was surprised to see him. Where had Mitya got the notion that he had been killed? He could not remember just now who had told him that.

Arkashka was as lean and lanky and withal as handsome as ever, and looked still better in uniform. The girls they had met in the Culture and Rest Park should have seen him now! But he had always been so popular with the girls anyhow.

A hush fell on the others when Arkashka came in. And now Mitya had a chance to understand why Petka had not mentioned Arkashka when he had been running over the names of all the acquaintances here. The lads did not care much for

him. The general opinion was that he was a lot too glib, too pushing, thought too much of himself and put on "side."

Arkashka showed no great surprise on seeing Mitya: his greeting was even rather reserved. But that was just his way. Mitya, who was inexpressibly glad to see him, got out some dry footwear from his kit-bag and put on his boots again, he did not know why. Anyhow he didn't want to sleep now.

A little later he went out with Arkashka. The stars were very large and bright in the dark sky over the silent woods. "They're our stars, too, Russian stars," Mitya thought, pleased as a child at the sight of them. He was in a good humour now, somehow joyous and eager, and all on fire.

"Someone told me a silly yarn about your being killed," he said to his friend.

Devyatin began to tell him at some length and with a great deal of picturesque details how he had lost his way in the woods after a battle, how he had wandered day and night and had all but fallen into the hands of the Germans.

Devyatin had seen the Germans, and been in battle, which gave him the immediate advantage over Mitya, an advantage he lost no time in using.

There in the pine-wood, where an occasional silver birch stood out with startling clearness from the surrounding gloom, Arkashka strode along with his usual air of assurance and talked with a show of reluctance, though his pleasure in the recounting of his adventures was obvious. The general impression conveyed was that he had been doing all the fighting single-handed, while the rest simply served as a background to set off his exploits in higher relief.

Ordinary decency required that he should at least have remembered the fact that he had volunteered because Mitya had persuaded him to do so. But he never so much as mentioned it, only went on describing his exploits.

Mitya listened to him. And even these constant references to himself, this eternal cropping up of the pronoun "I," which had become characteristic of Arkashka and antagonized almost all his comrades, did not irritate Mitya in the least.

As he listened attentively, Mitya was trying involuntarily to extract the essentials, the truth that he needed to know as a newcomer. He wanted to get an idea of the everyday aspect of the war. He wanted, too, to understand the position at the front just now, and find out whether it was true that the Germans were advancing at such a rate that even to check them was a difficult task.

But nothing could be learned from Arkashka except yarns about himself and his own experiences and emotions: the Germans were depicted in these stories as being extraordinarily feeble and ridiculous. Arkashka could not resist boasting and bragging even to his best friend.

However, this did not upset Mitya in the least. Always taciturn, confident in himself and his own strength, and actually very wilful and independent in his decisions, he was never afraid that anyone could offend or humiliate him, or outdo him in any field open to all or to many. He never thought of himself as being better or worse than others, but was always conscious of being the same as most. He had the same shortcomings, the same good points, he supposed, as the rest. "If you don't get the wind up, then I won't either. And even if you do, well, I must just try not to, that's all,"—this summed up his attitude.

He knew that in many ways he was superior to Arkashka. But there were things his friend could do better: it had always been that way, right from their schooldays, when they had sat at the same desk.

Arkashka for instance had a lively imagination. He was fond of verses, recited them beautifully and even wrote some, too. He had always shone

at the school concerts. As he was a very highly-strung, emotional child, the teachers had always encouraged him. And he was invariably a success with the girls. Here all the advantages seemed to be on his side: he was good-looking, talked easily and well, and knew how to awake an interest in people.

No envious feelings had marred their friendship. On the contrary, Mitya was proud of having such a clever fellow as Arkashka, a popular success everywhere, for a friend. What attracted Arkashka to Mitya, was more difficult to understand. Perhaps it was simply that they had been thrown together by circumstances, and grown accustomed to each other. Mitya was more accustomed to Arkashka though than Arkashka to him.

Lately they had seldom met. Mitya had been working, while Arkashka was still at school, studying to be a technician. But they had kept up the connection, and the school set in which they met was still a certain influence.

Petka Shchelkonogov belonged to this set, and Afonka Vorobyov, and Pashka Trubilov; and Seryozha Knyazev, who was dead now, had belonged to it, too.

All these boys had worked at the same plant where Mitya was employed, and gone together to join the volunteers. And now he had met Arkashka again.

They were always pleased to meet each other. And now in the wood, not far from the front, they understood once more that each one of them had no one else to whom he could speak so openly and so unaffectedly about anything and everything.

When Arkashka had got through the recital of his own adventures, which he did in record time, he began to ask questions about Moscow and completely forgot to dramatize himself and brag. They gazed up at the stars, listened to the stirrings in the woods, and told each other that a few months ago neither of them could have dreamed that they would meet like this in the forest, and that it would be war-time, and the enemy would be tearing madly towards our capital.

"Remember," said Mitya, "how we used to be always talking about our fatherland. At meetings we always used to say we wouldn't grudge our lives for the defense of our country. And see, the time has come. . . We mustn't grudge our lives now."

When they went back to the dug-out, whom should they find there but Nadya Khmelyova in person! She ran up to Mitya and kissed him, which embarrassed him a little, but could not spoil his delight in thinking: "We're all here now—even Nadya's come." Only later did it occur to him that possibly she was not entirely indifferent to him.

He soon saw, however, that it would not do to take this for granted yet. Nadya was working in the ambulance-corps and dropped in for a chat when she had a spare moment. But from her behaviour no one could have said that she favoured any boy in particular. It was simply that when she felt lonely and had nothing to do, she came to see her old school-pals and considered them all equally agreeable.

She was sitting by the stove now.

"You, boys, ought to get a guitar," she said, "it would be nice to have a song or two now."

That reminded Mitya of his own guitar and how he had played it for the last time, thinking of Nadya Khmelyova.

All that he had done in Moscow that morning, all that he had been thinking that day and that evening, seemed to him unnecessary, and petty, and hardly worth the remembrance. The chief thing in his life now was to occur tomorrow. . .

The candle stuck in an empty soda-water bottle was burning down. They were all sitting round the stove, talk-

ing of this and that. Then again the conversation turned, as it always did in those days, to the Germans.

Pashka Trubilov told them that some new Soviet divisions had arrived at the front yesterday and today. Even the Siberians, it was rumoured, had come, and were already hard at work on the Germans. But the Germans kept on coming, there was no end to them.

Petka Shchelkonogov retired to his straw-bedding in the corner, Pashka and Afonka followed his example.

They all lay down side by side, leaving a place for Mitya. But he wanted Arkashka to sleep beside them, too, so he asked them to make room for him also.

At midnight it started to rain, and poured all next morning. This left the roads in a terrible state, the boys were told. But still the field-kitchen arrived.

They all went out under the downpour to get their soup and porridge, both of which had been brought early that morning and were very good indeed. Particularly the buckwheat porridge. The ex-cook Mikhliudov found fault with it, however, and ate it without relish.

"No, of course it wouldn't be as good as you used to make at the Metropole Hotel," Voistinov said spitefully. "I suppose you had it with sugar there."

"That's not the point," said Mikhliudov. "The thing is they don't know how to cook it. Ruining the government meal, that's all they're doing."

"You ought to go to the kitchen and show them," Voistinov advised. "It's a lot pleasanter fighting in the kitchen. Not half so dangerous."

Mikhliudov made some ill-humoured retort, and after a few sharp remarks it began to look as though there would be a row. But just then Petka, who had been delayed longest of all in the kitchen, came in with the news that about a hundred German prisoners had arrived.

Mitya Popov wanted to leave his breakfast half-eaten and go to see them. Mikhliudov put on his coat, too. But Voistinov said:

"What's the hurry? You'll see plenty of them yet—in their natural state."

At that moment a thoroughly drenched sergeant whom they had not seen before came in and told them to be ready to start at once.

It was still pouring outside. The sergeant hastily explained to them what they had to do. Then they all got into the lorries, which started immediately.

The rain came on heavier. The road was actually washed away in places. But the lorries went steadily on without stopping. Mitya Popov was wondering anxiously if all his equipment was in order, if there was anything he had forgotten, why this unknown sergeant was in command and where their own commander could be.

"There are all kinds of people here," he said as he settled down by Voistinov. "Some of them aren't from our platoon at all. And the sergeant is a stranger, too."

"It doesn't matter," Voistinov rejoined. "Evidently it's necessary. There's no time to bother about things like that now."

The lorries emerged from the wood and bumped over the ruts of the gravel road. Very soon they reached the adjacent wood, and here with a clatter the sides of the vehicles were let down even before they stopped.

Flinging their tarpaulins into the lorries, the men sprang to the ground and scattered through the wood, crouching low.

Mitya was running like the others, keeping a sharp look-out all the time.

Ahead of him he saw only the bent back of the sergeant, and tried to keep close to him all the time.

Now the sergeant dropped on one knee. Mitya was preparing to do the same when he noticed that the sergeant was talking to someone.

Here on the wet, fallen leaves lay a wounded Red Army man.

"Bear more to the left, sergeant. Keep to the left," the wounded man muttered rapidly. "There's a thicket there to the left. You have to drive the Germans out of the thicket into the bog, and there they'll stick."

Mitya turned to the left, and so did the sergeant. After them, at short intervals, came the whole unit.

They came upon a second, then a third wounded Red Army man on the ground. Not far from them lay a dead German in a uniform of field-grey. He was lying on his back, partly leaning against a tree-trunk, as though he had slid down from it. Mitya looked into his face. The long yellow teeth of the dead man were bared in a grin.

"Where's your commander?" the sergeant inquired of a wounded Red Army man.

"In the gully. See, over yonder," the man replied in a feeble voice. "Maybe he's killed, maybe not. He's lying there anyway. They got three of our commanders, these snipers did. They're up in the trees."

The sergeant did not run, he crawled over to the gully. Mitya followed. Overhead bullets whizzed and whistled, and snapped off twigs fell on them from the trees.

In the gully lay a lieutenant, wounded in both legs, in the shoulder and the head. A girl was dressing his wounds. The sergeant bent over him. They spoke in scarcely audible voices.

Mitya could not catch anything of what they said. He only saw the sergeant glance round, searching for someone, and when his eyes lighted on Mitya, he said:

"You keep close to me. For liaison-work."

"All right," Mitya replied without thinking, in the familiar manner he might have used at home. And did not recognize his own voice.

But the sergeant paid no heed to that. He only asked:

"Your name is. . .?"

"Popov," Mitya replied.

"Very well—Popov," the sergeant repeated. "Stay with me."

"According to orders staying with you," Mitya repeated in the regular military way and even wanted to draw himself up to attention, but that was out of the question. He only took a better grip of his rifle, and as he did so, noticed that the fingers of his right hand were sticky with blood.

It was oozing out of his sleeve. "What, wounded already?" he thought in annoyance. "And I've not even had a chance to fire a rifle yet, let alone a mine-thrower. Wonder who hit me?"

Anger, a sense of outrage and a fear that he might have to leave the battle without having done any fighting, stiffled the dull ache. Mitya wanted to hide the blood, but his rifle, the sleeve and the flap of his overcoat were stained.

"We're going to root him out of that thicket," said the sergeant. Then, in a voice that did not resemble his own at all, he gave an order:

"Kuzmin and Yakovlev, your detachments are to outflank the enemy on the right. Four machine-guns. The rest follow me."

Some of the men crawled away at once.

Mitya caught a glimpse of Arkashka between the trees, but could not understand whether he was going or staying. Mitya wanted to call out: "Arkashka!" but felt shy. Perhaps it wasn't the right thing to do here.

Staining the ground with his blood, he crept after the sergeant. "I'm bleeding like a sheep!" he thought to himself as he went on. The pain was growing sharper now.

When they reached some fallen trees right opposite the thicket in which the Germans were concentrated shooting from time to time, the sergeant came to a stop and lay down flat. Mitya lay down beside him. Around them and stretched out in a

line at a fair distance from each other, lay the men.

There was a pungent smell of earth and last year's rotting leaves. The men were digging themselves in. Mitya followed their example, and started to dig as he lay.

Suddenly someone nudged him. He looked round. Voistinov touched his blood-stained sleeve and said:

"Let me bandage that up for you."

Mitya gave silent consent. Voistinov opened his first-aid packet.

"Take off your coat," someone counselled. "I'll dig you in myself."

It was Mikhliudov. The ex-cook settled down beside him and started to scoop the wet earth from under him.

The rain, which had stopped for fifteen minutes or so, set in again. And at almost precisely the same moment the shots from the wood began to come faster. The Germans were not going to let our men get any nearer.

"They must have a good stock of cartridges," said Voistinov. "Just see how they're shooting quite at random."

The volunteers lay still, watching the greenish-black thicket that loomed before them through the rain. The Germans continued their shooting.

Mitya took off his coat and lay down on his back so that it would be easier to get at his wound. Voistinov busied himself with the dressing of it, never raising himself from the level of the ground.

At last it was bound up, and Mitya slowly turned over on his face. At the same moment he saw the lad next to him start and shudder from head to foot as though he had touched something red-hot, and tear at his breast with both hands, then suddenly stretch out his arms stiffly and lie still. He was killed.

It was the first time in his life that Mitya had seen this. Again the thought of Arkashka Devyatin came into his mind. And again he looked about to see if he was anywhere in sight.

But there was no sign of Arkashka.

Mitya felt no pain now. Like the others, he lay staring into the dark green thicket from which the shots were being fired. "Why aren't we doing anything?" he wondered. "Look here, they've wounded me and killed a man." He ought to have called to Arkashka that time and warned him. They would kill him.

Soon from both sides of the thicket came the tap and rattle of machine-guns. The German fire directed at the men lying opposite them lessened at once. When it had ceased altogether, the sergeant gave the command:

"Machine-guns!"

So they machine-gunned the thicket. And when five, or ten, or it might be only one minute, had passed, the sergeant jumped up, seized the branches of the fallen trees in front of them and in a voice that again did not sound in the least like his own, shouted:

"For the fatherland, for Stalin!"

Instantly the men were on their feet. Mitya Popov got up, and Voistinov, and Pashka Trubilov, who proved to be right beside them. And Mikhliudov re-appeared from somewhere.

Only Arkashka Devyatin was nowhere to be seen. "Perhaps they've killed him already," Mitya thought swiftly and sadly.

Then he forgot everything in the world.

Remembering it all later on, he could only recall the big, red-haired, capless German, who was the first one he had stabbed with his bayonet in the chest, instead of hitting him in the stomach as he had intended to. And how the German had grabbed him by the shoulder and would not let him go. But at that moment Voistinov struck Fritz a thundering blow on the head with the butt of his rifle, and Fritz had crumpled up and dropped like a sack at their feet.

Mitya remembered treading on the yielding body of the German as he tried to bayonet an officer who was

firing at Afonka Vorobyov. Afonka dropped to the ground suddenly. Then Petka Shchelkonogov collided with Mitya, who nearly knocked him off his feet. Under their feet lay the German officer who had been killed by someone—but they did not know by whom.

Then Mitya recalled very clearly the fright he had got when he found that he had lost his sight in the battle. He felt a sensation as though someone had pulled a sticky mask over his eyes, and he tore it away frantically with his left hand, and found that it was no mask but his own blood gushing from his forehead. He had not noticed who had hit him. His joy at finding his sight restored was tremendous; he "restored" it in a similar way several times in the course of the fight, and pushed on further and further into the battle. And if he had had to fight all night and all day, and the next night as well, he would have fought with increasing strength.

When the battle was over, he remembered what his grandmother had said about his having tremendous strength as compared with the Germans. He was astonished himself at this reserve strength of his, for he had never suspected it before.

He remembered also his surprise when he saw that Afonka Vorobyov had risen from the dead to fight again. But what Afonka actually did, he could not have told. He could not recollect everything he had done himself. Once he had wanted to strike a German with the butt of his rifle, but struck a shrub instead. The German had dived down suddenly, then butted Mitya in the stomach with his head, nearly knocking him down, and run away. Pashka Trubilov pursued and got him, he vaguely remembered.

Then there was the memory of the broad, green, mossy clearing across which the Germans fled straight to the quagmire, while machine-gun fire rained down on them from three sides.

It surprised Mitya to find that the Germans looked much smaller and weaker than he had imagined them, and howled and squealed when things went badly with them, and that many of them wore spectacles.

Nadya Khmelyova dressed his wounds; he had six bayonet slashes, a bullet through his arm and several scratches. None of the wounds were serious, and after they had been bound up he scarcely felt any pain.

The pain only came at night, when he lay uncomfortably, or in the daytime, when he forgot and made some sudden movement. He asked not to be sent away from the front and was allowed to stay. The wounds healed quickly.

"You're such a youngster!" Voistinov said with envy and admiration in his voice. "Everything heals with you as quick as a dog's wounds would. That's why you're so careless of yourself. But I have to keep my eyes wide open."

Voistinov had come off without a scratch, though he had fought like everyone else, and perhaps even better than many. His arms, long and heavy like tongs, always searching for work and used to raising stones and bricks, worked tirelessly and terrifyingly in battle. He could kill a man with a blow of his fist.

Only Mikhliudov was seriously wounded: a couple of bullets had gone through his shoulder. He was indignant and said to Voistinov:

"I'm not going to the kitchen, though, you needn't expect it. I'll be laid up for a week maybe, and then I'll be back again. You'll see. . ."

Nearly twenty-four hours passed before Arkashka Devyatin returned. Mitya was very anxious and wanted to go in search of him but was not allowed to do it. When he finally appeared, Mitya was as overjoyed as

though his friend had returned from the dead.

Arkashka had been lucky and escaped with no more than a scratch on the cheek and blistered feet. He refused to have his injuries dressed and was even annoyed when Nadya Khmelyova insisted.

She came again a few days after the battle, and they talked of many things, but mostly of the Germans.

The Siberians, it was rumoured, had fought fiercely, and the Germans had been checked. But in a few days' time they would very likely advance again. The weather was getting too cold for them, and they wanted to warm themselves in Moscow. Hitler had told them plainly to head straight for the capital. A German staff car with six drunken officers had been held up by partisans in the German rear. When the partisans had asked them where they were going, they had replied:

"Nach Moskau. . . Café 'Metropole.'"

"So they know there's such a café? These sons of bitches (excuse the expression, Nadia) actually know that we have a 'Metropole.'"

"They know everything," said Afonia Vorobyov. "And if you ask me, they know, too, that they'll never set foot in Moscow. They're just bluffing, in my opinion. Trying to frighten us out of our wits. . ."

"A few days ago they dropped a lot of leaflets," Trubilov said. "And some of the leaflets had sweets or a slice of sausage or a white roll attached. As much as to say: 'See what you'll get if you surrender! We'll feed you with sweets!' They haven't anything to eat themselves, the lousy beggars, and they go making promises! Yesterday I saw some prisoners. As soon as they caught sight of our bread, they went all of a tremble. They hadn't had anything to eat for five days, they said."

A dull thudding of guns started again. Afonka listened to it for a moment and then said:

"These are ours."

Mitya Popov made a rapid recovery from the injuries he had received in his first battle, and participated in two or three light skirmishes. But that initial battle had, as it were, confirmed him in certain convictions that had been formed previously. He decided now that everything depended upon his dexterity in the battle, and that in those to follow he would not only escape being killed but get even fewer wounds, perhaps.

He lived at the front as he had worked at home: always striving to learn some special knack, to understand the secret of this or that side of the job that was new to him. He who had never dreamed of a military career now acted as though he were aiming to be a general.

No, he had always wanted to be a skilled worker. And that was what he wanted now also. But since there was a war on, he would learn from the war as well. He even bought a few books on the art of warfare at a bookstall. And although they had no direct bearing on his daily duties, he read them assidiously in the dug-out of an evening whenever he got the chance. These he followed up with Marshal Foch's memoirs and bought Denis Davydov's *War Diary*.

One evening the sergeant who had led them in the first battle came into the dug-out and asked:

"Which of you is Popov?"

"I am," Mitya replied.

"I wanted to talk to you. Do you remember me?"

"Yes, sergeant," said Mitya. "Of course I remember you."

Naturally he remembered the sergeant of that first battle. And look—the sergeant had not forgotten him. Even his name—Popov.

"My name is Anton Khromykh," the sergeant informed him, then went straight to business. He was going

now on some special reconnoissance in the enemy rear, taking with him a few men—not more than seven or eight—whom he had been allowed to choose according to his own liking.

The sergeant looked about twenty, certainly not more than twenty-one. Though only two or three years older than Mitya, he had already acquired a commander's alert, soldierly carriage and a commander's manner of speech. Mitya remembered how, at the height of the battle, this young fellow had given orders in a masterful and commanding manner, not at all like his usual voice. In ordinary everyday conditions he spoke simply and quietly enough.

"Would you like to go on reconnoissance work?" he asked Mitya.

"I don't mind," Mitya replied almost indifferently, trying not to show how delighted he was. Then, casually, he added: "I've learned to fire the mine-thrower by the way, but I've not had a chance yet to use one properly."

"Well, we'll get one from the Germans," said the sergeant, "and then you'll have a chance."

"That'll be fine."

"I wanted to take one or two more of your crowd, but I don't know their names," the sergeant went on.

"They're good fellows, our boys—all of them," Mitya told him.

In the morning the party had been made up; it included Trubilov, Vorobyov, Shchelkonogov and even Voistinov. Only Arkashka was not in it at first.

"Don't you want to go on reconnoissance?" Mitya asked him.

"I'd love to go," Arkashka said. "You know very well that I like anything with a risk in it."

So Arkashka was taken along as well.

Life in the army needed a good bit of grinding down, like any hard job. You had to make yourself so used to it that it would not seem difficult at all.

At first Mitya grew very thin and seemed to lose his freshness. Some nights the sudden bursts of shooting woke him, other nights he had no chance to sleep.

Then, as suddenly as he had got thin, he began to put on weight.

When he was on reconnoissance work, he began to feel really fit. They roamed the woods. Often for days they had nothing much to eat. And still Mitya and all the other lads felt splendid.

The detachment carried on its investigations in the enemy rear, severed communications between German staff headquarters, and occasionally attacked them and the staff cars they happened to chance upon on the roads near the German bases.

Sometimes they had skirmishes with enemy detachments that often outnumbered them; those were usually brief encounters. But for the most part the detachment managed to fulfil its orders without firing a single shot and returned to headquarters without mishap.

The woods smelled of mushrooms, although the first chill of early winter had yellowed the grass, and in the morning it was white with hoar frost.

The men set out before dawn and returned after dark, sometimes roaming about for five or six days.

The Germans, temporarily checked at the approaches to the capital, were preparing a new offensive, bringing up reserves and armaments. This was the point at which the detachment under Anton Khromykh got to work. Every man among them realized that he was carrying out a very important and responsible job.

"If anything should happen," the sergeant said, "I don't need to tell you that we'll never surrender alive. The Germans mustn't hope for it. . ."

The second or third day after this had been said, when the men were on their way home and not very far from headquarters, they were seen near a village by a big party of Ger-

mans who were just emerging from the woods, Sergeant Khromykh noticed the Germans, and spotted, too, a shallow pit about half-a-yard deep, thirty paces or so away from him.

"Follow me!" he commanded and made for the pit.

Mitya Popov crawled after him. The Germans had opened fire on them already—would the rest of the boys have time to get to the pit?

"Arkashka!" Mitya called.

But instead of Arkashka, Vorobyov crawled after him. Then Voistinov and Petya Shchelkonogov. Last of all came Pashka Trubilov.

"All here?" the sergeant asked, keeping his eye on the Germans and not glancing round into the pit.

"No, not yet," Mitya replied.

Four men, among them Arkashka, were stranded somewhere out on the road.

"Arkashka!" Mitya called again.

Another man, Altukhov, crawled up. But there was no sign of Arkashka.

"Don't shoot yet," the sergeant said quietly, when he saw Vorobyov getting ready with the machine-gun at the lip of the hollow. "Let the Germans come a bit nearer first."

"Yes, sergeant," Vorobyov responded brightly. He was watching the Germans merrily. It did not seem to worry him that there were only seven men in this pit, with perhaps a hundred or more Germans against them.

The Germans were running across the field already. Arkashka was nowhere to be seen. What had become of him?

"Arkashka!" Mitya called for the third time; and was about to climb out of the pit and go to his pal's aid, when Arkashka finally reached them.

"After all, I'm not empty-handed," he announced. "I've got a machine-gun with me, you know."

"Now there are eight of us," Mitya said.

Two more—Usmanov and Andronnikov—came up.

"Ten of us," Mitya counted. Then, taking the machine-gun from him, he set it at the right-hand corner of the pit.

The Germans were quite close now. An officer was running ahead of them, shouting as if he was asking someone to wait for him, or was late for a train.

"Ein Moment! Ein Moment!"

Now they could see the colour of his coat and epaulettes. He was quite near them.

"Rus! Surrender! Surrender!" he yelled.

"Sure, and why not? You just wait and see us doing it!" Afonka said soothingly, and, with a mischievous glance at the sergeant, pleaded: "Do let me have a go at them, sergeant—I'll just take a snapshot of the whole impudent lot!"

"Shoot away!" the sergeant said simply.

With the greatest satisfaction Afonka let a long volley into the oncoming Germans. The officer suddenly resembled a bird that was trying to fly and couldn't. He flung out his arms, gave a convulsive stagger, and slumped down heavily, to rise no more.

Ten or fifteen soldiers who were close on his heels were hit, too, but the rest bobbed down and lay flat.

Voistinov squatted down by the machine-gun Arkashka had brought.

"Well, are we going to wait till they get here or start combing them out?" he asked the sergeant. It was plain that he was worn out with waiting and doing nothing.

Mitya Popov, who had been regretting that they had no mine-thrower, aimed his tommy-gun. Pashka Trubilov had the other (they had only two). The rest of the men had ordinary rifles.

"We're not in any hurry," the sergeant replied after a rather long pause. "We can wait. Let them come nearer."

They were coming up, but from the direction of the village now.

Voistinov took his machine-gun to the side that faced them and waited for them patiently.

"Rus! Surrender!"

"Always the same old tune!" Voistinov commented disgustedly. "I've never seen any people as stupid. And so restless and nervy, too. You've got to give in at once and not keep them waiting. . ."

The Germans were advancing rapidly on them from the direction of the village, and those in the clearing had risen to their feet as well.

"I don't suppose we'll get through before dusk, the way things are," Voistinov began again, glancing at them. "Too many people around here. . ."

The Germans encircled the pit now and shouted:

"Rus, surrender!"

"All right, I will then," Afonka Vorobyov replied chuckling. "Since you keep asking me like that. Seems I'll have to appease you. And my patience is fairly exhausted."

"Fire!" the sergeant commanded.

The burst of fire that followed broke the German circle. They dropped flat again, leaving thirty or forty dead in the clearing and by the village.

Mitya Popov was watching the fringe of the woods, where some movement was going on. Finally he understood what it was: the Germans were bringing a gun to the edge of the wood.

"I think they're training a gun on us, sergeant," he said.

"It's a mine-thrower," the sergeant corrected him. "Two mine-throwers."

Then he glanced in the direction of the village, where movement was going as well.

"There's a third mine-thrower over yonder," he added.

"Fancy the lot of attention they are showing us," Afonka Vorobyov said. "Thieves and swine though they are, they're what you might call a civilized nation. Just look, how many men they're collecting to send against a few Russians, and three mine-throwers into the bargain. I wouldn't be surprised if they brought up the long-range artillery in a minute."

Arkashka Devyatin was standing at the edge of the pit, looking thoughtfully at the wood. He was holding a rifle that had been fired twice.

"Did you kill anybody?" Mitya asked him. "Or didn't you notice if you did?"

"I didn't notice," Arkashka admitted, "I may have killed someone."

"You oughtn't to shoot without taking aim, Arkashka," Mitya advised him. "After all, we haven't got too many cartridges to spare. Bear that in mind. . ."

Mitya was about to say something else, when the German mine-throwers opened fire. There was a burst of scarlet flame and an explosion. The first explosions were a good way from the pit, but they were coming nearer. And under cover of the mine-throwers' fire the Germans advanced to attack.

"Fire!"

A shower of fiery metal greeted them from the pit. Some fell. The rest came on steadily, because they were confident the mine-throwers would do their work.

"Fire!" Anton Khromykh commanded.

The men in the pit opened fire from machine-guns, rifles and tommy-guns. Suddenly Usmanov swayed, raised his rifle and flung it over his head as he fell to the floor of the pit.

After this Afonka Vorobyov ceased his attempts at banter; he applied himself to his machine-gun and worked feverishly; he hardly had time to change the disks. Once, however, he said to Shchelkonogov with a grin:

"I'd like to know how much I'm worth. I must have done for forty of them at least by now. How many Germans would you give for me?"

"It would be better if we kept you," Petya said gravely.

"Well, I'm just saying it—in case of anything happening. Wouldn't like to going off too cheap," Afonya added.

The first to be wounded was Arkashka Devyatin, who got a bullet in the right wrist.

Mitya took him at once to the middle of the pit, put a field-dressing on the wound, and anxiously investigated him for further injuries. There were none, so Mitya went back to his post, while Arkashka remained sitting on the bottom of the pit, looking more depressed and thoughtful than at the beginning of the battle.

Soon afterwards Andronnikov slid down and crumpled up. Trubilov was wounded in the head and was the next to fall.

The firing from the pit was slackening. Only Afonka Vorobyov went madly on, changing the disks like lightning, firing almost without stopping.

Voistinov was much cooler, his shooting much more even.

Then suddenly Afonka Vorobyov gave a convulsive shudder and slid slowly down to the floor of the pit.

"So I did get hit after all," he uttered in a scarcely audible voice, and, laying his head on his right hand, rolled over on his side. As quietly as though he had just dropped off to sleep, cheerful, fearless little Afonka died.

The sergeant took his place. The machine-gun was still in good order, it could be used. But a violent explosion tore away the edge of the pit at the spot where Voistinov's machine-gun was standing, and flung up a fan-shaped mass of earth.

Together with the clods of earth, Voistinov and Shchelkonogov were thrown to the floor of the pit as though flung back by a blast of wind.

Mitya Popov started to drag out Voistinov's machine-gun from the debris.

The Germans ceased firing for a minute to shout again:

"Rus, surrender!"

At that, Pashka Trubilov, who had been lying motionless on the floor of the pit, raised his head out of a pool of his own blood and said hoarsely:

"Not at any price! Do you hear me, Mitya? Don't surrender no matter what. They can't take us. They're only muck! Can you hear me?"

"Yes, I can hear you all right," said Mitya, struggling with Voistinov's machine-gun.

Suddenly there was a stir in the heap of earth near him.

Voistinov got his bleeding head free and spat out soil and blood.

"See, Mitya," he said, "this is the soil we're fighting for. This same bitter, sweet soil of ours."

"Rus, surrender!"

On one side the Germans were almost at the pit, and the sergeant was pouring lead into them.

"That's for valiant Afonya Vorobyov, one of our best machine-gunners!"

The Germans replied with a hurricane of fire. A rain of flame beat down over the pit.

"We're done for now," Arkashka suddenly exclaimed aloud, and rose to his knees. "It's all over. . ."

Mitya left the gun for a minute and rushed to Arkashka. Seizing him by the shoulders, he thrust him back on the floor of the pit.

"What's up with you, Arkashka?" he said in a horror-stricken tone.

He felt suddenly ashamed of his friend and alarmed for him. After all, Pashka Trubilov wasn't dead yet. The sergeant was still going strong, Voistinov was coming back to life. And perhaps Afonka Vorobyov could hear them.

Arkashka, quite broken in spirit, crouched on the floor.

Voistinov had got his legs free. He was looking already at his machine-gun. Mitya crawled over to him.

"Just a minute, Uncle Kostya! I'll fix your gun, never fear. . . And I'll bandage up those wounds of yours. . ."

He raised the machine-gun, and at the same moment felt a crushing weight on his heart, a burning in his breast and something hot and warm pouring down under his shirt.

He slumped down on the ground. He could not somehow understand what was happening to him. Only that it hurt very badly. He lay down, stretched himself out with his head on a little hummock and tore open his tunic. He felt stifled.

Where had he seen someone tearing open his shirt like this? Ah, yes! Now he knew. It was in that first battle by the thicket. A man near him had torn open the shirt on his breast just before he died.

So he was dying, too? Dying already. Dying so soon. Before his mind's eye passed visions of things and people strangely linked, and he seemed to hear once again words and phrases that he heard—some of them only a few days ago, some ten years ago.

The old book-keeper had said to him for some reason or other: "I'm ashamed of myself when I look at you, Dmitri Vassilievich."

His grandmother had said: "We're Russians, thank goodness. Where should we run to out of our own country?"

And what was it the old man with the wooden leg—Mikheyev—had called after them as they were driving away in the lorries: "The Germans will try the loop-trick on you, but you make two round him. And never fear him. He can't stand up to the Russians."

It all came back to him now. And the way his grandmother used to point to the picture of his father and tell him when he was a child: "Look, Mitenka. He was a handsome man, was your father," and she would cry. She never told him that his father hanged himself. And Mitya pretended that he did not know. But he had known it for a long time. He had always known.

Then he suddenly remembered his guitar. Here he was lying helpless, while the neighbours' girls might be playing on his guitar. And he couldn't even get up.

He would get up, though. He'd just lie a little while yet and then he'd get up. At this point he remembered how he used to gallop through the empty corridor in the morning, pretending that a stick was a horse. He was only a little chap then.

Now he was big, and fighting out at the front. And Pashka Trubilov had just called out to him before he died: "Not at any price! Don't surrender, Mitya!" And Voistinov had said: "Fighting. . . for this bitter, sweet soil of ours!"

Mitya was lying now on this soil.

No, he would not die. He would get up immediately. It would be hard, but he would do it. But why was it so stifling? It was cold weather, October, and yet he couldn't breathe, couldn't get any air. He must unfasten his tunic.

Then his attention was drawn by something else. Arkashka had risen to his knees again. There he was kneeling and waving his hands. And there was something white in one hand.

What was it? Oh, yes! The white bandage with which Mitya himself had bound up his wrist. Arkashka was waving the white bandage. The bandage Mitya had given him.

The smothering sensation grew intolerable, and the weight was crushing his heart so that it seemed as if it must flatten out altogether. The agony was unbearable. He dare not move.

The sergeant went on firing. So everything was all right? It was a pity, though, that the sergeant couldn't see Arkashka.

Arkashka was standing behind him. Arkashka was tall, taller than the

sergeant, and he was waving a white bandage.

But Mitya was not dead yet. And he would not die. He could not die. He must not.

Overcoming his pain, he struggled to a sitting position, resting against the wall of the pit. Then he drew out a heavy trophy revolver, a trophy won in battle, and took very careful aim, putting his whole heart into it, his whole life, his whole desire for life. And at last he fired and shot Arkashka Devyatin in the temple.

Slowly, very slowly, Devyatin's knees bent, as though he wanted to sit down. But he only slumped down.

Voistinov and the sergeant glanced round when they heard the pistol-shot from the pit. They said nothing. Then the sergeant turned back to his machine-gun.

Voistinov looked at the dead body of Devyatin, then at Mitya. He said nothing. Only looked.

His eyes were big and clear and bright, naive as a child's. They held no trace now of their usual shrewd twinkle. He was looking at the two young men and thinking of something.

Only an instant was spent on that thought, yet it seemed an age.

Perhaps he was thinking in that instant of how those two young men had lived. He himself had seen how they lived. Then Voistinov turned back again to his machine-gun.

Sergeant Anton Khromykh went on firing. . .

* * *

It was of this that I wanted to write, of these young people who are not to be conquered, of the sergeant who went on firing to the very last.

And it all happened near one of the villages in the vicinity of Mozhaisk, in October, 1941.

"We'll defend Petrograd at all costs"
A poster of 1919

NIKOLAI TIKHONOV

SOVIET PEOPLE

(Leningrad Stories)

1. A DUEL

The German pilot could see his prey distinctly. The forest, which from above looked like a green pie, was cut through by a narrow yellow strip. This was a railway embankment, and along it crawled a military freight train. There was no sense in diving down on it while it was in the forest. He had only to wait until it reached the clearing between this forest and the next one, and then he could bomb it unerringly and at leisure.

The plane swung round. Its wings glistened in the sun. It made another round, gained altitude, and then dived down towards the clearing. Two fountains of mud and earth spouted up on either side of the embankment where the train should have been. But when the pilot glanced around, he saw that having reached the clearing the train had suddenly and swiftly backed into the forest again. The bombs had been wasted.

The German circled again, deciding that this time he would not miss his mark. The train was speeding across the clearing. How could its driver know that the nazi reception was now awaiting him in the forest and that heavy pines, uprooted and blown sky-high by the thunderous explosion, would come crashing down on the freight cars? The pines fell, but without causing any damage. The train had slipped past them. Again the bombs had been wasted.

The pilot cursed savagely. Was this long clumsy thing going to get away scot free? The German dived down on the forest, aiming at the very middle of the train.

Perhaps he had miscalculated, perhaps it was mere chance, but the bombs fell wide of their mark. The elusive train was still speeding stubbornly forward on its course, puffing indomitably.

"Just keep calm," the pilot said to himself. "Now we mean business."

He studied the distances carefully and made his calculations with calm deliberation. This unusual hunt was beginning to fascinate him.

Once more he swooped down from the clouds to that spot on the ground where the transparent column of smoke wavered in the vibrating air. It seemed to him that he was diving right into the locomotive. But at the last moment somebody must have pulled the train from under his wings. The roar of the explosion was still ringing in his ears when the conviction overcame him that he had missed once again. He glanced down. So it was! The train was gliding forward absolutely intact.

The German realized that he was up against a will no less stubborn than his own, that the engine-driver had the eyes of a hawk and an astonishing faculty for exact calculation, and that it would not be easy to catch him.

The duel continued. Bombs dropped in front of the train, behind it, and

on either side, but the monster, as the pilot called it, continued its way towards the station as though protected by invisible spirits.

The train hopped and leaped fantastically. Its couplings shrieked frantically. It dashed down inclines like a horse with the bit between its teeth, and put on the brakes just when the next batch of bombs was awaiting it. It backed, it stopped, it darted forward like an arrow. There seemed to be no end to the tricks which this exasperating, dull, clumsy freight train could be up to in obedience to its driver. Bombs were bursting like fire crackers.

The German was sweating profusely. He spat in disgust. He flung himself into the attack again and again. The last time he reckoned everything perfectly. There was no escape for the train now. This was the first time that the driver had miscalculated his movements. But an oath burst from the pilot's lips: he had used up his bombs,—there was nothing now to strike with!

So he flew low over the train, peppering it from his machine-gun. But as luck would have it, another forest appeared. The train plunged into its green shady seclusion and was again invulnerable. The pilot was frantic. He aimed at the locomotive, at the enemy lurking behind that thin wall, at that formidable Russian working man who was scoffing at him, the magnificent German ace, and was driving his train across fields and through forests like a madman. . .

Bullets hailed down on to the train. Some hit its wheels, others struck the rails, but the train moved steadily forward. . .

The German flung himself back exhausted. The sky glistened overhead. It was a serene, crystal-clear autumn day, reminding him of the autumns of his far-off Westphalia.

His cartridges had come to an end. The duel was over. That Russian down below had won.

What should he do? Hurl his plane into the locomotive? Answer madness with madness? A shiver ran down the pilot's spine.

He lowered his plane and sailed over the train in a spasm of curiosity and hatred. He could not see that the keen eye of the engine-driver was following him. All the driver said was:

A wrokers' battalion marching along the streets of Leningrad

"Pulled your leg this time, you viper!"

And the locomotive, in high contempt, crossed and crushed the shadow sprawling across the track,—the shadow of the enemy plane.

2. THE MOTHER

"Let us go and visit him," the mother said, and although she did not mention any name, Olga, her daughter, knew whom she meant at once.

She meant her son, Olga's brother, Boris, a volunteer. He had said that he was going into the army, together with all the men of his year at the institute. The mother stood facing him, small, erect and worried.

"But you are short-sighted, and not at all strong," she remonstrated. "Aren't you afraid?"

"Don't worry, mother," Boris replied.

"You have never fought before, you will find it very hard. . ."

"Don't worry, mother," he repeated, and went on packing his kitbag.

. . . Many a time had the mother gone together with Olga to visit him at the village where he was undergoing military training. He would return from exercises elated, tired, dusty and tanned, and they would sit and talk about the city and about their friends and acquaintances. They never spoke about the war, for everything around them was filled with its very breath.

Olga was still quite a young girl, and to her these visits to her brother seemed like the customary summer excursions of yore, the familiar outdoor hikes to the villages around the city. They would return, their arms full of field flowers, to the trolley train, and would reach their home in the evening dusk, when the city was full of the bustle and preoccupation of war.

Only of late everything had changed. The front was already quite near, and Olga was worried. How would they find her brother today, when everything was so unlike those quiet Sunday outings which their trips to Boris had been?

They tramped across the fields which already lay in their autumn bareness. The summer residences were boarded up. They met carts and motor-trucks going in the opposite direction. The roads swarmed with excited refugees, with children, bundles and knapsacks on their backs. From a ditch a dead horse raised its rigid legs to the sky. Red Army men marched past, their billycans rattling. Somewhere, not far off, the thudding of heavy guns could be heard.

They had already left the noisy highway far behind them and were proceeding along familiar paths. But everything around was strange and unfamiliar: broken fences, an absence of people, and a sense of alarm, of tense expectation, of something sinister. In the field, concealed beneath bushes, lay camouflaged Red Army men with machine-guns. And when they entered the first village, it was deserted, completely empty. Not even a sparrow was to be seen pecking in the dust, not a single hen, not a single dog. No smoke issued from the chimneys, and the tumbledown benches in front of the houses seemed lonely and forsaken. Usually villages looked like this only in the white nights, just before dawn, when everybody was asleep. But nobody was asleep now: this was a wilderness.

Through the silence of this wilderness Olga staunchly followed her mother, who strode steadily forward with a slow but confident step.

The second village was in flames. When they had mounted the hillock, they involuntarily came to a halt. Flames darted and waved like red manes over the roofs, and there was nobody to extinguish them. Several of the huts had been reduced to match-

wood, and this was a pitiful and astonishing sight.

Olga tugged at her mother's sleeve timidly. But the woman said quietly: "We must go as far as that copse." And so they proceeded along the village street between the burning houses.

When they passed the village and had descended into a shallow ravine, they became aware of a shrill whistling sound, rising in volume and intensity; it approached so persistently and inexorably that it hurt the ears to listen to it. The mother stopped and bent her head. Olga did the same. She knew that this was quite the wrong thing to do, that they ought to cast themselves down on the road and bury their faces in the ground. But they had to move on, they had to find Boris, and if they were to drop down every time a shell passed, they would never reach their destination and never see him.

The shell burst behind a mound. The fountain of earth it raised subsided slowly. It had hardly settled, when another shell burst. Then they broke into a run, stumbling over the bushes, for the bursts of black cloud shot with red lightning flashes were now continuous. Olga was trembling violently, her lips were parched, but the mother kept pressing implacably forward, and Olga followed after her, with the absurd thought: "They won't hit us. They can't hit us. They mustn't. . ."

The village where Boris had lived and taken his military training had simply disappeared. In its place, black pillars protruded from the ground, and here and there charred boards lay about in fantastic heaps. Even the trees had been burned down or torn up by the roots and were sprawling by the side of the enormous holes filled with greenish opaque water.

"Mum," said Olga, "where are we to go now?"

The mother stood in silence. Olga was seized with pity for this little, tired, pertinacious woman.

"Mum," she said again, "let us go home. You see yourself, it is no use going on."

"Let us go forward a bit," the mother replied. "We will inquire there. . ."

They turned once more into the fields, and passed through gloomy copses and wrecked villages. Everywhere now, lying in the grass and in ditches, they saw Red Army men, looking towards the left. Suddenly three of them came out of a small bath-house. The mother hurried towards the men and cried out happily to one of them, a tall, slender, freckled fellow:

"If I am not mistaken, you are Pavlik?"

The Red Army man opened his eyes in astonishment; for a moment he carefully examined the little woman standing before him, and then said:

"You are Boris' mother, aren't you?"

"Yes. . . I want to see him. Where can I find him?"

"Find him?" echoed Pavlik, somewhat taken aback. "Just continue going straight ahead, towards that hill. But you had better not go. . . It will be hard to find him, and then. . ." Suddenly he smiled: "Why, there is fighting going on all round, we are almost surrounded. How do you happen to be strolling around here? . ."

"But we are not strolling," the mother replied. "I must see Boris. . . I must. . ."

She uttered this with such heat and deep feeling that Pavlik, who had come from the same institute and belonged to the same battalion as Boris, could only say:

"Well, go along. . ."

. . . The mother sat in the tall grass, her back propped against the log-wall of the bath-house. Olga sat by her side with bated breath. A Red

Army man pointed down towards a long marshy field overgrown with scrub, where here and there the bends of winding streamlets glistened. The field merged into a wood, and beyond the wood, on a hill, a village could be seen. The whole landscape was dominated, if one might say so, by a blinding thunder. Somewhere from behind, one of our batteries was bombarding the village on the wooded height, while the German guns held under fire the marshy field and the approaches to the hill on which Olga and her mother were sitting.

"They just went into action," said the Red Army man. "You can wait if you like, or not, that's up to you. They went off in that direction. They are attacking. . ."

"Do you know Boris?" the mother asked.

"Of course, I do. He is with them."

"How does he shoot?"

"He is not a bad shot. . ."

"And he is not afraid?"

The lad, a former student, shrugged his shoulders and looked quite offended.

"Why, if he were a coward we would never have allowed him into our company."

They both fell silent. Without a word they stood staring at the village burning on the hill. The roar of voices could be heard from the wood crying "hurrah!" or some other long drawn-out word which could not be distinguished. The wood, illuminated by the glow of the fire, seemed blood-stained.

The mother rose and walked to the edge of the hill. It was as if she wanted to see her son, to discern him in the midst of that wood that was being torn by battle, to see him running rifle in hand towards that burning village. Thus she stood for a long time. Then she said to Olga:

"Let us go!" And without glancing around she took the path leading to the road.

"Won't you wait for them?" cried the Red Army man.

"No," answered the mother. "Thank you for your kindness. Come along, Olga. . ."

They reached the road.

"Olga," the mother said, "you are tired, my darling. . ."

"No, mum. But I am afraid we will never get out of this alive. I have become such a coward. . ."

The mother's thin bloodless lips curled in a smile.

Red Army sappers putting up wire-entanglements around Leningrad

"Nothing will happen to us, dear," she said.

And then, after a moment's silence:

"I am easy in my mind now. I thought that he was not fit to fight, that he was too weak, too short-sighted. So I decided to find out for myself. And I have. Now I know that my son is fighting as well as the best of them. That is all I wanted to know. Let us go home now."

And she set out with her short, rapid stride, small, erect and light-footed. . .

3. THE OLD SOLDIER

He was very old, and his eyes could scarcely see. They were all standing at the open windows. He went up to them, but he could see nothing. So he asked:

"Tell me, what is happening over yonder?"

"Somewhere, far away, thick clouds of smoke are rising above the city. Enormous mountains of white smoke. Their edge is rosy in the glow of the sunset. And now the smoke is turning blue. It has reached the very zenith."

"What is it,—fires?" he inquired. "Have the Germans done it?"

"Yes," he was told.

The anti-aircraft guns were still firing, but somewhat lazily now.

. . He used to pore over his maps far into the night. He was an old military teacher of geography and an inventor. He had piles of maps. The variety of contours, the richness of the terrestrial features and the quaint intricacy of the reliefs were always a source of pleasure to him. Beyond these blue patterns and brown patches, beyond the green and yellow strips, he saw the life of a mighty country,—vast, ardent, free and growing. He knew how its map was changing from year to year.

But now, as he gazed at the maps of Leningrad and its environs, his brow was furrowed and his glance was veiled and sombre.

The rattling of machine-guns could be heard not far off.

"No, it's impossible!" he said to himself, "It cannot be!"

He flung down his magnifying lens in agitation and paced up and down the room.

"And yield them to whom? To the Germans! To those doltish, brutish, bloodthirsty assassins of women and children. To the fascists! . . No, no!" he muttered to himself. "The German generals are just smug marionettes. They are not bad administrators, and they know how to fight. . . But do they really know how to fight?" he cried the next minute. "They are adventurous gamblers, and all their plans are the ruses of bandits, designed to hypnotize, to disarm, to discourage. . . No, but it will not work this time! We are not to be duped. The Russian people are not so easily fooled. You will never get Leningrad!"

He went to bed, but sleep would not come. His whole being shuddered at the thought of the battle going on around the city. He closed his eyes, and the picture rose in his mind of those peaceable environs where once, as a young officer, he had participated in the manoeuvres. Those quiet nooks were now one by one disappearing in the smoke of conflagrations, and—horrible thought!—perhaps the enemy tanks had already penetrated to the outskirts of the city. If that was so, . . well, he still had the strength to throw a hand-grenade. He would not ask: "How many of them are there?" True, his eyesight was feeble, but he would ask: "Where are they?" But no, it was impossible: the Germans would never tread these sacred streets and squares. Never!

When the air-raid alert was given, he did not go to the bomb-shelter. The house shook with the force of the concussions, shell fragments rained down on the roof, the windows

rattled, and the house swayed as if it were a thing of match-board, but all he said was:

"Fly, you vultures, fly, but you will soon break your necks! . ."

The battle dragged on. The enemy was entrenched outside the very walls of Leningrad. Winter came. It was cold and dark in the house. A few damp chips and shavings in the small iron stove emitted but a feeble warmth. It became harder for the old man every day. He lay beneath his rug, and his whole life passed before his eyes. It had been a long, industrious and interesting life, and had it not been for his great age and the present privations, he could have carried on for a long time yet. But weakness had now fettered his arms and legs, and even the firewood for the little stove he had to have cut for him, for he himself,—he was ashamed to say,—was rapidly fatigued by this child's labour.

He thought only of the wonderful, inimitable, majestic city.

In sentimental moments, when the thought of his ebbing life was particularly oppressive, he would take a gold watch out of a drawer in the desk and fondle it in his hand. This watch had been presented to him in recognition of his work at the Higher Militia Courses, where he had taught for many years and had helped in the training of many a young, intelligent and dashing commander. . . He thought of their smiling faces, their youthful spirits, their noisy discussions. And then he suddenly saw himself, young, riding on horseback by foaming mountain streams or ranging the Caucasian heights, an inquisitive cartographer, traveller and historian of mountain warfare. . . But that was all so long ago. . .

He had grown very feeble. He even found it an effort to raise his soup spoon to his mouth at table, and his daughter had to feed him. And as she did so she recounted the news from the fronts.

"Retreating, always retreating!" he would murmur with a heavy sigh, and his short-sighted, almost blind eyes would peer in agony at his daughter.

"The old fellow won't last long," the neighbours said.

. . . One memorable morning, the old soldier's daughter heard strange noises emanating from her father's room. First there was the sound of a saw, then of a hammer, then the sound of singing. . . Yes, somebody was singing in the room. The words were indistinct; in fact, the song could scarcely be said to have any words at all. It was a sort of contented, self-engrossed rumbling.

As far as everybody knew, the old man should be lying, covered with his rug, subdued, debilitated and discouraged.

His daughter went to the door, but it was some time before she made up her mind to open it. When she did, she saw that her sick and senile parent was sawing away at a plank and singing to himself. Yes, it was he who was singing. And as he sang, his eyes gleamed. And although an old overcoat hung from his frail shoulders, he looked as majestic as a patriarch.

"Father, what is the matter with you?" she cried in alarm. "Why have you got up? And why are you sawing? You are not strong enough for that!"

He glanced at her, and then in a clear and sonorous voice said:

"Didn't you hear the radio this morning?"

"No," she replied. "What did it say?"

The old man nearly gave a hop with the saw in one hand and the plank in the other.

"You didn't hear it? The whole world has heard it, and you know nothing! The Germans have been smashed at Moscow! Smashed to atoms, to powder. . . the wretched adventurers! I always said that the only way they can fight is like bandits. Their tactics are the tactics of

Leningrad women during their military practice

footpads and highwaymen. They have been smashed, do you understand? And if they got a beating like that at Moscow, they will never get Leningrad. When I heard that, I could not stay lying down any more: I jumped up. I jumped up to cry: 'Long live victory!' Now, you can't possibly say such a thing lying down, girl, can you?"

4. THE LION'S PAW

Yura was not one of those annoying little boys who are always getting in the way of adults. He was still quite young, only seven, but he would disappear for the whole day, playing in the park or in the streets, or in the zoological garden. The zoo was just across the way from the house where he lived, he often stole in side of it, as he was very fond of the animals.

But, although he would be terribly ashamed to admit it, what he liked most was the huge plaster lion on the column near the ticket-office at the entrance to the zoo.

The first time he set eyes on it he was fascinated, and he could never remain indifferent to it again.

"He is there to protect the zoo, so that bandits shouldn't harm the animals, isn't he, mummie?" he asked her one day.

"Yes, yes, dear," his mother answered absent-mindedly. And Yura was very pleased that his mother had agreed with him on such an important point.

The large plaster lion towered proudly over the entrance, and every time Yura passed it he greeted it with a glow of friendship and respect.

. . . The sirens howled over the city, and the mothers, in anxious alarm, gathered their children and hastened with them to the bomb-shelters. Yura sat on a stool in the cellar, and every now and again his little heart leaped to his mouth. In the large low cellar, the terrible thundering outside rumbled distinctly and uncannily. Sometimes the cellar shook as though in terror, something poured down the outer wall, and the sound of shattered glass could be heard.

"There they are again, the bandits, the air pirates!" the women exclaimed in indignation; and when the explosions were particularly loud, the older women crossed themselves hastily.

Suddenly the house trembled violently as if somebody had tried to pull it out of the ground together with its foundation, like an oak with its roots, but then changed his mind and only gave it a thorough shaking.

"That one fell very close," said Yura's mother, "perhaps across the way."

She was not mistaken. When the all-clear signal was given, they all ran out to see where the bomb had fallen. Yura kept pace with his mother. It had fallen into the zoo, bystanders said, killing an elephant and wounding monkeys, while a sable had broken loose and was running about the street.

But Yura, his eyes filled with tears, saw only one thing.

"Mum, the lion!" he cried.

There was such deep despair in Yura's voice, that his mother involuntarily glanced in the direction where he was pointing. His wonderful idol, the plaster lion, was lying on its side, its great white head reclining on one paw. Its hind legs had disappeared. One of the front paws had been shattered, but its mane was just as majestic, and its eye as stern and immoveable as ever.

"Mummy, mummy, the bandits have killed him!" cried Yura. "Mummy, he fought with them! . . "

He ran forward and began to search for something at the foot of the column, which had been smashed and riddled by bomb splinters. The tears coursed freely from his blue eyes as he rummaged among the fragments. At last he found something and with a spasmodic movement slipped it into his pocket.

"Yura, what are you doing there?" his mother cried. "What are you looking for among all that litter? You will only get filthy dirty. What do you want to collect that rubbish for?"

Yura could not drag himself away. He kept walking around the column and gazing at the lion reclining on its side, as if he wanted to fix forever in his memory the sight of the poor dumb beast that had stood for so many decades at the entrance to the zoo and had watched over the security of the animals. He was not attracted by the bomb craters, by the broken fence, by the overturned watch-house, or by the ticket-office, of which only a few posts remained standing, or even by the polar fox which was scurrying about among the bushes of the park. He had eyes only for the lion.

One evening a Red Army man, covered with the dust of battle, came to visit Yura's mother. He sat at the table drinking tea, and Yura gazed at him with drowsy eyes which grew heavier and heavier every minute. He had been running about all day and was so tired that he could scarcely understand what the visitor was saying. He was telling about the front, about the kind of men we had there, the way they were fighting the Germans and the heroism they were displaying; and he also told about Yura's uncle, his mother's brother who had received the Order of the Red Banner. Perceiving that Yura was almost ready to tumble off his chair, his mother ordered him to bed. It was only when he was already undressed and sitting on the edge of the bed that he said:

"Is it true that Uncle Misha has got the Order of the Red Banner?"

"Yes; he fought like a lion. I hope you will be as brave as he when you grow up. When he comes back, he will teach you to fight like a soldier. . ."

"Mummy, did he fight like our lion?" Yura asked.

"Which lion? That's only a way of talking. When a Red Army man

A. Shnitov, an old inhabitant of Leningrad, bidding good-bye to his grandson who is leaving for the front

fights bravely, they say he fought like a lion. . ."

"Yes, he fought like our lion," answered Yura, not listening to what his mother said. "That means he fought well. . . I will also fight like that. . ."

"Well, go to sleep now," his mother bade him. "There may be an air-raid tonight, and you must get a good sleep before the alarm sounds."

The air-raids had now become quite common. It was not always possible to get Yura into the shelter. Sometimes he would be out in the street and could not be found, sometimes he would creep unperceived on to the roof of the house, or else stand on duty at the first-aid station. He was already accustomed to the anti-aircraft guns, to the vibration of the house, and to the dull thud of the bombs.

"Where do you get to?" his mother asked. "I ran my legs off looking for you. Don't ever go far away from the house, do you hear? You have got entirely out of hand ever since your father went away, there is no managing you. Just wait until your father comes back from the navy, he will give you a good talking to. I don't know what to do with you."

"I am helping to build the barricade behind our house," rejoined Yura seriously.

"What barricade?"

"They are building them already on the Bolshoi Prospect. I saw how they are doing it, so I got the boys together, and we are building one, too."

Three days later, after a heavy air-raid, he was brought home stunned by a bomb explosion. His mother, pale, her hair dishevelled, undressed him with trembling fingers. He lay quietly, but he had already recovered consciousness. He had only been struck by the blast of air and flung to the ground.

"I was watching the barricade behind the house, mummy," he said in a low penitent voice. "I am alive, mummy, don't worry."

His mother was turning a pile of miscellaneous objects out of his pockets, looking for a handkerchief.

"What a lot of rubbish you carry about in your pockets?" she said as she pulled out a large piece of plaster which had already turned grey.

"Mummy!" cried Yura, "Don't touch that! It's the lion's paw. I need it. I am keeping it as a remembrance."

The mother stared in surprise at the lump of plaster. And sure enough, the shape of a big round claw could be distinctly seen on it.

"What did you need it for? Is this what you found among the rubbish outside the zoo?"

"It's a reminder," he said, his little forehead bent in a frown.

"But what is it to remind you of, Yurik? I don't understand, my dear," she said tenderly.

He blushed as he answered:

"I will avenge him. . . I will

take revenge on those bandits! Let me only come across them! . . I will give them such a reminder, they will never forget it! . . "

5. THE FAMILY

"Mother, come here for a minute. I want to tell you something," said Semyon Ivanovich.

Dasha stared at her husband as if she was seeing for the first time this broad-shouldered, earnest-looking man with the unhurried movements and the stern eyes, who for so long now had not smiled at her or jested with her. She wiped her hands on her apron, sat down on a chair, and with averted eyes said:

"I think I know what you are going to say, Semyon."

"You do, do you? How do you know? . ."

"I feel it in my heart. . . Well, go on, what do you want to say. . ."

"Shut the door, I don't want Olya to hear. . ."

"Olya has gone for water. I will tell you myself what you want to say; you just correct me if I am wrong. . . I have seen, of course, what you have been going through ever since Kostya was killed. Well, Kostya died a good, an honourable death, defending Leningrad. And we have got to take revenge on the fascists; we must take revenge on them every day, every hour. . . Oh, the villains, the scoundrels, what they are only doing! It is terrible, it is horrible! I hate them, I despise them! You want to take revenge for your brother Kostya. You want to join the army, you want to go to the front. That is so, isn't it? Am I right?"

Semyon Ivanovich slapped his knee, rose, went up to his wife, embraced and kissed her, and said:

"You are a regular mind-reader, Dasha! You are right, I couldn't have put it better myself. Well, to clinch the matter, I have already filled in the applications. So that's how it is, mother. There will be one soldier more in the Red Army. I can't go on working at the bench; my heart is just boiling over. And I am an old soldier, I have been through the last world war, and I haven't forgotten how to shoot. But I have little time to spare, mother. Help me to get my things packed. . ."

"I will see to it," said Dasha softly.

She went to the window and looked into the street to see whether Olya was coming. The street was crowded with people, as though it were a holiday. They were all walking on foot, because the street-cars were not running. Many were dragging sleds loaded with firewood or sacks. On some of the sleds sat old men or women, wrapped up in shawls and mufflers.

Water was also being transported on sleds—in children's baths, in churns, in buckets and in kegs. People slipped on the frozen road, the water would splash out of its receptacles and freeze in tongues of ice. The frost was fierce. Gusts of wind came blowing from the gulf, hurling prickly snow and biting ice dust into the people's eyes. Everybody had their faces bound up to the mouth in black scarfs, and seemed to be wearing semi-masks like masqueraders.

Dasha stood for some time staring at the endlessly moving throng. Beneath the masks, the breath froze into an icy lacework, and a white vapour rose from the pedestrians' mouths. It would be hard to spot Olya with her bucket in the thick of this human torrent. She should be coming any minute.

"I also have something to say," said Dasha, turning away from the window. "I have made up my mind, too: since you are going to the front, I will take your place. Don't interrupt me, listen to what I have to say. Our city is besieged. The sufferings of the people are terrible. The city

has now become the front,—that is what the papers are saying. And it is true. And that being so, and since you are going off to take revenge on the Germans for your brother, I will take your place. I am still well and strong, and I can stand it. You don't have to worry. I have got sense, and I like work. I will not let you down. You won't have any cause to be ashamed of your wife. I understand the job. After all, I left the factory only because of the children. . ."

"But it is just the same now," exclaimed Semyon Ivanovich.

"What is just the same?"

"Petya is still a little fellow. And even Olya is only twelve; and she is such a delicate little girl. What will become of the children, if both of us go away? The home will go to rack and ruin, mother! Have you thought of that?"

"I have, Semyon, I have thought it over very carefully. I will send the children to Porokhovyie. I have an old friend there, and she has children just about the same ages as ours. I will ask her to take care of them. And then my hands will be untied. This is not the time to think of family life. We may see one another again, and we may not. And the enemy is even wrecking and destroying our homes. We have to fight, we can't sit with folded hands. Nobody will fight for us if we don't fight ourselves. . . Am I right, Semyon?"

"You are right, mother," Semyon Ivanovich said approvingly. "You put it well."

Olya came in. Leaving her bucket of water in the kitchen, she came straight into the room to warm herself. She walked up to the tiny stove and extended her little hands, blue with cold, towards it. She was struck by something unusual in her parents' manner.

"Mummy!" she exclaimed. "What is the matter with you today? Something has happened. Has somebody else been killed? No, but tell me the truth, don't hide anything!"

"We have nothing to hide from you, dear," said Dasha. "Take off your things and listen carefully to what we have decided." She took a deep breath and said rapidly, with scarcely a pause between the words: "Your father is going to the front, and I am going to the factory to take his place, and we have decided to send you children to Auntie Lolya at Porokhovyie to be taken care of. . . That's how it is, Olya. . ."

Olya opened the stove door, threw in a couple of logs and sat staring at the low reluctant flames. Then, without raising her head, she asked:

"But why send Petya and me to Porokhovyie?"

"But there will be nobody to look after the house, dear. Who is going to stand in the line for bread, and get the firewood, and fetch the water, and feed Petya? Somebody will have to look after him when he comes back from playing with the neighbours' children; he can't be left to himself. . . Who is going to do all this when I am away? . ."

"Mummy, we won't go to Porokhovyie. I don't like Auntie Lolya. She is always complaining. She keeps grumbling all day. . . And as to the house, I will manage all right myself."

She stood up; with an abrupt movement she threw her coat from her thin, almost boyish shoulders, and with a toss of her head began to speak in a distinct confident voice:

"And do I manage badly now? Don't I fetch the water, what of it? I know where to get firewood; Valya from No. 17 will help me. And as to lighting the stove, so what of it? And I can cook the dinner, too. It's not so complicated. Valya and I will stand in the line in turns for bread. And I feed Petya every day anyhow. Don't imagine I am just a helpless child. There are no children

now, we are all grown-up. Go, both of you, since you have to. Don't worry about us. You will be coming home every day, won't you? . . Well, that's fine. If it's hard for me, so what? It's hard for everybody nowadays. Nothing will make me go to Porokhovyie. So there you are, mother, darling. Don't worry, mummy, everything will be all right. . . There, let me kiss you. And that's all there about it! . ."

An anti-aircraft battery on the look-out in Leningrad

JEAN-RICHARD BLOCH

A SEARCH IN PARIS

A PLAY IN ONE ACT AND THREE PICTURES

CHARACTERS:

GEORGETTE, Parisian factory-worker of forty.
GERMAINE, her eleven-year-old daughter.
FELIX, brigadier
MARCEL, policeman
GEORGES, "
ALFRED, "
GUSTAVE, "
} members of the Paris municipal police force.

PUYMAIGRE, inspector in the Sûreté Nationale (the political police).
HELLMUTH REBENBOHNEN-SCHMUTZLER, assistant inspector-in-chief of the German police force of the occupied areas of France.

Supers: two German gendarmes, Paris workers and city policemen.

The action takes place in Paris, in 1941.

FIRST PICTURE

SCENE 1

A police-station in Paris. Felix, Alfred, Georges, Gustave. All four are seated. Georges and Alfred are playing cards, Gustave is looking on. Felix, the brigadier, is seated at his desk drawing up a report. Silence.

GEORGES *(slapping down three cards one after another as he calls them)*: Clubs! More clubs! More and more clubs! Aha! What have you to say to that now? *(Takes the trick.)*

ALFRED *(quietly; he speaks with a very noticeable southern accent)*: Rotter! Wait! Let's see what you'll say. *(Puts down a card.)* Here's a queen for you!

GEORGES: A pretty little queen she is, too. Supposing I take her?

ALFRED: Have a try. We'll settle up later on.

GEORGES *(playing)*: It'll be all the worse for you. I'm taking this. *(Takes the trick again.)*

ALFRED: Splendid! Now it's my turn. *(Plays a card.)* I'm trumping this, and this, and this! *(Collects the cards.)*

GEORGES: You're just a bad lot!

GUSTAVE: That's a game, if you like!

GEORGES *(to Gustave)*: Now then, none of that from you, you rat! *(To Alfred:)* Now it's my lead. *(Shows a*

card.) Here you are,— a king! Charlemagne. *(Puts it down.)*

ALFRED *(thoughtfully)*: Aha! The big fellow's out.

GEORGES: That's right, . . The Boches had a Führer, name of Charles, in olden times.

ALFRED: And what if I cut out your Führer altogether?

GUSTAVE: Now then, no humbuging of that kind, you know.

GEORGES: Will you hold your tongue, rat? How often have I to tell you?

ALFRED: Well, now you're going to see something! *(Puts down a card.)*

GEORGES: Another trump, you scoundrel!

ALFRED *(gathering up the cards)*: See the tricks people play with your Führer? *(He gets up from his seat.)*

GEORGES: I only wish your words might come true. But what do you mean by calling him my Führer? I'll thank you not to do it again. That's more in his line *(with a jerk of his thumb over his shoulder in Gustave's direction.)* He sucks up to the Fritzes. But they just make me sick—like they make every real Frenchman sick.

(Alfred starts cleaning his boots.)

GUSTAVE *(incensed)*: Oh, is that so? And maybe you think I'll stand your insults, do you? Insinuating that I'm not a real Frenchman!

GEORGES *(cooly)*: I've no intention of insulting you, I'm sure. I can only say—there are French and French, and let's leave it at that.

ALFRED: Gosh, what rotten boot-polish this is! What are you supposed to clean with it, I wonder? *(Throws the brush into the corner.)* Just look at this hoof of mine!

GEORGES: All the good stuff disappeared as soon as the occupation started. And where did it all go, I'm asking you, boys? Straight to Berlin.

ALFRED *(stretching his fine muscular arms and singing with his pleasant accent the song of his native South)*: "O, Toulouse, o, land of mine! . . "

FELIX *(who has stopped writing for a moment to think)*: Can't you make a bit less of a row? A fellow can't hear himself think with all this clatter.

ALFRED *(in an undertone to the other two policemen)*: I say, has anybody got a light?

GEORGES: You don't mean to say you've got some tobacco? *(Throws him a box of matches.)*

ALFRED: Just some sort of manure they sell as tobacco.

GEORGES: Tobacco. . . that's another thing that disappeared. . . Gone straight to Bocheland. . .

ALFRED: Like every other decent thing we had in France.

GUSTAVE: Now, now! It's starting again, is it?

ALFRED: No, it isn't starting, it's going on. And what's more, it's not our fault it's going on—it's Fritzes'. . .

GEORGES *(unfolding the newspapers)*: And it'll never stop until. . . Well, I suppose it's understood.

GUSTAVE *(sharply and challengingly)*: Yes, and I understand what you mean too, don't worry. You're thinking of de Gaulle, aren't you?

ALFRED: And why not? A general's job, so far as I know, is to fight, not to capitulate. A general's job, to my mind, is defending, not surrendering his country. And if one French general goes on fighting even after defeat,—well, I don't know about you, but I must say I like this sort of a general.

GUSTAVE: I go in for discipline, myself. . . My chiefs. . .

FELIX: Don't make such a noise, I'm asking you!

ALFRED: Looks as though it wasn't going any too smoothly, that report of yours, eh, brigadier?

FELIX: Is this what they call order?. . This famous German order you hear all the talk about? . . To listen to them you'd think they'd

fought for nothing else, you'd think they'd come here specially to show us their methods. . . *(With a bitter sneer.)* To teach us how we should live. . .

ALFRED: And we didn't need to wait for them to teach us. There wasn't another city in the world where the traffic was better regulated than in Paris.

GEORGES: And why? Because the Parisian shows plenty of initiative and the Paris police use their heads when they have to apply the regulations.

FELIX: That's something the Boches will never understand. A man's just an automaton for them. Strictly forbidden to think!

ALFRED: In some of the towns they've issued an order forbidding foot-passengers to move in any direction but one, on each side of the street.

FELIX: Their notion of order is a slow process of deadening people.

ALFRED: And then you see what this keeping to one side of the pavement means? You just march in single file, like in a prison yard, seeing nothing but the back of the man's neck in front of you.

GEORGES *(to Alfred)*: Shall we have another game?

ALFRED: Yes, we might as well.

FELIX: And what an idea—to build two motor-roads through Paris! Crowding four and a half million people! As though there wasn't any other traffic in the city except their Boche cars. As much as to say, that the nazis have granted themselves the right to rush around about Paris in their cars at the rate of 100 kilometers an hour without slowing down at the crossings, knocking down everybody who gets in their way.

GEORGES: Ace of clubs.

ALFRED: Jack of spades.

FELIX: Will you hold your tongues while I'm writing my report?

SCENE 2

The scene and the people are the same, with the addition of Marcel, who, as soon as he crosses the threshold, flings his cape, equipment and cap down on a bench.

MARCEL: So that's that. . . It's all up with me!

FELIX: What's up?

ALFRED: Why is it all up with you? *(Goes on playing with Georges while listening to Marcel.)*

MARCEL *(flops down on a bench)*: What are you staring at me for like at a tinful of sardines? They got me, the dirty dogs!

GUSTAVE: What's that you say?

MARCEL *(violently)*: I'm saying what I'm saying: it's all M. Laval's friends. . . and yours. Our new masters, that's who.

FELIX: Explain yourself. What has happened?

GEORGES *(in an undertone)*: Diamonds.

MARCEL: You'll know when your turn comes. Because you'll all come to the guillotine yet, Messieurs!

ALFRED: Hearts.

MARCEL: The German trick isn't a particularly shrewd one either. While you're on point-duty, a plain-clothes-man is strolling along the pavement. He doesn't attract any attention.

GEORGES: I'm taking that. And the spade.

MARCEL: Well, this bloke turns out to be a Boche policeman, one of the Führer's spies who's been set to keep an eye on you.

GEORGES: It's the usual thing these days.

FELIX: Let him speak, will you?

MARCEL: And if you happen to wink at any trifling infringement of the rules and regulations,—done, as the saying is, without malicious intent,—if you pass it over in the good old French way, they're down on you in an instant.

ALFRED: But what's happened? *(To Georges:)* This is mine, too.

MARCEL: It was like this: just as Dupont was relieving me, this Fritz comes up with a Boche gendarme who'd been hiding in a gateway till then, and cooly informed me that I'd broken the regulations,—these new regulations imported from Berlin,—eleven times, and that I might expect to be punished in consequence.

GEORGES *(in an undertone)*: Hearts, spades, an ace and a king, I'm taking everything. You've lost, you're done for now pretty thoroughly. *(Alfred gets up from his place.)*

MARCEL: Just let me catch the fellow some dark night on my beat, and believe me, he won't fancy his job any longer. . .

ALFRED: What is it they're after, when all's said and done?

FELIX: It's easy enough to guess. They want to show our government that the French police are no good at keeping order, so that they'll be able to kick us out and give our jobs to the Boche police.

GEORGES: What rubbish! Why should they bother to do that? They're the top-dogs here. What need have they to go in for petty little tricks of that kind?

MARCEL: Can't you see, you blockhead? You're just a kid still, it seems. You ought to go back to school again. Do you mean to say you can't see that the Boches are just downright frauds and liars, and nothing else? They've got a way of making the filthiest tricks look as though everything was perfectly all right and in the very best style, can't you see?

GUSTAVE: Still, there are people in our government who wouldn't allow that sort of things to go on. . .

MARCEL *(to Gustave)*: The boy's a born idiot, I declare! Haven't the Boches arrested our Prefect of the police? Haven't they thrown him into prison, just as if he was an ordinary Communist? And what has Vichy done about it? Has it raised a finger? No, of course it hasn't. Get out! You make me laugh, you and your government! . .

SCENE 3

The scene and the characters are the same, with the addition of Puymaigre. The latter, who is an inspector in the Sûreté, comes in unexpectedly. He is in plain clothes.

PUYMAIGRE: How did I let the fellow give me the slip? If I'd only. . .

FELIX: What's the matter?

GUSTAVE: What's happened, inspector?

PUYMAIGRE: Just imagine! I was on duty at the Gare Montparnasse, when somebody came up to me and shoved this paper right into the pocket of my overcoat without my even noticing it! *(Highly indignant, he pulls out a handbill and shows it to them.)*

FELIX *(bursting into a loud guffaw)*: Ha-ha-ha! That's a good one, that is! Here's the inspector been done by a pickpocket!

MARCEL *(laughing)*: You might just as easily have been robbed of your watch and money.

ALFRED *(laughing)*: Ha-ha-ha! Don't you think perhaps this paper was meant for you?

MARCEL: Yes, was the person interested in you as inspector, or did he just hit on you by accident?

PUYMAIGRE *(furiously)*: An accident, indeed! Funny kind of accident when the envelope's addressed to inspector Puymaigre and marked: "Strictly confidential!" *(Fresh outbursts of mirth from the others.)*

GUSTAVE *(slapping his sides)*: Ha-ha-ha! Pretty smart, that!

FELIX: What's the paper about, anyway? Is it the address of a den, or a speak-easy, or what?

ALFRED: Or perhaps an advert from a doctor for veneral diseases?

Poor chap, they suspect you of having some nasty disease!

PUYMAIGRE: Witty to the last! It's all right for you. But if I could only lay my hands on the one who slipped me this rubbish, I'd take him by the scruff of his neck and. . . But do you know what it is? *(They all crowd round him, as he says impressively:)* It's nothing less than a letter from the Communist Party to the members of the Paris police force!

GUSTAVE: Oho! Fancy that! And what have the Communists had the infernal impudence to write to us?

PUYMAIGRE: They've written in their letter: "Nothing is forgotten. . ." "All the names are known to us. . ." ahem. . . and. . . all the rest of it. . .

MARCEL: The names? What names?

PUYMAIGRE: Well. . . There are those among us who've been rather zealous in putting down the Communists, and so we're regarded as helping, in a sense, the occupation authorities. At least, that's what they say. . . And that we'll be made "to pay in full." *(Reads:)* "Those who have had no mercy on either France or on the French people need not hope for any mercy in future. . ." Pretty plain speaking, that, isn't it? *(Forces a laugh, but it falls flat.)*

ALFRED: And you found this paper in your pocket, inspector, with your name on it?

PUYMAIGRE *(in a worried voice)*: Yes, scribbled in pencil. And that's that. *(The others move away, whistling, and settle down to work. Silence ensues.)*

GEORGES: Take, for instance, our own everyday affairs. Is it true or is it not true that the French hate the occupationists more and more as the days go by?

GUSTAVE: You can't deny that the French can't stand the Boches!

PUYMAIGRE: Do be a little more careful in choosing your expressions! Don't you know the word "Boche" is strictly forbidden? *(Gustave is slightly abashed.)*

GEORGES: Is it true that every day more and more of the French are refusing to work with the occupationists?

PUYMAIGRE: I have nothing to say on this point.

GEORGES: Have you considered the measures that we are told to take for the safety of M. Laval and M. Déat and their friends every time they venture out? And that even these measures didn't save M. Fontenoy, their chief propagandist, from being dragged out of the Seine with two huge stones tied to his feet?

MARCEL: Admiral Darlan was hooted in Beauvais.

ALFRED: To avoid a repetition of the stormy scenes that took place in Montauban, Grenoble and other cities through which Marshal Pétain passed, he was advised not to try to enter Limoges until fifteen hundred citizens had been removed from the town.

GEORGES: And when all's said and done, inspector, if anyone knows what the people really think, it's municipal police like us and political police like you. We don't miss much. Nobody can put anything over us. That's our job — to watch what's going on behind the scenes. Well, then, isn't it true that the great majority take side with de Gaulle? If the people are behind those who are arrested, who dare harm them? And because of this, I foresee that the day is not far off when the French police will be sent to fight for the Germans against the French people.

PUYMAIGRE: But wait! Look here. . .

FELIX: He's quite right, inspector. And that day either the Germans will still be strong enough and we, the French police, will owe our salvation to the brilliant performance of the Führer's gunners mowing down our fellow-countrymen,—or the Germans will have come to the end of their tether and we shall be done for.

MARCEL: That's clear

ALFRED: Good God!

PUYMAIGRE: I must say I'm appalled. . . *(After a pause, furiously:)* Well, as far as I'm concerned I don't know anything but my orders. I'm faithful to nothing but duty and discipline. I close my ears to everything except what my superior officers say. I don't go in for splitting hairs and making nice distinctions. I've been fighting the forces of disorder and revolution all my life. And if my chiefs have decided to collaborate loyally with the occupationists so as to establish a new order in Europe and stamp out bolshevism and the Jewish free-masons who are at the bottom of all our misfortunes,—then I'm not the one to blame or criticize them. The head of the State, whom I respect, shook hands with the Führer himself at Montoire and was treated with every mark of courtesy by him. Hitler went even so far as to help him to get into his train. That man knows how to live.

MARCEL: He knows how to kill, too.

PUYMAIGRE: That's war. We're offered peace today—an unlooked for peace—which is in keeping with our dignity and honour; that's what the Marshal said. And as for this paper. . . do you know what I'm going to do with it? Hang it up in the lavatory. . .

SCENE 4

Scene and characters are the same, with the addition of Rebenbohnenschmutzler and two German gendarmes.

The door is flung open violently. A nazi in civilian clothes marches in, escorted respectfully by two German gendarmes, and only comes to a standstill when he is under the lamp.

NAZI *(with a marked German accent)*: What a pig-stye! What a stink! And the dirt! Look how they keep their police-station! The table all in ink-stains. The walls. . . the floor. . . and the police themselves! How sloppy and untidy they look! One without his belt, the other with his tunic unbuttoned. . .

FELIX: Who are you?

NAZI: Silence! Stand up!

FELIX: What? What do you mean?

NAZI: Silence, I said! And stand up! Attention! *(The two German gendarmes move nearer to him, each making two goose-step paces like automatons.)*

FELIX: I shall obey if you say who you are and what your rank is.

NAZI *(flying into a rage)*: Who is the superintendent of this police-station?

FELIX: I am. Brigadier Felix.

NAZI: Oh, so you occupy a responsible position, into the bargain? Well, my friend, you can rest assured that you won't be here for very much longer. I am Doctor Rebenbohnenschmutzler, Hellmuth Rebenbohnenschmutzler, assistant inspector-in-chief of the Führer's police in the occupied countries. *(Felix rises to his feet.)* Take off your cap! *(Felix hesitates.)* Take off your cap, I repeat!

FELIX: Even though you may be Doctor Hell. . . etc., as you say, I have three remarks to make. First, that in our police-force we're allowed to take off our equipment if we're not on duty. Second, that according to the regulations we are supposed to salute our superiors by raising our hands to our caps. Third, that superior officers are forbidden to take the liberty of addressing their inferiors as "thou,"—as you addressed me just now.

NAZI *(advancing on Felix)*: You mean you never take off your cap to a superior officer?

FELIX: No, we take off our caps to the Prefect of the police, and to no one else.

NAZI *(bellowing)*: I am higher than

your Prefect! What is your Prefect to me? No more than this! *(He spits on the floor and grinds his heel into it.)* A dog! The lowest rank in the Führer's police is higher than the whole lot of your chiefs, higher than that pig of a Prefect whom we've thrown into prison, where he'll stay; yes, and higher than all your Prefect's superiors. For we are the conquerors, we have set our foot upon your necks. Off with your cap, do you hear? *(Knocks off Felix's cap suddenly. Felix startled involuntarily, recoils.)* Attention! *(He thunders.)* Stand still! Still as a statue! *(Glances over the rest.)* Don't stir! Stand as still as statues! *(Points to Felix and says to one of his own gendarmes.)* Find out the name and character of this good-for-nothing unter-officer. *(The gendarme goes toward Felix, who is about to pick up his cap.)* Don't touch that cap! Don't budge! We'll drill you, we'll teach you how to march in step. That's what your country needs! Ah, and how badly it needs it! It's no better than a dog-kennel, a pig-stye, this much-belauded France of yours. *(Paces up and down the room.)* You call this culture? You call this a civilized country? A country where there's neither order nor discipline! It was high time for us to come! We'll show you how to cultivate the soil scientifically. . . methodically. To grow flowers. . . methodically. . . To make your wine. . . methodically. . . To cook. . . methodically. . . We shall transform this chaotic country of yours into a beautiful German farm run by honest Germans on German lines. . . for the maintenance and welfare of the master-people. *(Notices Puymaigre furtively stuffing the Communist letter into his pocket.)* What's that fellow hiding? What is it he's trying to hide? *(Advances upon Puymaigre.)* Name, position, rank?

PUYMAIGRE: I am inspector Puymaigre of the Sûreté Nationale.

NAZI: And what's that document you're hiding?

PUYMAIGRE: M. Assistant inspector, I am not trying to hide anything. . .

NAZI *(bellowing)*: Hand over that secret document at once!

PUYMAIGRE: I venture to assure the Assistant inspector that my feelings. . .

NAZI: Hold your tongue! Give me that document!

PUYMAIGRE: It is simply a paper some unknown person. . .

NAZI: Haven't I told you to hold your tongue?

(Trembling, Puymaigre holds out the paper, which the nazi snatches and reads under the lamp.)

NAZI: Ah! Very good! Communist propaganda, no less! I must have disturbed a meeting of a Communist club. So you are a speaker? An agitator? You dirty swine!

PUYMAIGRE *(crazed with fear)*: If the Assistant inspector will allow me to. . .

NAZI *(to his gendarmes)*: Arrest this person at once! *(The gendarmes place themselves on either side of Puymaigre.)*

PUYMAIGRE: These policemen are witnesses that. . .

NAZI: Search this man immediately!

(The gendarmes relieve him of his weapons, etc., turn out his pockets, take his handcuffs, manacles, rubber truncheon and other things,—all in the twinkling of an eye, while Puymaigre tries in vain to put in a word in his own defense.)

NAZI: Excellent! Excellent! Quite a neat little Communist arsenal. What a catch! What a catch for me! Now, where is that policeman. . . Marcel?

MARCEL *(coming forward)*: Present! Policeman Marcel. *(He uncovers his head and keeps his hands stiffly by his sides.)*

NAZI: Aha! Here you are! A very poor sort of a policeman. . . and

a very poor sort of police-force. . . I came here about you. . . But I'll have to deal with you some other time. I've found something better for the present. *(Points to Puymaigre and says to the gendarmes:)* Take this man away. *(The gendarmes lead away the terrified Puymaigre. At the threshold the German turns.)* I shall come back. This is only my first visit. We shall keep coming back. . . here and to other places, until "la belle France" is rid of all you. . . gentlemen of France! *(Goes out.)*

SCENE 5

The scene and characters are the same, except for the three nazis and Puymaigre. The police slowly emerge from the species of stupor they have been in.

GUSTAVE: Well, I'm damned! If that isn't the limit! What next?

ALFRED: What do you think of it? And that, let me tell you, is only the beginning.

MARCEL: Yes, boys, we might as well get our things together and prepare to depart for La Santé [1].

FELIX *(to Georges, who is laughing quietly to himself)*: And you have the heart to laugh at it all?

GEORGES: I really can't help it. When I think of that ass Puymaigre getting himself arrested as a Communist by the Boches. . . Honestly, it's enough to make a cat laugh!

(The telephone rings.)

FELIX *(answering it)*: Yes, hello! . . Police-station number 82, brigadier Felix speaking. . . Yes? Very well. *(Hangs up.)* Georges and Gustave, you're to go to Number 143 Rue Vanves, and be snappy about it.

GEORGES *(putting on his things)*: Anything serious?

FELIX: No. It's just that somebody's informed on the person who distributed those leaflets. . . There's a woman mixed up in it. . .

(Georges and Gustave, putting on their capes and equipment, hurry out.)

SCENE 6

The same people, with the exception of Georges and Gustave. Felix is still writing his report.

MARCEL: God blast their souls! When will we see the end of this?

ALFRED: Not till the Germans are beaten.

MARCEL: It's a good thing the Russians are fighting them.

ALFRED: Yes, they're getting it hot from the Russians. After all those cock-and-bull stories we were told about them: their army would never be able to stand up against the first blow, the people were only waiting for a chance to rebel, and all the rest of it!

MARCEL: Do you listen to their radio? The workers, peasants, technicians and the government have all united in Russia.

ALFRED: If only our generals and rulers had shown the same mettle, France wouldn't have been under the Prussian heel today and we wouldn't have been robbed, starved and overwhelmed by swarms of locusts.

MARCEL: Look here, I did believe in all that glib talk Laval and his crowd went in for. And then all of a sudden I saw that the Boches were in on us as easy as cutting butter; they crossed France—the whole of France—from end to end in eighteen days. And I have seen how the Maginot Line was left unfinished and how we were left without airplanes and tanks; and how our army—the old army that fought at the Marne and Verdun—surrendered. . . How were we to account for all this? And now we see the Red Army, the army of peasants and workers, standing

[1] La Santé—one of the largest prisons in Paris.

firm, though Hitler has gathered all the forces of the Continent against them. How are we to account for that? I'll say this: bolshevism was represented to us as a sort of inferno, and Hitler as our saviour. And what if it turns out to be just the opposite? Our bourgeois papers did nothing but sing the praises of Hitler and Mussolini. In fascist countries all in the garden's rosy, here at home everything's as bad as it can be. Small wonder, then, that our officers had no heart to fight against people who had come to regenerate us! But you must understand, there's a man in Europe who has seen things in their proper light from the very beginning. It's Stalin. I've been thinking a great deal about him for some time now. And I often say to myself: "There is no doubt about it,—this is someone, this man: the great man of our time."

(A noise outside. Rebenbohnenschmutzler enters, followed by Georges and Gustave, who are leading a woman dressed like a factory-worker. Puymaigre is the last to come in).

SCENE 7

The scene and characters are the same, with the addition of the nazi, Georges, Gustave, Puymaigre and Georgette. Felix, Marcel and Alfred get up, take off their caps and stand at attention. Georgette can be heard inveighing against Puymaigre as she enters the room.

GEORGETTE: Oh, I know you only too well, you're a downright bad lot! It was you who arrested my husband and got him sent to a concentration camp. You've shown yourself up properly now, though. . . everyone can see what you are,—you're hand-in-glove with the Boche spies. You don't trouble to hide it any more. And why should you? After all, you're the bosses of France now. . . That was why you allowed those parasites to come here. . . You needed their guns so as to shoot at the people!

NAZI: Make her hold her tongue. . . I was present when the woman was arrested. . . She insulted this man (*pointing to Puymaigre*) and started straight away to accuse and abuse him. . . I shouldn't wonder if it isn't all a farce just to turn suspicion away from him, and they're in league with each other. . . However, we'll see. . . Question the woman!

FELIX *(to Georges)*: Here, make your report.

GEORGETTE: Well, this is a nice state of affairs! I'm sure! And you call yourself Frenchmen, do you? Rushing to obey the Boche's orders?

NAZI *(bellowing)*: Make her keep quiet!

FELIX *(without heat)*: Be quiet. It'll be all the better for you. . .

NAZI: Actually insulting the representatives of the army of occupation! Insulting the police in the execution of their duties! . . Take care! And you,—I want to see how you conduct this inquiry.

GEORGETTE: And this man wears a Croix de Guerre! He's one of the old guard combattants who fought in the last war! Aren't you ashamed to work for the murderers of your country?

GEORGES *(after several attempts to interrupt Georgette and drown her voice, while the nazi follows the scene with exclamations of rage and sarcasm)*: We were on duty near Number 143 Rue du Maine, when we noticed this woman accosting passers-by and slipping them these leaflets. It was dark, so she didn't see us coming up. When we were just on the point of arresting her, she tried to throw away the remaining leaflets. Here they are. And here's her handbag.

FELIX: That's all you have to say?

GEORGETTE *(in an undertone)*: Blackguard! Spy!

GEORGES *(quietly)*: That's all, brigadier.

FELIX *(to Gustave)*: And what have you to say?

GEORGETTE *(in an undertone)*: Wretches! Traitors to your own people!

GUSTAVE: I corroborate his evidence, brigadier.

FELIX *(to Georgette)*: Where did you get these leaflets?

GEORGETTE: A bit inquisitive aren't you?

FELIX *(patiently)*: Have you any more of them?

GEORGETTE: Go and have a look. You're too well fed by your new masters. Maybe it'll bring your weight down a bit.

FELIX: Where do you live?

GEORGETTE: Under anyone of the bridges.

FELIX: Very well. Don't trouble to think up anymore lies. *(Opens her handbag and empties the contents on the table. Rebenbohnenschmutzler pounces on them.)* Here's your bread-ration-card. . . your meat-card, your shoe-card, your clothes-card, your cheese-card, potato-card, rice-card, coffee-card, dried-vegetables-card, sugar-card, your passport. . . and your marriage license. Your name is Lhéritier, Germaine Alice Georgette, a married woman, you have had four children, two of whom are dead, and you live at Number 18 Rue Vercingétorix. . . Is that correct?

GEORGETTE: That's your business to know.

FELIX: Hand over all the papers you have about you.

GEORGETTE: I haven't any more.

FELIX: Never mind, you will be searched when you get to the cells. Where is your husband?

GEORGETTE: In a concentration camp, thanks to that sneak and spy over there. *(Looks at Puymaigre.)*

FELIX: What camp he is in?

GEORGETTE: I haven't heard anything from him for the last three months. He may be dead for all I know. Or perhaps he's been sent to Africa to build a railway through the Sahara, and is being worked to death there.

FELIX: What was he accused of?

GEORGETTE: You don't suppose they explained all that to me, do you? Do you suppose they even knew themselves what he was guilty of? They don't need to go to all that trouble when they want to get rid of a French worker.

FELIX: What was he?

GEORGETTE: An electrotechnician.

FELIX: What firm was he working for?

GEORGETTE: Well, find it out. That's your job, isn't it?

FELIX: Did he meddle with politics much?

GEORGETTE: Oh, no, he used to sing mass in chapel of a Sunday morning.

NAZI: How much longer are you going to allow this woman to ridicule you to your face, brigadier?

FELIX *(to Georgette)*: These comebacks of yours are a bit out of place here. I advise you to drop them.

GEORGETTE: But I was under the impression you were joking,—asking such silly questions.

FELIX: Did he go in for syndicalism?

GEORGETTE: Yes, he used to go round from house to house peddling pictures of Pétain and his bosom friend Hitler. *(The policemen laugh.)*

NAZI: She'll pay for every word! Yes, and you'll pay for laughing and thus encouraging her, I warn you!

FELIX: Where are your children?

GEORGETTE: You said yourself,—two are in the graveyard.

FELIX: And where are the other two?

GEORGETTE: The little one's with his grandparents in the country, or he would have died of starvation. These Boches have taken all we had

NAZI *(in an undertone)*: She'll pay for every word!

FELIX: And the other?

GEORGETTE: The elder, the girl is at home with me.

FELIX: According to your marriage certificate, she must be eleven?

GEORGETTE: Can't hide much from you, I should think.

FELIX *(to Georges)*: Go to her home and make a thorough search.

GEORGETTE *(startled)*: But my little girl will be there, she'll just have got home from school.

FELIX: Can't be helped.

GEORGETTE *(thoroughly alarmed now)*: But if she comes home and sees a policeman there instead of her mother, she'll get an awful fright, the poor little thing!

FELIX: Well, you shoulnd't have got yourself into this mess.

NAZI *(in honeyed tones)*: Perhaps this can be avoided, Madame, and you can save your dear little girl from the shock of seeing a police uniform. . . *(To Felix:)* Send the inspector from the Sûreté.

GEORGETTE *(her voice rising to a scream)*: What! That low filthy creature?

NAZI *(to Puymaigre)*: You heard what the woman said, inspector? Go to her house at once and *(in a threatening tone:)* see that you don't come back with empty hands. I'm warning you in your own interests. Here is a chance for you to prove your innocence. But mind you don't come back emp-ty-hand-ed!

(Curtain)

SECOND PICTURE

A worker's home, poor, but clean and tidy. Little Germaine is seated at the table under the lamp, doing her lessons. She hums cheerfully to herself and from time to time takes a bite out of a stale crust of bread, the peculiar flavour of which makes her pull a wry face. She hears a sound and looks towards the door with eager anticipation. A loud knocking makes her start. She sits motionless with fright. The knocking is repeated.

GERMAINE: Who's there? . . Who is it? *(Runs to the door and listens.)*

GRUFF VOICE: Madame Lhéritier?

GERMAINE: Who's there?

GRUFF VOICE: Does Madame Lhéritier live here?

GERMAINE: But who is it? Who are you?

GRUFF VOICE: Open the door!

GERMAINE: Mamma's out.

GRUFF VOICE: Open at once!

GERMAINE: I tell you Madame Lhéritier isn't at home.

GRUFF VOICE: Open in the name of the law!

GERMAINE: O-o-h, Mamma!

GRUFF VOICE: Open in the name of the law!

GERMAINE: Oh, oh! Mamma! . . I don't want to.

GRUFF VOICE: Open the door, or I'll break it down!

GERMAINE: O-oh! . . Ohoho! . . Papa! Papa!

GRUFF VOICE: Open the door, or you'll be put in prison!

GERMAINE *(she is trembling and her teeth are chattering with fear)*: Mamma! Mamma! What's happened to my mamma? Where's my mamma?

GRUFF VOICE: Well, open the door, and I'll tell you. That's what I've come for.

(The little girl draws the bolt, then rushes back to the bed and crouches there trembling. The door is opened with a dreadful, calculated slowness, and Puymaigre enters, closing it after him carefully and slowly. Silence. Puymaigre takes a good look round.)

PUYMAIGRE: Are you here all by yourself?

(The little girl nods asser and continues to stare at him with eyes dilated by fear.)

GERMAINE: My mamma? Where's my mamma?

PUYMAIGRE *(stares fixedly at her without moving)*: She's in prison. And if you don't do as I tell you, you'll go to prison, too.

GERMAINE *(in a low moaning voice)*: Oh, mamma, mamma! Oh, oh! *(She is too stunned with fear to cry yet.)*

PUYMAIGRE: Your mother has been arrested for distributing forbidden leaflets, very bad leaflets, in the streets.

GERMAINE *(springing to her feet, resolute and fierce as a little lioness all at once)*: It isn't true!

PUYMAIGRE *(seating himself and speaking in a good-natured, easy-going tone)*: Oh, yes, it's quite true. But she may be let go. . . She may be let out at once and come back to you before dinner-time. *(Germaine watches him tensely.)* The only thing is that you should help us. . . You can set your mamma at liberty. . . Do you know what she said? "My little girl," she said, "my little Germaine knows where the papers are. Go and tell her from me that she should show you where they are and give them to you."

GERMAINE *(shakes her pretty brown curls and says in a very low voice)*: It isn't true! She never said such a thing,—my mamma didn't. It isn't true!

PUYMAIGRE *(very gently)*: You know, my dear, I have a little girl like you, my little Gabrielle, I'm very fond of her, and I may never see her any more. . . So I don't want to deceive you. . . Germaine, I swear to you I didn't come here to deceive you, or to do your mamma any harm. But you have to do what I tell you and what your mother tells you.

GERMAINE *(almost screaming)*: It isn't true! I know it isn't true! You're telling lies! You're a police-spy! I know all about those spies. . . they're just a lot of lazy good-for-nothings, fascists, who are all out against the workers!

PUYMAIGRE *(getting up suddenly and speaking in a different tone)*: Very well. That'll do. You'll go to prison. You'll have to go to a reformatory. . . and you'll never get out of it till you're twenty-one. You'll never see your father and mother till then. . . Never! And your mamma will have to go to prison where she'll have nothing but bread and water for ten long years. . . And all because of you! Come, follow me! *(Goes towards her with an air of decision and tries to catch hold of her. She is too quick for him. At one bound she reaches the darkest corner of the room and from there watches him with burning eyes through the tangle of curls fallen over her face.)*

GERMAINE: I won't go! Don't touch me! Help, help! Mamma! Mamma!

PUYMAIGRE *(pulled up short)*: Don't scream like that, you little idiot!

(Germaine utters piercing screams for help. Sounds of hurrying footsteps on the staircase and voices outside. Then comes a knocking on the door.)

WOMEN'S VOICES: What's going on at the Lhéritier's? Who's that screaming? Germaine, is it you? Open the door!

PUYMAIGRE *(going towards the door and flinging it wide open, he sees a crowd of women. Shouts)*: Now then, what's all this? The police are here, can't you see? Don't meddle in what doesn't concern you. Go about your business! *(The women retire, muttering and grumbling, but evidently undecided.)* I don't want any nonsense from you, women, either, or this business may turn out badly for you as it did for the Lhéritier woman. Just go home and stay there. *(He shuts the door again and turns to Germaine.)* Now, you see, that's soon dealt with. They've all gone. You're alone. Will you listen to me and do as I tell you? If you tell me where your mamma has hidden the papers, then you won't go to prison

and your mamma will be home again this evening. *(Germaine, completely overcome, sits staring at him in silence.)* Come, little girl, make up your mind. Say where they are. Only tell me, nobody else will know. You will be a good child, and you'll save your poor mother. Tell me now. . . where are the leaflets?

GERMAINE: Will she come back? Will you really bring my mamma back? You aren't telling me a lie, are you?

PUYMAIGRE *(shrugging his shoulders)*: I've given you my word that she'll come back.

(Germaine hesitates a moment longer, then makes up her mind. Going up to the coat-rack, she pulls back the curtain that covers it, then some clothes, points to a valise, and with a sudden spring, like a terrified kitten, cowers back in her corner again.

Puymaigre pounces upon the valise, opens it, rummages in it, picks out a leaflet from a pile and scans it rapidly by the light of the lamp. He gives a nod of satisfaction, turns back to the valise, empties it carefully on the floor and, straightening himself, looks around him. His glance lights on a little iron stove in which the fire has gone out. He lifts the lid and, making sure that it is empty, takes great armfuls of the leaflets, shoves them into the stove, then closes the lid again. Twisting a few of the leaflets to make a firelighter, he strikes a match, thrusts the lighted torch through the little door in the stove and blows on the flame. A crackling comes from the stove, and he feeds the fire with the rest of the leaflets. When they are all gone, he gets up, gives the room another careful scrutiny and then goes up to the child.)

PUYMAIGRE: Swear there aren't any more of these papers here. . . You are sure there aren't any? Look out! If you're not telling me the truth, it'll be the reformatory for you and life-imprisonment for your mother. *(She shakes her head in the negative.)* Take care! Do you swear to me there aren't any more? *(She repeats the same movement.)* That's right. You're a very plucky little girl! Good-bye! *(Takes his umbrella under his arm and goes towards the door. When he reaches it, he hesitates a moment, turns back and lays a five-franc note on the table.)* I forgot. . . Your mamma told me to give you this. . . so that you could buy something for your dinner. . . before she comes back. . . *(Starts towards the door, but comes back again.)* Don't forget to clean out the stove properly and take the ashes out to the ashpit before you have your dinner. You mustn't forget that. *(He forces a mournful little smile as he looks back at the terror-stricken child, then goes out very quietly. While the curtain slowly descends, Germaine ventures out of her corner, takes the note he has left on the table, crumples it up into a ball and flings it at the door which has just closed upon him. Then she sinks down by the table, leans her head on her arms and bursts into a fit of sobbing.)*

GERMAINE: Mamma! Mamma!

(Curtain)

THIRD PICTURE

SCENE 1

The setting is the same as in the first picture. The characters are the same as at the close of the first picture, with the exception of Puymaigre. Georgette is sitting on a bench; she is sullen and angry, and there is something about her that reminds one of her little daughter in the previous picture.

NAZI *(in honeyed tones)*: Charming

little Frenchwoman, she'll have to clean the boots of the German masters. . . wash up their dishes. . . *(with a suggestive leer:)* make their beds. . . empty their chamber-pots. . . Pretty little French an-ti-fa-scist. . . Aha! Ha-ha-ha!

MARCEL *(in a low voice to Felix)*: If he doesn't stop it, I'll do something desperate.

GEORGETTE *(in a stifled voice)*: You're a monster! A fiend! A filthy low creature!

(Rebenbohnenschmutzler bursts out laughing. The telephone rings.)

FELIX *(at the telephone)*: Yes. Hello! This is brigadier Felix speaking from police-station Number 82. Hello! Yes. Just a minute. *(To Rebenbohnenschmutzler:)* Someone is asking for you, M. Assistant inspector. *(Hands him the receiver.)*

NAZI *(before putting it to his ear)*: The next time remember to address me in the third person. . . Say: "I have the honour to inform M. Assistant inspector-in-chief. . ." and so on. . . Do you hear? We don't want any more of these abominable French manners. *(At the telephone.)* Hello! . . Hier General-Unterinspektor, Doktor Hellmut Rebenbohnenschmutzler. . . Wer ruft? . . Ja. . . Ja. . . Schön! . . Gut! . . Ausserordentlich! Danke! . . Auf Wiedersehen! *(Hangs up the receiver and rubs his hands gleefully.)* Good! Good! Very good! Well, that's an end of your career in the Paris police, my friends! There's a new brigade being sent over by the new Prefect we appointed, to relieve you of your duties. Rear-admiral de Bard. . . a splendid policeman. . . a great friend of your admiral Darlan's. . . The whole of the French admiralty has found jobs in the police. . . Ha-ha-ha! Everything will be straightened out this afternoon. . . The men we appointed to take your places have been sent for already. . . That's an excellent Prefect! Your successors will be here in ten minutes. And then we'll wish you good evening, Messieurs. . . But we'll see something of each other yet. . . The car that brings them here will take you away. . . to a nice little country house specially kept up by the authorities for hotheads and. . . daring spirits of your type. . . Ha-ha!

(The telephone rings.)

FELIX *(answering it)*: This is police-station Number 82, brigadier Felix speaking. . . Ja. . . Just a minute. . . Ja, ja! *(To the nazi:)* Someone is asking for M. Assistant inspector-in-chief.

NAZI *(at the telephone)*: Ja. . . Hier General-Unterinspektor, Doktor Hellmut. . . Ja? Wer ruft? . . Ach, so? *(Straightens himself and stands at attention.)* So? . . So? . . Ich danke. . . Auf Befehl! *(Hangs up.)* Ah! Aha-ha! *(Rubs his hands again.)* That's news. . . pleasant news for you to hear. . . or perhaps not so pleasant. . . Much I care. . . *(He looks slowly and triumphantly around at their faces.)* Another attempt has been made on the life of gallant German officers in a. . . night-café. . . in Montmartre.

(At this moment Puymaigre enters. He pauses in the doorway. At sight of him Georgette sits up straighter on her bench and stares fixedly at him with eyes that burn feverishly in her deadly-pale face. Rebenbohnenschmutzler notices nothing and goes on talking.)

SCENE 2

The characters are the same as at the close of the last scene.

NAZI: Yes, one of your dogs of de-Gaullists. . . threw a bomb. . . Some of our brave officers. . . the officers of the army of occupation. . . have been killed. . . Think of it! Ger-man of-ficers killed by a cur of a Frenchman! . . But don't imagine that you will get off lightly with this. . . Our Supreme Command has taken the necessary steps. . . Beginning from tomorrow, the laws

that have been in force for the last three days in the XVIIIth ward will be extended all over Paris, all over the Department of the Seine. Curfews will be imposed from five o'clock in the afternoon. . . Did you hear me properly? From five o'clock! All the cafés, restaurants, cinemas, theatres will be closed at four-thirty. . . The underground, the railway stations, will be closed at five. . . Every Frenchman or Frenchwoman caught in the street between five in the evening and five in the morning will be shot at once. . . without any explanation whatsoever. . . Aha? How do you like that? You thought you could play at throwing bombs, did you? We'll teach you, my young friends! *(Notices Puymaigre at this moment and goes up to him.)* Ah! So you're here. . . Hand over those leaflets!

PUYMAIGRE *(standing at attention, his umbrella hanging from his wrist and pressed close to his side like a sabre)*: M. Assistant inspector-in-chief, I have the honour to inform you that the search I was sent upon yielded no results. . . Though the room was submitted by me, with the assistance of the little Lhéritier girl, to the most thorough search, not a leaflet or a paper of any description could be found.

(Georgette relaxes and sinks down with a deep and very audible sigh. Marcel and Alfred support her on either side and seat her on the bench.)

NAZI *(bellowing)*: You dare to tell me such a thing? Dog! Dog! I say! The woman herself did not dare hope for such a thing! Her feelings gave her away just now. . . and, incidentally, you! You liar! Those leaflets! What have you done with them?

PUYMAIGRE: I can only repeat what I have told M. Assistant inspector-in-chief.

NAZI: You lie! You lie! You dog of a Frenchman! Take that! *(Strikes Puymaigre.)*

PUYMAIGRE: Well, that's the end of your tom foolery, M. Assistant inspector! *(Fires several times through the pocket of his coat. The German falls.)*

NAZI: Ach! *(Dies.)*

FELIX: Oh, my God,—there'll be the devil to pay! *(Runs to the door and bolts it.)*

PUYMAIGRE: Yes. . . this. . . this swine opened my eyes. . . opened my eyes for me. . . I have been. . . lower than the dirt. Yes, Madame, you were right. But. . . that's all over. . . Now I can see what they're intending to make of France. . . what they're going to do with my country. . . I've realized at last what a ghastly escapade I was sharing in. . . But, oh, what a fool I've been! The fascists and fascism,—it's all clear to me now. . . *(Turns to Georgette.)* Go home at once, Madame! The leaflets—forgive me, but I couldn't do otherwise—they're destroyed. . . Your daughter is a plucky little girl,—a real Frenchwoman. If all the antifascists are like her, and you and your husband, then I have been an out-and-out scoundrel! The lowest of scoundrels! Forgive me, Madame! *(Stands with bent head before Georgette, who was roused out of her horror-stricken stupor by his revolver-shots.)*

GEORGES: Come, that's enough melodrama for one day. Our successors will be here in five minutes. And we've got to get His Excellency the inspector out of the way. We've no time to waste.

GEORGETTE: Thank you, thank you, gentlemen! *(Goes out, and they bolt the door after her.)*

SCENE 3

The same characters as in the last scene, except for Georgette. Marcel and Georges drag out the body of the nazi by the legs and throw it down into the coal-cellar.

MARCEL: Down with you, M. Assistant inspector! Down among the

coals! But before we shut you in and leave you, permit us to apologize for the rough treatment and let us avail ourselves with a couple of little trifles that we find very handy in times like these.

(They get themselves very dirty with coal-dust as they drag out hand-machine-guns, automatics, revolvers,—a whole arsenal of different kinds of weapons.)

SCENE 4

The same characters as in the last scene. Alfred, working hard, addresses Puymaigre.

ALFRED: Aha! I can see you're scandalized, inspector! But coal-cellars and lavatories are the best hiding-places. People don't fancy soiling their gloves to go and search in them.

MARCEL: These little guns of ours were well-oiled and just biding their time.

GEORGES: Even the Germans couldn't find them.

GUSTAVE: Oh, if they'd get their dirty hands on them!

(As each one speaks, he pops his head out of the cellar, and each head is blacker than the former.)

MARCEL: What are you doing, Georges? You might lend a hand here.

GEORGES: I'm decorating the room a bit for our successors. *(He has got hold of the brush used for tarring the mouldings and lintels of the doors, and is painting in enormous letters on one of the walls the following legend: "We, patriots of the French police, warn Hitler's hirelings that the day of reckoning is near. Beware of the hour of victory! Victory! V.")*

FELIX *(emerging out of the cellar, followed by the rest)*: And now let's see. I take it we've all done our share of helping our fellow-countrymen to escape and join de Gaulle's army. Now it's our turn. These little toys *(starts to pack up a machine-gun)* will give us a chance to travel more or less in comfort. *(To Gustave:)* You're going to stay here, I suppose?

GUSTAVE: Yes, I'm afraid I wouldn't do for de Gaulle.

ALFRED: You prefer to hang on here? So as to give us away?

GUSTAVE: What makes you think that? Somebody has to stay and carry on with the work here.

GEORGES: I'm staying, too, Gustave, I'm staying. So look out, don't let us down. I'm keeping an eye on you.

GUSTAVE: What an idea! The inspector said that his eyes had been opened this evening, and I can say the same. Anybody would after a bust-up like this. *(The others are busy collecting the weapons and tying up the kit-bags.)*

FELIX: Well, it won't be any too easy for us, but it's going to be pretty hard for you.

GEORGES: Don't you worry.

MARCEL: I say, time's nearly up. We ought to be doing a bunk.

FELIX: Just a minute! What about the reports of the inquiries?

GEORGES: Never mind them, Gustave will see to them. Clear out quick!

FELIX *(throwing the report-book to Gustave, who catches it)*: Here they are! *(Gustave tears up the book and flings it into the fire.)*

FELIX: We'll go out through the little door.

PUYMAIGRE *(rousing himself)*: Let's be off!

FELIX: Good-bye, old chaps! We'll be seeing you soon. Good luck!

GUSTAVE: The same to you, brigadier!

GEORGES: And good luck to you, boys!

ALFRED: Cheerio, we'll be back soon with tanks and planes, and I don't know what not.

MARCEL: Good-bye! There are only five of us going out, but there'll be five hundred thousand of us coming in.

ALFRED: Long live the letter V!

PUYMAIGRE: It's a duel to the death between France and Hitler.

GEORGES: And for us the duel is

still going on. Inspector, I hadn't a very high opinion of you at one time, but today. . .

(Puymaigre goes out with the others through a hidden exit.)

SCENE 5

Georges and Gustave. Georges is industriously painting the last letters of the writing on the wall.

GEORGES: Listen, I have a grenade stowed away behind the library. You used to be sergeant in the regulars, didn't you? Bring it to me, and hang it on that little door. I'll manage the rest. We'll meet at the usual time in the back-room of the "Grunting Pig." You'll come through the yard. Change into civies first, of course. . . Now, come on, get busy!

(Gustave nods assent, does as his comrade has told him and goes out through the little secret door.)

SCENE 6

Georges alone. He looks about him with satisfaction.

GEORGES: I believe they're coming. It's high time. The bolt will keep them out a second. *(A knocking at the outer door is heard.)* Devil take them, what a hurry they're in to die! *(Goes up to the little door and, keeping it open with his foot, sets the timing-apparatus of the explosive grenade hanging there. Then he passes through the door, closing it carefully behind him.)* Welcome to our successors!

SCENE 7

The stage is not deserted for very long. The main door yields at last to blows from without, and the two German gendarmes seen in the first picture burst in. They are purple in the face and are flourishing revolvers. After them comes a whole brigade of fascist police.

The writing on the wall and the letter "V" make them still more furious. They look about for their inspector and the French police, but see no one. Alarm is apparent on all the faces. One of them, intent on examining the place, comes upon the little door and accidentally touches it. The curtain comes down swiftly just at the moment when the explosion is heard.

MAXIM GORKY

(March 1868 — June 1936)

MAXIM GORKY

Tales from Italy*

1. CHILDREN

On the little square in front of the railway station in Genoa a dense crowd has gathered. Workers predominate in it, though among them one can see quite well dressed and well-fed people. The members of the municipality stand first and foremost with the heavy, silk-embroidered town banner waving over their heads; near it flutter the multicoloured pennons of the workers' organizations. Golden tassels, fringes and cords glisten, spear-tipped flagstaffs are sparkling, silks rustling, and the droning hum of the solemn assembly sounds like a chorus singing in an undertone. Above the crowd, on a tall pedestal, towers the marble figure of Columbus, that dreamer who suffered much for his idea, but who triumphed because he believed in it. Even now he seems to be looking down at the people and murmuring with his marble lips: "Only those win who have faith."

At his feet around the pedestal the musicians have placed their brass trumpets, and in the sun the brass shines like burnished gold.

The heavy marble building of the station stands in a concave semicircle, stretching its wings out on both sides as if it wanted to embrace the people. The heavy panting of the steamers, the muffled sound of the water screw working under water, the clang of chains, loud whistles and shouts come from the port. It is still on the square, the air is stifling and everything around is bathed in the hot rays of the sun.

Women, with flowers in their hands, stand on the balconies and look out of the windows, and beside them the small figures of festively attired children also resemble flowers.

With a loud whistle an engine rushes in to the station, a thrill passes through the crowd, several crumpled hats fly up into the air like big black birds, the musicians grasp their trumpets, some grave-looking elderly men step forward, preening themselves and facing the throng begin to say something, waving their hands to right and left.

Slowly, with great difficulty, the crowd makes way clearing a wide passage to the street.

"Whom are they meeting?"

"The children from Parma."

There is a strike in Parma. The bosses don't give in, it's difficult for the workers, and so having gathered all their kids already sick from hunger, they have sent them over to their comrades in Genoa. From behind the columns of the station-building a procession of small folks is coming along in excellent order. They are miserably dressed and look quite shaggy in their tatters, shaggy like a lot of queer little animals. On they march, holding each other by the hand, five in a row. They are very small, covered with dust, and they look tired. Their faces are serious,

* The *Tales from Italy* were written by Gorky in 1911—1913 on the Island of Capri.

but their eyes shine, bright and clear, and when to welcome them the band starts playing the Garibaldi anthem, a smile of pleasure ripples over their wan, sharp, hungry little faces.

The crowd greets these "people of the future" with a deafening shout, the banners bend low before them, the brass trumpets roar, deafening and blinding the kids, who are somewhat stunned by such a reception: for a moment they hesitate, but then they all draw themselves up erect: they seem to have suddenly grown taller, to have blended into one single body, and with hundreds of voices but with a sound exhaled as by one bosom, they shout:

"Evviva Italia!"

"Long live young Parma!" thunders the crowd toppling over them.

"Evviva Garibaldi!" call out the children, and the greyish mass of them wedges into the crowd and is lost in it.

Like fluttering white birds pocket-handkerchiefs wave from the windows and roofs of the houses, loud, joyous shouts are heard, and bunches of flowers shower down on people's heads.

Everything around has taken on a festive look, everything is alive; the grey marble itself seems to be blossoming with bright spots of light and colour.

Banners wave, hats and flowers fly up, small children's heads suddenly appear over the heads of the grown-up people, little brown paws catch at the flying flowers or wave their greetings, and in the air the mighty, incessant call keeps thundering:

"Evviva il Socialismo!"

"Evviva Italia!"

Nearly all the children have now been picked up from the ground, they are sitting astride on people's shoulders; stern-looking, broad-chested, moustached men hug them. The music is scarcely to be heard through all this din, laughter and shouting. Women are diving down among the throng to take under their care the last of the new-comers, they call out to one another:

"Are you taking two, Annita?"

"Yes, you too?"

"And one for lame Margherita. . ."

Joyous excitement reigns everywhere. On all the faces around you see that there is a great festivity going on; people's eyes are moist and kind, and here and there the strikers' children are already munching chunks of bread.

"In our times one did not think of such a thing," says an old man with a bird-like nose and a black cigar squeezed between his teeth.

"And it's so simple. . ."

"Yes, simple and wise."

The old man took the cigar out of his mouth, looked at the tip of it, sighing, and shook the ashes off. Then catching sight of two of the little Parma mites, evidently brothers, he made a threatening face at them, bristled up. They watched him quite gravely. He pulled his hat over his eyes and stretched out his arms; the children pressed close to one another, frowning and moving slightly back; then suddenly the old fellow squatted down on the ground and crowed out a shrill, artistic cock-a-doodle-doo. The children went into fits of laughter, beating their small bare heels against the stone pavement in their delight. The old man then stood up, adjusted his hat and with the feeling that he had done all that was required of him, tottered away on his feeble old legs.

A hunchbacked grizzled old woman with the face of a witch and prickly grey hairs sticking out all over her bony chin, is standing at the pedestal of the Columbus statue, weeping and rubbing her swollen red eyes with a corner of her faded shawl. Dark and ugly, she seems so strangely lonesome amidst all this excited crowd of people. . .

With a light dancing gait a black-

haired Genoese woman trips merrily by, leading by the hand a little man of about seven in wooden shoes and a big grey hat that reaches down to his shoulders. He is tossing his little head, trying to throw off the hat on the nape of his neck, but it keeps slipping down over his face; the woman seizes hold of it and waves it high above his head; she is singing a song, and the little fellow looks at her with up-turned face; he is all smiles; then he begins to hop trying to get at the hat. And both he and the woman disappear.

A tall man with huge bare arms, wearing a leather apron, is carrying a little, grey mouse-like girlie of six on his shoulders and saying to a woman who is walking beside him and leading by the hand a boy with fiery-coloured hair:

"You see? If such a thing takes root, it will be mighty hard to overcome us, won't it?"

And boisterously, loudly, triumphantly he laughs, and tossing up his little burden into the blue air shouts:

"Evviva Parma-a!"

People are leaving, leading and carrying the children away with them; there is nothing left on the square but withered flowers, torn sweetmeat wrappers, a merry group of facchini (porters) and above them the noble figure of the man who discovered the New World.

And from the streets as out of enormous tubes joyously fly the gleeful voices of the people who are marching to greet a New Life.

2. MOTHER

One could go on speaking about mothers for ever.

For several weeks the town had been encircled with a tight ring of the enemy's mail-clad troops. At night-time watch-fires were lighted, and out of the darkness they seemed to be observing the town walls with their many blood-red eyes; they blazed malignantly, and these keen, wakeful lights evoked many gloomy forebodings among the inhabitants of the besieged city.

From the town walls they saw the enemies' noose tighten around them, they saw their black shadows moving against the fires, they heard the neighing of their well-fed horses, the clang of arms, loud laughter and the merry songs of people sure of their victory. And what can be harder to hear than the laughter and songs of one's foe?

The enemy had thrown the bodies of the dead in the stream that supplied the city with water, they had burnt out the vines around the walls, trampled down the fields, destroyed the orchards; the city now was open on all sides, and nearly every day the cannon and muskets of the foe showered a hail of iron and lead on it.

Detachments of half-starved soldiers worn out with fighting trudged gloomily along the narrow streets; from the windows of the houses came the moans of the wounded, the shrieks of the delirious, the prayers of women and the weeping of children. People spoke in subdued voices, under their breath, stopping each other in the middle of a sentence to listen tensely and to make sure whether the foe was not starting the assault.

Life became especially unendurable at nightfall, when in the reigning silence the moaning and crying increased and grew more distinct, when out of the gorges of the distant mountains blue-black shadows crawled down and, hiding the enemy's camp, moved towards the half-demolished city walls, and the moon appeared above the dark jags of the mountains, looking like a lost shield bearing scars made by sword blows.

Not even expecting help, worn out with toil and hunger, losing hope with every new day, the people gazed in fear and dismay at

this moon, at the mountain jags, at the black mouths of the ravines, at the noisy camp of the foe. Everything reminded them of approaching death, and not a single star would shine to bring them consolation. They were afraid to light the houses at night, the streets were plunged in darkness, and in this darkness, like a fish in the depths of a river, a woman wrapped in a black mantle moved along silently.

When people met her they would ask one another:

"Is that she?"

"It is she!"

And they would hide in the niches under the gates, or bending their heads low they would hurry silently past her. The chiefs of the patrol warned her sternly:

"Again you are in the street, monna Marianna? Mind, you may be killed, and nobody will seek the guilty one."

Then she would stand up erect and wait, but the patrol always passed by, not daring or disdaining to touch her; armed people would avoid her as if she were a corpse, and again she would remain alone in the dark, and again silent and alone, she would move on somewhere, passing from street to street, silent and dark, as if she were the incarnation of all the calamities of the town. And all around, as if tracking her, mournful sounds crept up: moans, weeping, prayers and the sullen voices of the soldiers who had lost all hope of victory.

A citizen and a mother, she thought of her son and of her fatherland: her merry, pitiless, handsome son was at the head of the people who were destroying her city; but recently she had looked at him with pride as at a precious gift offered by her to her country, as at a kindly power born from her to be a help to the people of her town, that nest where she herself was born, where she had given birth to him and fostered him. With hundreds of indissoluble fibres her heart seemed bound to the ancient rocks from which her ancestors had built the houses and erected the walls of this town, to the earth in which lay the bones of her blood-relations, to the legends, ballads and hopes of her people. And now her heart was bemoaning the being who was the nearest and dearest to it; and when on the scales of this heart she weighed out her love for her son and her love for her city, she could not discern which had more weight and which of them was lighter.

Thus she walked at night in the streets, and many of her friends, not recognizing her, grew frightened and took this dark figure for the embodiment of death which seemed so near to everyone; but those who knew her silently backed away from the mother of a traitor.

Yet once in a remote corner by the town wall she saw another woman: kneeling beside a corpse, motionless as if she herself were but a piece of clay, she was praying with her sorrowful face raised to the stars, and above her head, on the wall, the sentries were exchanging remarks in hushed voices, and their armour grated against the stone of the crenels. The mother of the traitor asked:

"A husband?"

"No."

"Brother?"

"A son. My husband was killed thirteen days ago; this one—today."

And rising from her kneeling posture, the mother of the dead man said with humble resignation:

"The Madonna sees everything, knows everything, and I am grateful to her."

"But what for?" asked the first of the two women; and the other answered:

"Now that he has perished with honour, fighting for his country, I may confess that I was afraid for him; he was giddy, he loved to lead a joyous, reckless life, and I feared that for its sake he would betray his town as did Marianna's son, that foe of God and humanity, the leader of our enemies;

let him be accursed, and cursed be the womb that bore him! . . ."

Burying her face in her hands, Marianna walked away, and on the next morning she presented herself before the defenders of the city and said:

"Either kill me for having a son who has become your foe, or open the gate for me and I shall go to him!"

They answered:

"You are a human being, and your country must be dear to you: your son is as much a foe to you as he is to everyone of us."

"I am his mother, I love him and feel guilty of his having become what he now is!"

Then they began to take counsel with one another as to what they should do with her, and they decided thus:

"Truly we may not kill you for the sins of your son, we know that you could not have prompted him to commit these dreadful sins, and we know that you must suffer. But the city has no need of you even as a hostage, your son does not take care of you, we believe that the devil has forgotten you, so this is your punishment if you find that you have deserved it! And it seems to us this is more terrible than death!"

"Yes," she answered, "it is more terrible!"

They opened the gate before her, let her out of the town, and for a long time they watched her from the top of the wall, and saw her treading her native soil soaked with the blood shed by her son: she was walking slowly, painfully dragging her feet over this soil, bowing down before the bodies of the defenders of the town, kicking broken war-arms aside disdainfully: mothers hate weapons of assault, admitting only those that serve to defend life.

She walked as if carrying hidden under her mantle a cup full of a liquid which she was afraid to spill; her figure grew smaller and smaller. And to those who were watching her from the wall it seemed that together with her their own despondency and hopelessness were leaving them.

They saw that she stopped halfway and throwing back the cape of her mantle stood for some time, gazing at the town; whilst over there, in the enemies' camp, they noticed her standing thus alone in middle of the field, and four figures, black as herself, slowly and cautiously approached her.

They came up and asked her who she was and where she was going.

"Your leader is my son," she said, and none of the soldiers had any misgivings. They walked beside her and praised the cleverness and courage of her son; she listened to them, proudly holding up her head, she did not wonder: such was her son and such he should be!

And now she stood before the man whom she knew nine months before the day of his birth, whom she had always felt to be within her heart: clothed in silks and velvet, he stood before her, his sword studded with precious stones. Everything was as it should be. He was as she had often seen him in her dreams: rich, famous and beloved.

"Mother!" he was saying, kissing her hands, "you have come to me, this means you have understood me, and tomorrow I shall take that cursed town!"

"In which you were born," she reminded him.

Drunk with his exploits, mad in his thirst for still greater glory, he went on with the daring eagerness of youth:

"I was born in the world and for the world, to strike it with amazement! I spared this town for your sake, it is like a splinter in my foot, it hinders me from moving on to fame as fast as I should like to. But now, tomorrow, I shall destroy the den of these pig-headed people!"

"Where every stone knows you and remembers you as a child," said she.

"Stones are dumb if man does not make them speak; let mountains speak of me, that is what I desire!"

"Yes, but the people?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, I remember about them, mother! They too are necessary to me, for only in the memory of people are heroes immortal!"

She said:

"Only that man is a hero who creates life despite death, who conquers death! . ."

"No!" he retorted. "The glory of a man who destroys cities is not less than that of the men who erect them. Consider only: we are not sure whether it was Eunias or Romulus who built Rome, but everyone knows of Alaricus and other heroes who demolished that city. . ."

"Which outlived all those names," his mother reminded him.

Thus did he talk to her till sunset; she scarcely interrupted his wild speeches; lower and lower sank her proud head.

A mother creates, she watches and defends, and in her presence to speak of destroying means to oppose her. He knew this not, and nor did he understand the very purpose of her life. A mother will always oppose death. The hand that brings death into the dwellings of people is hateful and alien to mothers her son did not see this, blinded as he was by the cold lustre of glory, which kills the heart.

He did not know that a mother is a being as clever and pitiless as she is fearless in everything that concerns life, which she, the mother, creates and defends. She was sitting in a drooping posture, and through an opening in the rich tent of the leader she could see the town where she had first experienced the sweet thrill of conception and the painful convulsions of the birth of a child, the child who now wanted only to destroy.

The crimson rays of the sun seemed to be pouring blood over the walls and towers of the city, the window panes shone with an evil-boding glow, the whole city looked as though gashed with wounds, and from those wounds the red life-blood was slowly oozing. Yet a little later the town began to turn black like a corpse, and the stars that shimmered above it looked like funereal candles. She saw what was going on there in the dark abodes, where they were afraid by lighting a fire to attract the enemy's attention, in the dusky streets full of the smell of corpses and the muffled whispering of people awaiting death; she saw all. The things so familiar and dear to her were there, quite close, silently awaiting her decision, and she felt she was the mother of all the people in the town.

From the black mountain tops clouds were descending into the valleys, and like winged steeds they flew to the doomed city.

"Maybe we will storm it this very night, if the night is dark enough," said her son. "It is not handy to kill when the sun looks you straight in the eyes and the glittering of the arms blinds them, there are always many mishits then," he said examining his sword.

His mother said to him:

"Come to me, lay your head on my breast and repose on it thinking of the days when as a child you were so merry and kind and everybody loved you."

He obeyed her, he laid his head on her lap and closed his eyes saying:

"I love only Fame, and you for having borne me such as I am."

"And women?" she said, bending down over him.

"There are many of them, and one is soon bored by them, as by everything that is too sweet."

She asked him for the last time:

"So you don't want to have any children?"

"What for? That they should be killed? Someone like me would kill

them, and that would be painful to me, and then I should have grown too old and weak to avenge them."

"You are beautiful but barren like lightning," she said with a sigh.

He answered smiling:

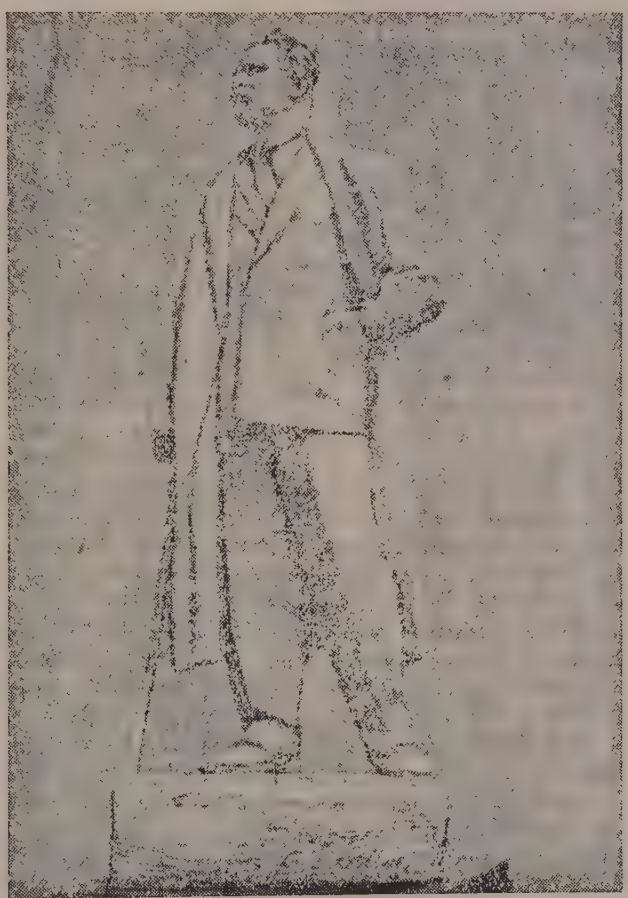
"Yes, like lightning. . ."—and fell asleep on his mother's breast as a child might.

Then, muffling him up in her cloak, she drove a knife into his heart, and with a start he died instantly: she knew right well where beat the heart of her son.

And thrusting the body off her lap to the feet of the amazed sentry, she said, turning her face to the city:

"As a citizen, I have done everything I could do for my country; as a mother, I remain with my son! It is too late for me to bear another one, my life is useless!"

And with the same knife still warm with his blood, her own blood, she struck her breast, and this time, too, she did not miss the mark: it is easy to touch a heart when it is aching.



Sculpture by I. Shadr

Alexei Maximovich Gorky

1

It is difficult to write reminiscences of this remarkable man, one of the greatest of our contemporarjes. One wants to bring back to mind his particular tones of voice, his particular way of speaking, his smile and his gait.

There was something inimitable about him, something that belonged to him alone. But wherein lay this unique quality, it is by no means easy to define. Gorky both resembled and at the same time differed from everyone else.

One recognized in him a multitude of Russian people who were in no respect like each other. Now he was the old baker sitting down for a minute's rest, now the professor eyeing his young students severely over his spectacles.

And withal he always remained himself, and himself alone.

His was a subtle and at the same time simple personality, varying at various period of his life, but always remaining essentially unchanged.

2

The literary profession is one that is often apt to alter people.

Into a circle of writers sometimes comes a man with fresh material and ideas, with a character of his own, with a curious biography; and in a few years time he is unrecognizable. In fact, it would seem sometimes as though he must have been born and bred in an editorial office or in a writers' club.

Of fellow-writers like these Gorky used to speak with vexation and bitterness.

There was no surprising these people with anything, he would say. Actually, they had no real love of literature and no faith in it. They still wrote things, now and again, but they were quite incapable of reading. What others besides themselves had written, failed to arouse in them even the slightest interest.

Alexei Maximovich himself was a professional literary man in the highest sense of the word. But he was never the slave of his profession. This man, whose name was for millions synonymous with the word "writer," bore much less resemblance in his appearance and ways to a professional literary man than did very many of those young people who were crossing the threshold of an editorial office for the first time in their lives. He was a passionate reader,

such as is rarely found among those who themselves write books. Every new page he turned with that same burning curiosity with which he once turned the pages of the books in the black trunk belonging to Smurov, the ship's cook,—astonishing antique books with astonishing titles like: *Memoirs of Artillerymen*, or *Homer's Edifying Precepts*.

When Gorky at sixty emerged from his study in Moscow or the Crimea, emerged for a few minutes to read aloud in his somewhat husky voice some remarkable passage in a manuscript or a book, he was, as far as essentials were concerned, that same lad who nearly half-a-century before had avidly thumbed with floury fingers the pages of books in a Kazan bakery.

He read aloud, and his voice quivered with the pleasurable emotion or hidden laughter.

"A serious writer this, a capable literary man," he would declare, and it was evident that these words held for him the same weight and gravity they had had in his young days.

And this was after so many years of literary work.

3

It is easiest of all to call him to mind in his study, at the high spacious desk on which the books and manuscripts, pens and sharpened pencils were arranged,—not with pedantic precision, but ready in battle array.

Such was the writer's workshop.

Here, at this desk which always seemed the same, whether it was in Little Nikitskaya Street in Moscow, in the country house in Gorki or in Sorrento by the window looking out on Vesuvius,—Gorky spent the greater part of the day.

No one in the house knew exactly what he might be engaged on at the moment,—a novel, a play, the perusal of the magazines and books received by the last post, the replies to his innumerable correspondents, or the devising of a plan of geological and geographical publications for children.

For long hours at a stretch he remained alone, but these were the times when he actually communed with the whole world. No wonder that when he came out after his work into the dining-room it seemed as though he had just returned from a long eventful journey rich in events, acquaintances and adventures.

Gorky could work with close concentration, could preserve his working hours intact and fill them with a variety of fruitful occupations—the work of a writer, editor, critic, social worker, teacher and reader.

Here, in his study, he lived the most intensive life, but he never resembled a bookish, dry-as-dust student, cut off from the world.

Now he rises from his place at the desk and opens the window. And it appears that he knows every bird-note and can predict the weather from the clouds on the horizon. When he picks up the smallest thing, it seems to feel that it is lying on the palm of a master, an appraiser, one who understands the value of things. Until recent years the hands of this man retained the memory of common manual labour.

"He had a beauty and a plastic grace all his own," Stanislavsky said, recalling how young Gorky, seeing him off at Yalta, stood leaning carelessly against a pile of sacks full of goods.

When he was elderly, Gorky lost, of course, his former lightness and mobility. But even then he could stoop or squat down very easily whenever he had to tidy away the twigs and branches prepared for a camp-fire or find a book on the lowest shelf of the bookcase.

He had that ease, that careless freedom of movement, which is acquired by people who have worked much

and roved much about the world in their time.

4

Whether he was in the Crimea, Moscow, Sorrento or Gorki, Alexei Maximovich was always the same. Wherever he was, the pulse of life, varied and wonderful, beat high; there people talked of politics, of literature and science, as of things near and indispensable to them; thither flocked literary men with manuscripts ponderous or light.

With regard to his main interests, his principal strivings, Gorky was firm and constant.

Yet I have never known a man who when necessary could change so markedly, so resolutely leave the path traversed as Gorky could.

Scores of literary men attempted to look like him,—in the way they wore their hair, their clothes, their pseudonyms, their style of writing,—while he himself easily left the things of yesterday behind him.

He cut short the long hair that used to fall in straight locks over the temples, and took to wearing an ordinary jacket instead of a Russian shirt.

In the same way he departed from his early style of writing which was rather exalted and solemn, and made it strikingly simple and severe. For a book like *The Mother* he already felt no need of the elaborateness he had been fond of in his youth.

Gorky never valued the success he had attained.

He gave up the literary manner and genre that had brought him fame if he found that they were no longer appropriate for the tasks that confronted him.

With every year of his life these tasks became more complex and responsible.

The herald and partisan of the revolution, he became its trained champion.

The romantic author of *Makar Chudra* and *Old Granny Izergil*, he became one of the greatest of writers of the realistic school.

He saw life as it was, but that did not shake his belief that it should and could become just, pure and wise.

Almost from boyhood he had felt that life needed to be made all over again, and finally he found and chose the only path that leads to the building of the world anew.

5

Gorky's optimistic attitude to life, an attitude that was patent in every action and every word he spoke or wrote, was purchased at a great price, and that was why it was so steadfast and unwavering. His mature romanticism feared no reality, not even the harshest and gloomiest.

His observations became deeper and more genuine as the years went by.

While his early works, the narrative-poems, were written on the road, during his wanderings through the steppe and on the sea-coasts, his later writings were filled to the brim with the things of everyday, with an exact and exhaustive knowledge of Russian life, people, towns and hamlets, and therefore these, too, seemed to merge into one vast travel-diary, the second cycle of his wanderings through Russia.

And even during his last years, when he did very little roving, his life never ceased to be the life of the road, full of encounters, new acquaintances, new observations.

From all parts of our country people came to Gorky's house and brought him stories of themselves, their comrades and their work.

Up to the last moment of his life he was eager to know what was going on outside,—in the country, in the world,—and to receive the latest bulletins from the battle-field known as life.

SAMUEL MARSHAK

The Piebald Nag

With the thickening of the blue evening dusk outside, morning begins for the fliers and pilots of the bomber command regiment.

In the day-time they have slept their fill, they have recuperated their strength, and now their faces are fresh and ruddy, their voices and movements calm and assured. With the greatest attention they listen to Major Zaykin who gives them instructions before they start on a raid.

Zaykin speaks softly, unhurriedly. His thick hair, brushed back from his forehead in such a way that somewhat resembles a pair of folded wings, his subtle movements, soft voice, his whole appearance reminds one of a night bird sweeping noiselessly on swift wings through a forest thicket.

Night raids are Zaykin's element. Under cover of the dusk his plane reached Bucharest and appeared quite suddenly above the Rumanian oil derricks, above German aerodromes, tank columns, military trains and ordnance stores. Sixty times he flew over the remotest parts of the enemy's rear. He was met with showers of anti-aircraft and machine-gun shells and bullets. Searchlights felt for him with their clinging tentacles, trying to catch him, blind him and make a target of his plane. Yet he always managed to fly on and on to his goal, dropping bombs there and escaping safe and sound. Fighter-planes darted after him, but Major Zaykin vanished in the dark.

The light, spacious cabin in the forefront of the craft is the domain of Major Minkevich. Here you may see scores of most complicated instruments, that help the navigator to direct the aircraft through the densest darkness and clouds.

Zaykin sees neither the darkness nor the clouds, he sees nothing but the luminous throbbing hands on the dial.

"Three degrees starboard," comes the confident steady voice of Minkevich over the microphone, and the plane turns to the right. Never has Minkevich made the slightest error.

Zaykin and Minkevich have always returned safely from their raids. Never yet were they forced to jump from a burning craft, or to land on tree tops, or to fly home with only one motor working. Having achieved sixty night raids, they never got a single wound or even the slightest scratch.

"Have you had a lucky flight?" their comrades would ask them.

"Oh, it was very much as usual. Nothing to write home about."

One of the foreign airmen having heard that during their sixty flights they never once were wrecked or wounded or had any trouble whatever, inquired in quite a business-like way:

"And what is their mascot?"

He was told that Soviet pilots never had recourse to mascots, not being superstitious.

"Oh, that's quite impossible!" he insisted. "So many night raids, and not one accident! Zaykin and Minkevich must surely have a mascot of some sort. I am lucky too, but then you see, I always take my piebald nag along with me. . . It's just a kiddie's toy made of rags; but it's a great help! I once forgot to take it, and well sure enough there was an accident. No doubt Zaykin and Minkevich have some sort of 'piebald nag' which brings them luck."

Indeed, Zaykin and Minkevich seem to wear a special armour which makes them invulnerable.

"Maybe still you really do have a kind of. . . 'piebald nag?' " asked the war correspondent jokingly.

Minkevich burst out laughing. Zaykin smiled discreetly.

"Well, we've got a 'piebald nag' of our own," he answered. "We never part with it, and it does bring us luck. . . Honesty is its name."

"Honesty? Nothing more? I should say that honesty was something quite elementary."

"Honesty as a system in our work," explained Minkevich. "Honesty as a life principle."

Tonight the crew is to bomb a station through which the Germans send reinforcements to their troops. This station is several hundred kilometers distant. They are quite familiar with the way there and all the towns to be passed,—many a time have Zaykin and Minkevich flown over these same towns, forests and rivers when bound westward. Nevertheless today again

Bombers on their way to destroy enemy military objects

they spend lots of time poring over the air map, studying their route. They discuss at length every fighting problem, they plan out every means of approaching their goal, trying to take into account the smallest detail and to be prepared for any emergency.

Now they must test the machine and make sure personally that everything is in its place and in perfect order. Minkevich climbs up to his cabin. He makes an inspection of all the apparatus, of the wires along which his will is presently to be transmitted to the pilot, to the radio-operator and to the locks of the bomb trap-door.

Minkevich checks up his store of signal rockets. The number is sufficient, but are they of all the colours he needs for today? Here now! Where on earth are the red rockets? They are absolutely necessary for signalling when landing at the aerodrome.

"I'd certainly be in a fine fix without those rockets," thinks Minkevich.

A new sight mechanism has recently been set up in the cabin, a device which is very important for night bombing as it secures greater accuracy. But the cord of the microphone, not being meant for use with this apparatus, is far too short and therefore makes it impossible to use the sight mechanism and at the same time give directions to the pilot. Minkevich decided to extend the cord, thus making quite convenient the simultaneous actions of sighting and regulating the movements of the plane.

"I wonder if the other navigators use this sighting appliance," thinks Minkevich and goes to have a talk with the crew of one of the other planes.

"Do you use this mechanism?" he asks the navigator.

"Of course, I do."

"But the cord is too short. How do you manage to speak to the pilot when sighting?"

The man looks confused.

"Well, you see, I just stop sighting while I am speaking to him."

And it becomes clear to Minkevich that the navigator does not use this most valuable appliance, and that the accuracy of his bomb-dropping by no means corresponds with the data given in his flight diagram on which the explosions are, evidently, represented at random. So Minkevich tells the embarrassed navigator about his methods of work, about conscientiousness in doing one's duty; he explains to him that this elementary quality is a sure guarantee of success in a raid.

Exactingly, keenly Major Zaykin examines his plane. The gunner and radio-operator Perekrest makes a meticulous survey of the radio-apparatus. Every device works perfectly.

And now in the darkness the formidable aircraft moves on its way to the starting point. In a few minutes the steady purr of its powerful motors sounds high up in the invisible sky, and rapidly dying away fades out somewhere far to the West.

A pitch-dark night has engulfed the earth. Zaykin steers his craft, entrusting himself to the work of the instruments and the calm voice of his navigator.

Down below they see the flashes of bursting artillery shells and great blood-

red tongues of fire swaying above the burning village,—it is the front-line.

Then again there is nothing but darkness and stillness. They are nearing their destination. Here it is at last,—this greyish spot on the snow. . . The enemy's anti-aircraft artillery and machine-guns are silent, trying to deceive the crew of the bomber.

"Well then, let's test them," decides Minkevich, and making straight for the enemy, he drops his first bomb. Instantly sheaves of fire rise up into the air, the beams of scores of searchlights flash out in the dark. Batches of shells explode right in front of the airplane.

"Turn starboard, turn starboard!" says Minkevich quite calmly, and Zaykin turns the plane starboard, escaping from the fire.

The gunner and radio-operator Perekrest keenly inspects the visibility to the rear.

"Bursts quite close. Starboard," he informs Zaykin, and the major changes both the direction and speed of the craft; the airplane dodges amidst the exploding shells like a pike amidst the meshes of a deadly net.

For a second time the plane circles above its object. Minkevich drops his bombs. A huge flame blazes up in the midst of the grey spot.

Now they have to get away from the cannonade. The plane and its crew must not take unnecessary risk.

Zaykin makes a 90° turn, and diving swiftly, escapes into the darkness. Behind them for a long time they hear the German anti-aircraft and machine-guns bombarding the empty air.

The bomber is flying homewards. Five hours have elapsed since they started. Reaction follows the severe strain of battle. A good rest,—that's what they need now.

Theirs is an old familiar route; one might think they could allow themselves a certain relaxation and trust entirely to the instruments. Yet never for a minute does Minkevich stop observing the ground.

"In five minutes we should be over the railway line," he says to Zaykin. And, indeed, in five minutes' time the railway line emerges beneath them.

Everything is all right. The plane has not deviated.

It's true that an accident did happen to them once: all the radionautic apparatus suddenly stopped working,—the plane got ice-glazed, the antenna was torn off,—and nevertheless Minkevich brought his craft quite accurately to the aerodrome.

A bomber returning after a raid on the enemy

This was possible only because the crew works according to the principle of conscientious collaboration and does its duty with a deep feeling of responsibility towards their fatherland and their people.

For these qualities both Major Zaykin and Major Minkevich have been awarded the titles of Heroes of the Soviet Union.

. . . Now Zaykin's airplane is making a landing on the aerodrome.

"Have you had a successful flight?" asks engineer Petrossian.

"Thanks, very much as usual."

"No accidents?"

"None whatever."

"You lucky dogs! You seem to have the gods on your side."

"It's our 'piebald nag' that does it. . ."

The next morning an air-reconnoitering plane flew over to the station and photographed the results of the bombing. The photos clearly showed the traces left by the raid: the bombs had hit their targets exactly in the places indicated by Minkevich on his flight diagram.

V. ILIENKOV

A Report from the Sea

Here it is at last, the dear old port. The ice-coated submarine is nearing her base, and it is not empty-handed that her crew is returning. They have sunk three transport-vessels. Such is their first report from the sea.

On the shore, among those present to welcome the boat, one could see the commander and the commissar of the unit, as well as some guests who had arrived from friendly Great Britain.

After mooring, Starikov, a tall, strongly-built seaman with a youthful, weather-beaten face, ran briskly up the gangway. Coming up to the commander of the unit who was standing on the pier, he was just going to report to him, but the latter stopped him short with a hearty embrace. The commander then introduced Starikov to a senior officer of the British Navy, who expressed his wonder and admiration:

"You are so young and already commander of a submarine, and such a commander, too! You're a regular submarine ace," he told him.

Our ship-commanders are young just like the Northern Fleet itself. The Northern Fleet has no ancient traditions like those of the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets. The history of this fleet and its traditions are being created now, in the days of the Great National War, they are being created by the exploits of such heroes as Kolyshkin, Starikov and other sailors of the North.

Over the wide expanses of the high seas, in the narrow fiords, in well-defended harbours, anywhere and everywhere the submarine men ferret out their enemies, they find them and send them to the bottom.

Three times the Germans "destroyed" Starikov's submarine, and each time after the "news" had been broadcast from Berlin Starikov's friends, seeing him enter the wardroom, would ask slyly:

"Has the captain-lieutenant got his pass from heaven?"

Starikov would always have some ready joke for an answer; he used to speak about his campaigns as if nothing remarkable ever happened to him. He never sought glory and rewards, yet glory and rewards always attended him.

. . . The submarine was moving along the enemies' coast. Starikov was skilfully tacking amidst the shoals and reefs, and going rapidly towards his goal. Nothing escaped the keen observation of the commander and his signal-men.

The goal was now attained. A large transport-vessel loaded with valuable war materials was anchored in the roadstead. A slight tremor of the boat,—and off darts the torpedo. A deafening explosion ensued. In a few minutes the submarine rose to the surface, and the men saw the enemy ship sink. Their task had been executed,—the German vessel had foundered, Dietle's army would not get its reinforcement. During five days and five nights the submarine-men had sought for an encounter with the foe, and the attack lasted but a few minutes. Now for gaining their own coast with all possible speed!

On the surface of the sea enemy pursuer-cutters were already scurrying about dropping depth-bombs. Suddenly the electric bulbs began to blink, then went out. It grew quite dark in all the compartments. There was a loud crash, and groping their way in the darkness the men on board started setting the emergency lights. Depth bombs were bursting quite near them, yet they all remained at their posts, calm and confident. They knew that their commander would never be at a loss, that he would take the right decision at the right moment and guide the boat out of her difficult plight.

One day after having sunk a large transport-vessel, the submarine got ensnared in a steel net. On the surface above them there was a patrol-ship and several pursuer-cutters which were incessantly sinking depth-bombs and dive-shells. Starikov ordered all the mechanisms to be switched off,—let the enemy think that the submarine had foundered. It was, however, impossible to remain for a long time in the net entanglement. And Starikov came to a bold decision,—to rise to the surface and open fire on the foe. The smallest details and possibilities were considered and provided for beforehand. He had four grenades. He gave those to the engineer with the warning:

"If the boat is surrounded, blow up the artillery store. Let all of us be blown up: better death in battle than degrading captivity."

Such an audacious stroke was quite a surprise to the Germans, who, seeing the submarine on the surface, were at first utterly dumbfounded; when they came

to themselves, it was already too late.

Just like his teacher, the famous submarine commander, Hero of the Soviet Union Ivan Kolyshkin, Starikov knows how to combine audacity with precise calculation, courage with circumspect risk. Starikov's submarine has five foundered transport-vessels to her credit. This means that owing to the brave crew the nazi Alpinist-chasseur troops were deprived of many thousands of sheep-skin coats, much ammunition and a considerable quantity of food-stuff.

The Barents Sea is treacherous and rough. The conditions in which our submarines have to operate are not easy. But the seamen of the North never lose heart.

The words of a little song of their own composition go as follows:

Impetuous winds, don't rave ye,
Howl not, thou raging gale,
The stout and stern-eyed navy
Aren't baffled by your wail.

The engines throb, unwearying,
In time with the sailors' hearts.
Our submarine, the daring,
Against the enemy starts.

A violent storm was raging at sea. The wind was so strong that it fairly knocked one down and tore the roofs off the buildings of a little town situated on the shore of the bay. We two,—Starikov and myself,—were sitting in the warm ward-room. He was describing with enthusiasm his life at sea, saying how grand it would be to go down now, this very minute, under the surface. After two or three days spent ashore, he missed the sea just as Kolyshkin did, and would keep thinking about new encounters with the enemy. He does not like to tarry on the coast, the sea is his natural element.

"The only things I miss when I am out at sea are the letters from my mother and wife. It's a pity we can't receive them there. They live in Molotov,—that's the town where I used to work when I was a blacksmith and from where I was sent to serve in the Navy. Two of my brothers,—Boris and Anatoli,—are in the Red Army, and the youngest is at a factory school. They all write to me, and they take a lively interest in my doings. We are great pals, the whole bunch of us; ours is quite a chummy family."

Valentine Starikov receives letters not only from relatives and friends: often people who know him by hearsay only, owing to his military exploits, write to him. A letter from the Ivanovo district is just now lying on the table:

"We, the undersigned, members of an organized body of girls working at the factory named after Lakin, have read in the paper about the courage and daring you always display in the battles against the German invaders. Dear comrade Starikov! Your exploits at the front inspire us to still more intensive work here in the rear. We are separated from you by the vast expanses of our immense country, but we feel that you are a friend both near and dear to us. After the war began, we attended some medical courses without leaving our own work, and now we are all of us trained medical nurses and are busy lending a hand at our hospital.

"With friendly greetings: Tanya Pashnova, Maria Prokofyeva, Vera Bibneva."

This letter arrived just on the eve of his going out to sea, and Starikov decided to answer it on his return.

Hero of the Soviet Union, Captain-lieutenant Starikov andhis renowned guards-men-crew are now again on the high seas. Again they have gone to seek out the enemy and to destroy him.

A. DUNAYEVSKY

Northern Front.

A submarine returning after carrying out orders

An Iron Will

The commander of the destroyer cast a fleeting glance at the dim outlines of the distant shore and turned a perplexed face towards Senior Lieutenant Popov, the commander of the cutter N, which had been put at his disposal. Half-an-hour ago this cutter was ordered to circumnavigate the inlet of a small bay where one of the Soviet destroyers was being shelled from the direction of point H.

"We passed all along the shore and failed to notice a single light," Popov said.

"That's odd," the commander of the destroyer replied. "In that case we'll have to do some thorough reconnoitering."

. . . Swaying gently on the waves, the cutter made its way noiselessly towards the shore. The commander was carefully planning the reconnoissance. There was no doubt that the shore was held by the enemy. So he ordered bos'n Myasnikov to use the loudspeaker and try to find out who was there. But there was no answer to the loudspeaker.

Just then, however, signalman Malinov noticed on the shore to the cutter's starboard a pale flash of light which died instantly. The commander immediately switched the handle of the engine-room telegraph to "full steam astern."

No sooner had the cutter put back to sea than a rocket shot up into the air, followed by the rattle of a German tommy-gun and by rifle shots.

"Ah, the crows are croaking at last!" machine-gunner Kryukov said angrily and aimed at the shore. The commander of the bowgun, Ivakhno, fired a salvo.

The cutter was moving away from the shore. When he reached the destroyer, Popov was ordered to return to his base. Now the destroyer was shelling the shore.

A storm broke loose. The fuel was nearly exhausted and the ship lay to. It was decided to report the situation to the base without delay. There was fuel enough only to start the motor of the dynamo which fed the wireless. The waves broke against the ship, flooding the cylinders; the engine choked and died. It became necessary to open the cylinders and remove the water from them. Then the exhaust gas filled the engine-room.

At the end of half-an-hour of intense work, Tapunin, the cutter's mechanic, lost consciousness as a result of gas poisoning. With superhuman efforts Kudrevatykh, the commander of the motorists' section, succeeded in starting the engine, but as soon as the engine began to work, he too fainted away. Two hours later he regained consciousness, and his first question was: "Has the radio message been sent?" The answer was: "Yes."

The cutter lay to and drifted in the direction of the enemy shore. The watch received orders to send up a red rocket every hour, to attract the attention of our ships or planes. The crew went to bed, but no one slept that night.

In the morning the base reported that a cutter carrying fuel was on its way to them, bringing assistance. Yet the north-east wind blew with the same force and there was the possibility it would not arrive in time.

The commander called his assistant, Lieutenant Mikaberidze.

"Well, lieutenant, what are we going to do?" he asked.

"I think," his assistant replied, "that if help comes too late, we should blow up the ship."

By the time visibility had become much worse. The cutter which had been sent to the assistance of the brave seamen still had not reached them. The Red Navy men were sitting around Lieutenant Mikaberidze, singing in low voices the Georgian song *Suliko*.

In this fashion the night passed; on the morning of the third day the shore was quite near. The men were grave and silent. The commander of the cutter entered the wireless-operator's cabin and handed him a blue telegraph blank. Radio-operator Tumanov took a quick glance at the coded text and read: "Enemy shore within five miles, nearing every minute. No way out. We shall fight to the last cartridge and blow ourselves up at the last moment. We'll die rather than surrender. Farewell, comrades! Greetings to the fatherland and J. Stalin."

The senior lieutenant nodded in the direction of the wireless key. But at this moment the sound of dots and dashes being rapped somewhere came through the earphones. The radio-operator's arm remained in the air. He raised his eyes and said:

"Comrade senior lieutenant! I hear a radiogram transmitted from somewhere."

"Intercept it!"

A few minutes later the ship's commander sat code in hand, deciphering the radiogram. Suddenly he shouted:

"Hurrah, Tumanov! They are looking for us! Do you understand? They are going to save us!"

He went astern, where almost the whole crew was assembled. The sea continued

to rage. Enormous waves attacked the small ship. Splashes of salt water wetted the face of the senior lieutenant, but he did not feel them.

"Comrades!" the commander addressed the men. "We have intercepted a remarkable radio-message. One of our ships has picked up the messages of our cutter and is inquiring at the base. A search has been instigated for us, comrades!"

A wave of joy swept over the faces of the sailors. For the third day they had been kept on edge by the uncertainty whether help would reach them before the ship was carried ashore. And now help was coming! Their joy, however, gave way to anxiety as they took a look at the approaching shore.

A few minutes more passed, and then something unbelievable happened: the wind changed to a south-west and, under the influence of two opposite forces,—a north-eastern current and the wind which blew in just the opposite direction,—the cutter stopped dead.

The situation was saved by the seamen's resourcefulness: they collected blankets and mattress-covers, sewed them into a sail and hoisted it up. The wind tore at the sail, and the cutter began slowly to leave the enemy shore.

In about an hour and a half the signalmen noticed two of our red-starred planes overhead. The entire crew rushed out on deck with exclamations of joy and throwing their caps up in the air.

The planes circled over the cutter, in token of having sighted the ship, and left. Later it was learned that the brave seamen were sighted by Peter Koval's crew.

In another few hours the cutter was towed away by a ship sent out to bring it home. Thus it was rescued from the clutches of the elements.

Today the seamen of the cutter N are striking at the German invaders with renewed vigour. Recently they convoyed a transport carrying valuable cargo to the Crimean section of the front. For six hours on end they bravely repulsed all the attacks of German planes which attempted to sink the transport. The order given by the command was carried out with honour.

Senior Foreman I. NIKULIN
Black Sea Navy.

A Chapter from a Novel

It was early morning in the forest, and quite a commotion was going on near the battery. In the order of the day it said that prior to beginning the attack the enemy battery was to be put out of action and the stronghold on his right flank to be destroyed; all this was to take two hours.

Commander Sukhanov, a fairhaired stocky man, was coming towards the dug-out, with his leisurely "seaman's" gait. Friendly glances from the men greeted him.

The opinion of the crew of the battery was that "Sukhanov is a very fine fellow." A story was told about him how during the Finnish campaign, while on reconnoissance, he lost contact with his group, was suddenly caught, disarmed and made prisoner by two Finnish soldiers. However, neither the soldiers nor the commander ever reached the Finnish unit. They didn't get there because on the way to Finnish headquarters Sukhanov converted the soldiers to his faith, and the end was that instead of coming to Finnish headquarters, all three of them,—Sukhanov and the two Finns,—arrived at Soviet headquarters.

How it all happened, nobody knew in detail. It was rumoured that at the very beginning of the conflict with Finland Sukhanov began to learn Finnish,—"it may come in handy," as he then said,—and he made rapid progress in his study.

Sukhanov himself did not like to mention the subject. To the endless questions as to how he did it, he'd simply answer: "Oh, I just did a bit of propaganda,"—as if it was an everyday matter. When somebody would start in his presence to describe in glowing colours how it came about, or rather how he imagined it must have been, Sukhanov grew embarrassed, would blush like a girl, wave his hand and say with a shy smile: "But, no, no, that's not at all how it was, far from it!"

. . . Sukhanov was on his way to have a talk with the men. Reaching the dug-out, he went downstairs, carrying a voluminous book. Then he read the order to the men. Yes, it was true, a battery and a stronghold were to be destroyed inside two hours. But this was not all: Akulshin, a scout of the communication service, having been sent to the rear of the enemy lines, had just telephoned the position of two new, carefully-camouflaged enemy strongholds. This, too, Sukhanov mentioned to the men. Then he opened the book, handed it to Kudriashov, the best reader on the battery, pointed to a passage and said:

"Here, read from here."

The book was Leo Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace*, and the passage pointed to was the chapter about Tushin's battery.

". . . the battery continued to fire and was not captured by the French," Kudriashov read, "only because the enemy could not have supposed such impudence on the part of four undefended cannons. On the contrary, judging by the energetic action of that battery, they thought the main Russian forces to be concentrated here, in the centre; twice they attempted to attack this point, and twice they were repulsed by the shots of the four guns standing alone on the hill."

The Red Army men strained forward. They stared into Kudriashov's mouth, afraid to miss a single word. When he paused, a deep silence fell in the dug-out. When Kudriashov paused for a longer time, enjoying the general attention focused on him, the silence gave way to groans of impatience, and the men drew closer to him.

Sukhanov sat twirling a pencil in his fingers, and nothing in his attitude betrayed the fact that he was the initiator of what was going on in the dug-out. Only his occasional fleeting glances at the men indicated the importance which he attached to this day's talk.

The reading went on.

"Soon after Prince Bagration left, Tushin succeeded in setting fire to Schoengraben.

"'Look at them scurrying! And what a fire! What a smoke! That was well done, all right! What a smoke, what a smoke!'—these exclamations came from the crew of the battery.

"Without waiting for orders all the guns were firing away in the direction of the conflagration. At each shot the soldiers would shout encouragingly: 'Fine! Good work! That's the way!'"

As the reading of the chapter progressed, the men began to stir and shuffle with suppressed excitement, and their faces beamed with smiles. Each one of them applied the writer's words to himself and each thought that all this was written about him, because that's how it really was when one knew how to aim.

Kudriashov continued:

"Like children who find themselves in a difficult situation, the soldiers looked at their commander, and each change in the expression on his face invariably found its reflection on their faces."

At this point all eyes turned involuntarily towards Sukhanov, who sat smiling calmly. . .

The reading came to an end. There was silence for a while, and then someone said:

"Yes, those forefathers of ours knew how to fight!"

"A first-class battery, I call it," another interposed.

"Just see, Tolstoy was a count, and still how well he knew and understood a soldier's soul," somebody remarked.

At this moment Sergeant Shapkin jumped up, holding a written paper in his hand.

"Comrade Commander," he called, "just a word!" He was known for his craving for drawing up resolutions on every occasion.

"What is it?" Sukhanov smiled at him. "Another resolution?"

"No," Shapkin replied with an embarrassed air, "I just want to make a proposal."

"Well, let's have it."

Shapkin coughed, took a look at the sheet and began:

"Having listened to the report. . ."

"Make it plainer, Shapkin, do," Sukhanov chided him gently.

"All right," Shapkin replied, crestfallen. "So, having listened to the report," he repeated quite mechanically, his eyes roving over the sheet of paper. Finally, having found something there, he continued: "Having listened to the report by Count Tolstoy, I propose to adopt the action of comrade Tushin's battery as an example. . ."

Shapkin lifted his eyes from the sheet of paper, and in a rapid manner of speech which betrayed the irrepressible speechgier, said:

"If Tushin's battery could overfulfil the task, then why can't we do it also?"

The sergeant scanned the men's faces and understood that he was not saying the right thing and, what was more, that he was not choosing the appropriate words to express his feelings. So, he stuffed the paper in his pocket and said simply:

"Dash it all, here's what I have to say, boys: is it possible that we couldn't do such shooting that,—well, if not a novel, then at least a brief notice in the wall-newspaper should be written about us?"

Everybody laughed, and Shapkin, encouraged by his success, continued:

"Now about tomorrow's job, for example. We have been told to destroy one enemy battery and one stronghold within two hours. But Stepan Akulshin reported that he has discovered two more strongholds. So, do we want to leave these two to the Germans for breeding purposes? Am I right? But if we should ask the command to give us more time, we should upset the whole plan of the battle. Therefore, I propose to put our shoulder to the wheel tomorrow and destroy these two strongholds too. That's all I've got to say."

A murmur of approval went through the dug-out.

"Right you are! Let's go to it!"

"We certainly can give it to them hot, that's our job here, isn't it?"

Sukhanov strolled through the crowded dug-out, listening to the men. Then he stopped and said:

"Well, comrades, it is time to rest. The talk is over. Tushin's battery really was excellent, wasn't it?"

And he left.

* * *

It was eight-twenty in the morning, when Sukhanov's battery silenced the enemy's battery and demolished the foremost German stronghold. The other two strongholds could not be seen from the observation post. To correct the shooting, the platoon commander was sent ahead, while Sukhanov himself left for the firing line. There he watched the crew's accurate work. Only forty minutes remained during which to destroy the other two German strongholds. At this moment an enemy plane, which for a long time had been circling over the forest in search of the Soviet battery, succeeded in locating it.

The plane went into action, dived and rushed over the forest. A bomb dropped, followed by another; the ground and the air trembled. . .

A heavy gun on the extreme right of Sukhanov's battery was silenced, and its entire crew was put out of action. Sukhanov, who happened to be not far from the gun, was alive, and now he stood leaning against a tree. His face was pale but calm. Only his right arm rested on his abdomen, instead of being thrust as usual into the border of his overcoat.

"Come on, boys, step on it!" Shapkin said running from one to the other. "We've only forty minutes left. You can rest assured, comrade commander, we'll do it in time,—it's a sure thing."

Shapkin threw a merry glance at Sukhanov and continued giving orders around the guns. For a fraction of a second he thought: "Why is our commander keeping his hand on his abdomen?" Again he looked at Sukhanov and at his hand.

The blood was oozing through the fingers of Sukhanov, running down in a tiny rivulet on the border of his coat.

"Comrade commander, why, you're wounded!" Shapkin hurried over to Sukhanov.

"It's nothing, just a scratch," Sukhanov replied in a low voice, trying to conceal his painful breathing. "Help me to get to. . . to the phone."

Shapkin put Sukhanov's arm over his shoulder and holding him around the waist carefully led him forward. Only now he could see Sukhanov's wound.

"Comrade commander, but it's no trifle! Why, you are wounded in the abdomen!"

"In the abdomen, you say. . ."—Sukhanov gave a wry smile wrestling with his pain. "Well, all the better. . . It was high time to remove my appendix. So, now they'll just. . . operate on it at the same time. . ."

When they reached the phone, Shapkin spread a tarpaulin on the ground.

"I'll send over two men, and they'll carry you to the medical post in a jiffy," Shapkin said, helping Sukhanov to lie down and bandaging his wound quickly.

"I don't object . . . But this we'll do . . . after we'll have finished all the strongholds. We need all the men now . . ."

"But, comrade commander . . ." Shapkin protested.

"Comrade sergeant! No back-talk! I order you to keep up the fire!"

"All right, comrade commander!" Shapkin shouted, and ran to the guns.

Again the drone of a plane came nearer. The fascist airplane was getting ready for a second attack, but this time it was different. No sooner did he dive, than he was set afire by our anti-aircraft guns. Like a burning torch he sped over Sukhanov's battery and crashed to earth behind the enemy lines.

The men got wind of their commander's wound, and that he refused to be removed to the medical post.

"Well, if this isn't just like in Count Tolstoy's book!" Shapkin exclaimed. "So, then, we are fighting no worse than our forefathers!"

And smiling approvingly at the sergeant's words the men sent shell after shell at the enemy fortifications. . .

Ten minutes more passed. From his observation post Akulshin reported:

"All strongholds levelled to the ground!"

Shapkin looked at the watch,—it was eight-fifty-five,— and he ran to his commander.

Supporting himself on his elbow, Sukhanov held the telephone receiver:

"Connect me with the major. . . Comrade Major. . . this is Commander Sukhanov reporting. . . The task. . ."

The receiver dropped from his weakened hand; Shapkin caught it up and continued:

"This is Sergeant Shapkin reporting. Comrade Major, Commander Sukhanov's battery has carried out the task by two hundred per cent. In one hour and 55 minutes we have destroyed one battery and three strongholds."

Rallying his last reserves of strength, Sukhanov attentively listened to the report. Then his head dropped back heavily, and he lost consciousness.

Shapkin looked at the commander in quite a singular way, and in a low voice, hardly audible, he whispered:

"Tushin. . ."

V. GRANATOV

Ahead of Schedule

When reading the newspaper Oleinikov came upon a challenge issued by the Stakhanovite moulder Chugunov, who proposed to fulfil the half-yearly program of production ahead of schedule. "What can Timofei Oleinikov's brigade promise on its part?" the challenge went on.

"Ah, he wants to match his strength against us! That shows he considers us a worthy lot!" Oleinikov grinned. He was flattered by the fact that Chugunov, one of the best-known moulders of the Ural Machine Works, had challenged him. It was an extremely serious challenge and certainly had to be answered in such a way as to keep up his dignity.

Everybody in the brigade read the challenge. Zhilin, the brigade's toolmaker, an energetic and ambitious young fellow, declared cooly:

"Well, I think we can announce the five months' program. We'll manage it."

Walking home from work together with his wife, Oleinikov said:

"Look here, Shura, you work up there on the overhead travelling crane; have you noticed any shortcomings in our work lately?"

"It's true, I can see better from above. I would advise you to put Bryukhanov on the preparatory end of the work, he's a very handy, strong chap."

"Right you are, Shura!" Oleinikov was glad of the suggestion made by his wife. "It looks as if everything is now taken into consideration: how to organize men and metal. You know, the part is rather intricate in design. First it will have to be cut in two and then notched on both sides."

He firmly rejected a suggestion made by the technological advisers to notch the small angle first and the larger one next; no, he would not spoil the metal,—this method may be good for the press but not for forging. He proposed just the opposite: to notch the large angle first and the smaller one next; this would make it possible to forge the ingot without concussion and accelerate the bending of the ends, thus saving time.

The next morning he came, as was his habit, long before the change of the shifts, and reviewed his well-organized brigade of "Oleinikovites." His assistant Zhilin had already prepared the forging tools for the day: large and small tongues, steel angles, a square and a steel hatchet. All this lay in perfect order: the tools which were needed first were placed nearer to the brigade leader, for Zhilin knew how to value each second of time. Oleinikov was pleased and smiled: yes, this was his school, everybody knew exactly where he had to be and what his duties were. When the forging started, Zhilin, as first assistant, would place himself to the right of the brigade-leader, and Bryukhanov to his left. Sergeyev took care of the small tongues and was responsible for these only; these were more complicated tools and frequently used during the forging process. Zhilnikov, a young helper, would handle the larger tongues, which were used more seldom. Frolov and Faiziev would take up their places at the front lever. Machinist Popov and crane-operator Gurina would also be on the look-out: Popov was responsible for the even breathing of the drop-forge hammer, and Gurina for the movement of the crane at the hammer.

There were ten of them, and each one felt quite at home on his job, because he knew in advance how the entire forging process was to run, according to plan. To them the drawing of the part, kept in the brigade-leader's desk, presented itself quite definitely in series of working operations, precise, rapid movements, changes of tools and blows of the hammer.

This morning, as the time of his shift was approaching, Oleinikov felt more excited than usual. Again he carefully scrutinized his men, as if seeking in their faces for something he had not seen and accounted for before; then he adjusted his cap and said:

"Well, let's start, boys!"

The new shift began. The ingot stopped in front of the five-ton drop-forge hammer, and the forging started. Watching each blow of the hatchet and the fall of the giant hammer on the red-hot metal, Oleinikov saw that his calculation was right. The pre-heating of the ingots also worked out well. Only yesterday they used to proceed as follows: while one half of the ingot was treated under the hammer, the other was dragged to the furnace. Olei-

nikov proposed to do it in one heating, as the forging under the hammer took no more than two or three minutes, as fast as a sabre encounter in battle,—so that one half could easily "wait" for the other. His idea was right, and the brigade-leader felt almost physically how time was being saved and how as a result of this way of heating,—at once instead of in two,—the entire forging process had been simplified and the work made easier.

An hour before the time of the shift was up, Oleinikov was wiping the perspiration from his forehead and saying:

"Well, boys, we have made forty parts. We mean business, it seems; so I propose that we make two more parts. What do you say?"

By the end of the shift, the brigade delivered forty-two parts.

Oleinikov returned home, walking slowly and inhaling the fresh frosty air greedily. The sky was reddish with the glow of the setting sun, and beyond the last streets of the manufacturing town the forest stood like a dark, forged fence. Oleinikov strode along, feeling a pleasant fatigue in his shoulders, like a wrestler who has put his opponent down on the mat. All his life long he liked in his profession that part of the toil where man's skill fought the unyielding cold and hardness of the metal. And what a marvellous change came on the metal when placed in the fire, what furious life awoke in it, what a play of freed forces took place in the nearly-transparent incandescent metal! It breathed a terrible, mortally-dangerous heat, this red-hot ingot of steel, which had come from a thousand-degree hot furnace. Don't come near it, you, laymen, or you'll catch fire from its mere breath! But this is so only for a certain time. Man, the craftsman, masters this metal, takes it into an iron grip—and the steel ingot acquires a shape; the master's hands, the ruler's of mechanisms, give life to the ingot, and it turns into a part, a living part of a mighty, redoubtable war machine.

Oleinikov felt especially happy then, when he realized that he had mastered a part of importance to the war industry. This was an unparalleled feeling made up of a happy realization of an accomplished duty and of a craftsman's pride which, like a mighty river, steadily tries to widen its bed. In such moments of happiness Oleinikov liked to recall the road he had travelled during his laborious life,—not in vain had he lived for thirty years. From a plain labourer, working on a railway siding, wielding a heavy hammer and shoeing horses, he learned how to master his metal, in alliance with the most modern technique and his own daring innovations. When he took a resolution which at first glance looked unexpected (and which later turned out to be a natural result of his experience), he felt like an innovator. During the war this creative daring grew and increased.

His entire life was now determined by anxiety for his native country, his people, his family, his children and their future. This feeling of disquiet resounded in him like the steady pealing of an alarm-bell on the background of a fire. Timofey Oleinikov understood that he must do his work as if he was at the front, otherwise it just was not worth a penny!

Oleinikov's brigade fulfilled the five-months' program of 1942 ahead of schedule.

And in the morning Oleinikov listened in on the radio to the Order of the People's Commissar for Defense.

"Now see here, Alexandra," he said to his wife, "this order concerns both of us. How well Stalin had spoken of the war industry! But the war industry, that's me and you, isn't it? Work, try hard, but never say enough,—this is the thing! Could we have thought a year ago that in February 1942 we should turn out production for May? But when one is a craftsman, and one's heart is aflame, nothing is impossible!"

The factory newspaper soon published an article by Oleinikov, headed: "The order is addressed to us, fighters of the rear!"

Together with Chugunov he promised the following to be carried out by May 1st, 1942:

"Chugunov—the program for the year. Oleinikov—the program for nine months."

"But this is not enough," Oleinikov told the men of his brigade. "Let's add some more, comrades! Let's fulfil the year's program by June 1st!"

ANNA KARAVAYEVA

A "Sapper-Surgical Case"

The army surgeon was returning to his medical unit of the army. For three days on end he had been visiting medical stations, regimental sanitation posts and hospitals. When he entered the hut, he greeted his comrades briefly and embarked at once on a report to his chief about his trip.

In a husky voice of a man suffering from a cold he told of the difficult and self-

sacrificing work of the medical personnel and of all the shortcomings in their work. His remarks were brief and to the point, for he knew people well.

As soon as the report was finished, the surgeon removed his sheep-skin coat, passed his hand over his face, made a grimace and prepared to shave. While the water was heating on the iron stove, he sat down at the table. His head dropped on his crossed arms, and immediately he was asleep.

Prior to mobilization, Georgi Nikolaev, surgeon with the N army and second-rank military physician, used to work as assistant-professor at the Archangel Medical Institute. He was of a mild, kind disposition, above all he loved music and his operating room. In a word, he was a civilian scientific worker, in the strictest sense of the word.

The peaceful activity of Assistant-Professor Nikolaev came to an abrupt end on June 22nd, 1941. He took off his everyday clothes, put on a military uniform and became an army surgeon. The very first days of the war revealed that beneath Nikolaev's former civilian exterior had lain a brilliant military surgeon, an excellent specialist, organizer and instructor.

On a certain winter morning a wounded Red Army man with quite an unusual diagnosis was brought in: an unexploded mine was embodied in the sole of his right foot. The German mine had pierced the felt-boot and the foot itself, but fortunately for the man had failed to explode. The wounded man felt fine, calmly drank his tea and smoked; only the sight of the mine which adorned his foot somewhat worried his neighbours who lay on adjacent stretchers.

The doctors held a lengthy consultation, but failed to arrive at a unanimous decision. During this conference the army surgeon arrived, and the doctors heaved a sigh of relief. True, in his practice Nikolaev had never had occasion to deal with an unexploded mine; and this was a case which might properly be termed as a "sapper-surgical" one. Of course, it was easy enough to amputate the foot, but Nikolaev wanted the Red Army man to remain able-bodied. So he ordered a sapper to be called and with characteristic straightforwardness asked him:

"Can I operate, or will it explode?"

The sapper examined the mine carefully, shrugged his shoulders and answered in a rather uncertain voice:

"It's hard to say. Perhaps it won't explode though."

"I get you," Nikolaev interrupted him. "So we'll just have to operate, and you'll be my assistant. What? You never assisted in a surgical operation before? Well, I must confess that this kind of operation is quite new to me, too."

Every precaution was taken: the wounded man was transported to the most distant ward, and he was urgently requested not to jerk his leg during the operation. Then the unprecedented procedure began. The consulting sapper held the mined foot, Streltsova the nurse handed the surgical instruments, and the surgeon wielded his knife. The operation was carefully carried out in layers: first the felt-boot had to be cut, then the sock, and only then it was the skin's turn. Cutting with extreme care, the surgeon widened the channel of the wound and. . . The rest was comparatively simple. The sapper carried the extracted mine away to the woods and blew it up there with a shot from his rifle.

Soon after the operation a naive person asked the surgeon:

"But weren't you afraid?"

The surgeon smiled and replied:

"While my eyes were afraid, my hands did the work. Understand?"

There is hardly a hospital or sanitation-post surgeon who has not seen Nikolaev operating. The latter has a way of teaching not only theoretically but by demonstration as well. One day a number of seriously wounded men were brought to one of the hospitals. Nikolaev, of course, went there. He stepped to the operating table and did not leave it before he had made eighteen trepanations of the skull.

. . . The army surgeon woke up, glanced disgustedly at the water which had nearly all boiled away, and re-filled the kettle. The telephone rang, and Nikolaev took up the receiver:

"What? A serious wound? A difficult case? I'm coming."

The white car sped along the road. Next to the chauffeur, his chest adorned with an Order of the Soviet Union, sat Army Surgeon Georgi Nikolaev.

E. ASHURKOV,
Second-rank Military Physician

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters Forwarded to the Union of Soviet Writers

SOVIET PEOPLE RISING TRIUMPHANT OVER THE ENEMY

"Many thanks indeed for your consideration in sending me copies of *Moscow News*.

What a pleasure it is to read a newspaper so vibrant with the truth of enthusiastic reporting! And what a story your journalists have to tell!

The story of the Soviet resistance to the unparalleled aggression of the fascist German hordes will make future generations stir with pride. Never in history has such heroism been shown. Never did such a heroic army acquit itself like the Red Army.

The British people have watched the Red Army fight its action from Lwow to Moscow with bated breath. The retreat of the army was indeed a great call upon our patience and our hope. As the earth was scorched with such ruthlessness, so was the soul of the British people. Now that the retreat is ended and the advance begun, so the soul of the people has become radiant with happiness.

Years ago Marcel Cachin foretold that he who would destroy the U.S.S.R. would have to march over the corpses of a whole people. When he made that statement little did we think that we would live to see a France prostrate before the conqueror and a Soviet people rising triumphant over the ruthless enemy of culture and peace.

I send my greetings through you to the gallant people of the Soviet Union.

I send my greetings to the heroic Red Army.

Yours sincerely,
HAROLD HESLOP."

ALL POSSIBLE AID TO THE PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET UNION

"I have been away from home for the last three months and am returning to Western Australia tomorrow. When the New-South-Wales Aid Russia Committee asked me to come to Sydney to help with the work of the Committee, I came at once, and have been speaking ever since at public meetings about my experiences in the Soviet Union and the need to give all possible aid to the peoples of the Soviet Union just now. I have spoken also in Queensland and will be addressing meetings in Victoria and South Australia on my way home.

The days have been very full and strenuous—and just now, you will understand the intense anxiety we in Australia are suffering as a result of the menace to our own country by the extension of war to the Pacific. There is so much I would like to tell you about the Congresses and Conferences I have addressed and the deep sympathy I have found everywhere for the suffering of the Soviet peoples, as well as admiration for

their magnificent courage and indomitable spirit. At last, the retreat of those cruel and brutal invaders of Soviet soil has begun and you will know how I am rejoicing with you. Cheers and love to my splendid Russian comrades.

When I reach home, there will be more time, I hope, to write to you and tell you some of my interesting experiences in connection with this tour of Australia for aid to the Soviet Union. I met so many fine men and women who are working whole-heartedly for this purpose: Mrs. Jessie Street of the Medical Aid Committee of N.S.W., Mr. Gerald Peel, M. A. of the N.S.W. Aid Russia Committee, Dr. Duhig of Queensland, many well-known writers, clergymen, scientists, Trade Union leaders and, best of all, great crowds of working people, eager to support and help to ensure the victory of our gallant Ally.

You know how deeply I have been feeling every day for all those dear friends in Moscow and Leningrad who have been suffering so terribly through these last months.

Love and cheers to you all.

KATHARINE SUZANNAH PRICHARD."

FASCISM MEANS WAR

"Ten years ago we were warned that 'fascism meant war.' People in high places shrugged their shoulders. The common people wondered and the intellectuals argued.

The monstrous thug of fascism then commenced to deliver pounding blows. China — Abyssinia — Spain heaved mighty hearts and fought the world's first battle for liberty.

Some people in high places still scoffed and traded. The common people were roused. They raised the slogan of 'Hands off China—Russia' in a crescendo of opposition to the menace of fascism.

The real intellectuals were strongly moved and identified themselves with the masses.

Writers sprang into action!

The Fellowship of Australian Writers declared itself antifascist.

I, without pretensions to any achievement of intellectual value, feel proud that our Fellowship in its indigenous culture (a heritage of the Eureka Stockade) has merged into the common front of unity against fascist aggression. You, magnificent people of the Soviet Union, in your stupendous struggle against the vile aggressor, are projecting mighty standards of social values in which life becomes synonymous with culture. My personal exposition is that of the world in which I am involved. My task is clear.

I pledge myself against exploitation, subjection, fascism.

ALEX. BOOKLUCK."

A RESOLUTE AND UNITED STRUGGLE WILL BRING VICTORY

"Fascism—that cankerous outgrowth of decaying Monopoly Capitalism—threatens not only the freedom, living standards and cultural conditions of the peoples of the world, but also means the prostitution of Art and Literature and the perversion and corruption of Science. It presages not only modernized and more vicious economic slavery, but also conditions of obscurantism and mental bondage worse than those of the Dark Ages.

In expressing warm greetings of unbreakable solidarity with the writers and peoples of the Soviet Union who are so valiantly carrying these words of defiance and determination into practical effect in the face of the fascist onslaught, the writers of Australia are convinced that fascism must and will be destroyed. Following firmly in the traditions of Gorky and of Lawson, they join with the writers of the Soviet Union in expressing with united voice the

irresistible determination of the masses of the Australian and Soviet peoples that the light of liberty and democracy *shall not* be extinguished: through resolute and united struggle against the onslaughts of fascism, obscurantism and reaction, the treasures of freedom, enlightenment and social progress shall be preserved upon the earth.

HILTON BARTON."

FOR FREEDOM AGAINST BARBARISM

"Always there has been the struggle between Good and Evil; but never has it so convulsed the whole world as now, when titanic forces clash to decide the final issue: World Freedom or World Barbarism.

When the history of this era is written, it will be recorded that the people of Russia played a leading part in this struggle. It has fallen to their lot, in this twentieth century, to experience deeper suffering and greater joy than any other people.

More and more is Australia coming to acknowledge this, as misunderstandings vanish under the stress of great trial and battle.

And in due proportion to the growing love all true Australians feel for their brave allies, so increases their hatred for the German fascists and their obsequious followers everywhere.

For we, like Russia, love freedom and will never submit. We believe that the forces of freedom will triumph, and that all history vindicates this belief.

As one of our truly Australian writers has written in *All That Swagger*:

'The pathways to the shrines of the saints remain smooth from the feet of the pilgrims, long after the tombs of conquerors are smothered by the jungle.'

FRANK RYLAND."

FASCISM MUST BE RUTHLESSLY CRUSHED

"Fascism is war, let us make no mistake about that. If we are to see a world freed from the danger of wholesale slaughter, in fact, if we are to see the survival of humanity, then we must ruthlessly crush not only German fascism, but all fascism, wherever it appears.

ROWLAND MOODY."

THE SOVIET SINGS

"*The Soviet Sings*—that is the title of a session we heard over the air recently—just a short program of recorded songs, but we found it profoundly moving. There was nothing sad about the songs themselves,—on the contrary, they were full of courage, hope and purpose, the pride of achievement, the joy of freedom, work and fulfilment. It was not exactly the realization that the horrors of war had been forced on those peace-loving builders of a new civilization, that brought the lump to one's throat. It was simply the songs themselves—spontaneous expression of a free and happy people.

We thought of another kind of song we often hear, accepted by tradition as the highest achievement in that form of art,—the German *Lieder*. Songs full of romance and sentiment and tender feeling towards women, that nevertheless failed to touch our emotions; perhaps because of their artificiality, their unrealistic conception of womanhood. And we reflected: the nation that idealizes its women in its art, in real life relegates them to a position of inferiority,—and extends this barbaric policy of oppression and tyranny to the whole world. On the other hand, the nation that takes a healthy, realistic view of women as normal human beings, admits them to equality in every sphere of life, — and

sets its face against every kind of exploitation and tyranny, everywhere.

The Soviet sings—and Australia listens. . .

VIVIEN NORMAN."

CONVINCED THAT FASCISM WILL BE DESTROYED *

"Our editing plan is arranged according to two fundamental principles: to depict the reality in our country and to depict that of the world. As to the former, we take themes for our articles in accordance with the war questions of the day, give both praise and criticism to the work and life of our people; especially stern criticism is given to the rotting and dissoluting life in the rear. We are eager to translate in Chinese the foreign writers' articles or novels which reflect the world current affairs."

Proposing an interchange with the English edition of *International Literature,* Mr. Tsin Thu says:

"We are sure that we can introduce more foreign masterpieces to our Chinese readers from that welcomed magazine. So we ask for this magazine earnestly and expect that you will be kind enough to satisfy us by sending it monthly."

The letter closes with the following words:

"Fascist Germany has stretched her bloody paw into the socialist land. We are glad to hear the exciting news of the Red Army and the Soviet people who are defending their fatherland. This is the land of Mendeleyev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Vavilov, Gorky; this is the land where the first light has been shed. We have a firm conviction that the robbers who invaded from abroad must be destroyed by the heroic Soviet people. We have always had a great admiration for you and your works, and we are writing this letter to assure of our regards, to wish you all still further success. Here we greet all the cultural fighters who are working in the sacred war.

TSIN THU."

*In his letter Mr. Tsin Thu, editor of the Chinese literary magazine *Ye Chuw* (*Wild Grass*), published in Kweilin, Kwanghsi, gives a short description of the leading features of this interesting magazine, which despite the difficult conditions of wartime publication has attained a circulating of 15,000 copies. The volume of this circulation, Mr. Tsin Thu points out, leads to show that at the present time *Ye Chuw* is the largest and most important literary magazine in China. We are publishing excerpts from Mr. Tsin Thu's letter.

Stefan Zweig's Drama

Stefan Zweig committed suicide, in a strange land beyond the ocean, far from his enslaved fatherland. The details of his suicide are still unknown, but even without learning the particulars, when we recall Zweig's literary characteristics and personal features, it is easy to imagine the writer's inner drama of the last few years.

He undoubtedly was an outstanding writer of free Austria, one of Europe's contemporary writers of merit, an author widely known and greatly liked among readers all over the world. As a story teller, he understood the secret of entertaining to perfection. He knew how to build up the subject with Maupassant's ease, and his stories full of splendid pictures of the inner life of his heroes, who always were highly complicated and often morbid. Zweig is very close to Russian literature, especially to Dostoyevsky. His novelettes will ever remain examples of artistic skill to the artist and a source of pleasure to the reader. In the biographic genre he has created masterpieces, and in belles-lettres he has introduced the latest European art of historical portraiture. I envy those historians and literary critics who are going to write of Stefan Zweig's books and the brilliance of his talent. I envy the reader who by some miracle has not yet heard of Stefan Zweig and who suddenly will read *Amok*, or *A Letter from an Unknown Woman*, or *Marie-Antoinette*. But what depth of feeling is aroused in us by the spectacle of ancient, crushed, shattered Europe, unable and powerless to preserve even its finest talents from the enslaver, who drives and pushes them to their doom!

Looking over Zweig's letters and cards addressed to me, I recall every new book of his which he used to send me immediately after it was published, always with some nice, hurried inscription. What passion for his vocation, what temperament, what keen interest in and love for literature!

I remember how during one of the happiest days of my life—when I stayed in Romain Rolland's house in Switzerland, as his guest—my host handed me with characteristic Gallic elegance of gesture a letter from Zweig. Like its author, the letter was alive and buoyant, full of thoughts and emotion. Zweig expressed his joy for my sake, for I "was going to look into the clearest and at the same time the kindest eyes in Europe,"—the eyes of Rolland. He was glad of his recent opportunity to appear in Florence with a speech in Italian "on the European spirit," and pleased that the Italians were sincerely gra-

teful to him for having heard at last a different melody than the fascist hymns to which they were used. Jestingly, but not without pride, he referred to his trip into the Duce's Italy, as a "hussar raid." He was happy that after a long period of moral "lameness," inability to think and the desire to flee from people, which he had experienced, he again felt an urge to work; he also wrote that after his biographical work he would again take up the novel "which he had interrupted for the duration of the depression." "In our days I consider depressing books to be a crime," he wrote; in that same happy, joyful letter he expressed the same idea in the following words: "To be weak at a time which claims all one can give is a torture."

This letter was written in the spring of 1932. In the summer, when I was in Germany, I received another letter. And it was remarkable how he repeated, almost word for word, the same exclamation: "Keep well! The time is much too important to be ill or tired!" He kept on working all the time, and in the fall I received a postcard written apparently in one of his hurried moods: "Are you still there? I want to send you my newest book."

In those days the waves of Hitler's offensive against the German people were mounting higher and higher. A few months later Hitler set the Reichstag afire. A rabble of bipeds borrowing the flames of shame from this bonfire sped with smoking torches across all Germany; and in every German city there rose to the sky a flame which destroyed the "European spirit," that same spirit of which, together with many other writers, Zweig had written. And his books were burned.

What happened to him afterwards was that which became the fate of the progressive intelligentsia of the entire European continent. Zweig was forced to leave his native Salzburg: at the gates of his beloved city stood the hairy spectre which rose from nearby Munich. As a fugitive Zweig wandered from land to land, but the hairy spectre followed him. Fascism was soon able to triumph: Hitler's most ominous bonfire was aflame,—the bonfire of the world war. Its glow followed Zweig no matter where he went, whether to the shores of the Near East, to the British Isles or distant Brazil. The earth had become a planet in flames.

Where, oh where, could the fugitive break through the ring of pestiferous fire? Where could Zweig's broken staff of Ahasuerus take him to?

In my possession are two remarkable letters written by Zweig prior to the Hitlerites' advent to power. One of them has been published, and the other was not for publication; it expressed even more clearly the writer's views on the subject to which the correspondence was devoted,—of the possibility of a new war.

In his first letter Zweig referred to himself as the "ideological disciple of Walt Whitman and Verhaeren," and he declared that "in his youth he considered optimism his sacred duty." Now, however, he denied optimism. But even while denying it, he considered "Russia completely beyond danger so far as war was concerned." He wrote: "You may rest assured, my dear Fedin, that despite the indifference of the intelligentsia, despite the blindness of the broad masses, at that moment when the attempt is made to turn the European economic crisis into a war against Russia or any other State, the conscience now lying dormant in many will be aroused, and it will not be so easy for certain persons to be as imprudent as in 1914, when (as prince Bülow told in his recent memoirs) Count Berchtold 'smilingly' stated that the Serbians would simply be forced to fight."

Zweig's second letter sounds almost

like a declaration. "Speaking frankly, I do not believe in an imperialist war." And he cited five reasons in support of this view. First, he was of the opinion that no European country could any longer be so sure of its workers as to carry on a prolonged war. Secondly, in his opinion Russia was safe from the threat of war for the reason that the European peoples hated each other much more than they did their socialist adversary. Thirdly, he believed that it would be impossible to justify a military step in the eyes of the European population, which for a generation had been told that Russia was faced with immediate catastrophe. "The very imperialist States have put themselves in a difficult situation by their steady lying about the imminent fall of Russia." Zweig's next reason was the economic state of Europe which "is now so desperate that public opinion has finally realized what monstrous ruin the war carried in its wake." And the last reason: "We intellectuals are more resolved today than we were in 1914. We will not be caught unawares, miserable and unarmed as we are."

With this conviction that war was impossible Stefan Zweig entered a period which fairly seethed with open preparations for war. Fascism was going in for power at all costs, intending to make Germany take revenge and plunder the whole world. With each year the inevitability of a general bloody conflict became more and more evident. And what bitter disillusionments dogged Zweig's footsteps! He must have already seen his error at the time when, prior to Hitler's advent to power, he wrote that to be weak at such a time was torture.

And he felt this torture. He found himself among those of the Europeans who were pushed off the road of events and who became convinced that the long years spent after the first world war were spent in illusions. Here it is not a matter of Whitman's or Verhaeren's optimism. Optimism, faith in man and in his future, the optimism of the great American and of the great Belgian, is the fruit of the vigour of life and not of its weakness. Such optimism is felt in the gesture with which a man raises the banner of the struggle. Optimism is not placidity. On the contrary, it is that sobriety which permits us to recognize the obstacles which lie close at hand or far away, and to fight and overcome them.

Widespread among the European intellectuals was a type of man who was sure that the trials of the war of 1914—1918 had brought mankind to its senses once and forever, so that any new war designs were doomed to failure by history itself. This assuredness the European "optimists" considered to be their weapon. They were hoping to unsheathe it whenever it would become necessary. But when the hairy spectre of the Hitlerite rose before them and they grasped the pretty handle of their sword, they found that the sheath was empty. Their conviction of safety had turned into passivity in the face of the danger of war.

Stefan Zweig by character was close to this intelligentsia. He was antifascist by reason, by conviction and by his emotions as an artist. He was a humanist in the XIXth century sense, and he was trying to preserve his humanism from contact with the XXth century. War, as a means of attaining one's aim, was abhorrent to him. He refused to believe that the year 1914 could repeat itself. And he lived to our days. And the year when the war reached the American shore became his last one, his "fateful moment."

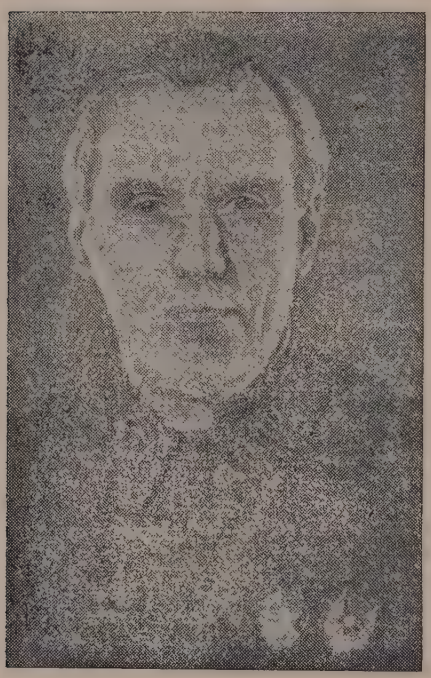
Our imagination refuses to add the name of Stefan Zweig to the long tragic list of the victims of war. I remember the ring of this name in the writers' circle in our country and in Europe. I recall how Gorky, who

was so remarkably responsive to every talent, was the first to tell me about him. He wrote: "I recommend to you highly Stefan Zweig's book *Conflicts* issued by the 'Vremya' publishers; it is a remarkable thing! Read it. This writer is growing swiftly and is able to give us brilliant things."

Zweig did give us brilliant masterpieces. All the more do we regret this artist, this European from head to foot, with his glamour, his errors and his significant drama.

KONSTANTIN FEDIN

Nikolai Tikhonov



In June, 1935, Nikolai Tikhonov went as a representative of the Soviet Union to Paris, to the International Antifascist Writers' Congress in Defense of Culture. It was the first time he had come in contact with Western Europe. The outcome was the volume of verse entitled: *The Shadow of a Friend.*

Thus it was that he visited Europe as a representative of the young socialist culture, in days that seem very far away now when one thinks of their comparative tranquility. Fascism was already gathering its demoniacal forces to strike openly, but the map of Europe was not as yet in smoking ruins and charred with gun-powder. So the Antifascist Congress opened in Paris, and a month later,—on the historical Fourteenth of July,—there was an impressive review of the democratic antifascist forces, a demonstration of the solidarity of the grand old city's working people. Tikhonov witnessed this; he has given us a description of it in unforgettable verse. Nevertheless, even in 1935 he sensed, as perhaps no other Soviet writer did, the imminence and certainty of a fight to the death with fascism. That feeling pervades the whole of this volume of verse.

Inevitably, memories of the war of 1914—1918 were present. They gazed mutely at the poet from every hilltop in the European uplands. A section of the book is called *Belgian Landscapes,*—a name symbolic; and not without a touch of bitter irony. He conceded its due to the Flemish land, a fair and well-tilled, tranquil land, breathing of joy and plenty; conceded it, though, only in so far as to guess at the appalling number of youthful dead on which this rich-flowering peace was founded. "Roses of Flanders," in all the luxuriance of their fresh young charm, reminded the poet that they had sprung from "the dun-grey layer of soil" beneath which "the infinite soldier-pantheon lies buried"; the keen observer, the Soviet citizen and poet saw another, a gloomier side to all this apparent European well-being:

The flame-thrower crimsoned in the phosgene smoke,
Beneath a mask that stank like very hell;

The groan was loud that from the parched throat broke,
And large as horse's eyes his own eyes seemed to swell.

Here is nocturnal Vienna after the devastation of 1934; a dreadful, desolate city where a miserable child-prostitute, "with something proud and bird-like and desperate in her face," wanders the streets alone. And here is the tale of the forty-seven Schutzbundists who marched from Vienna to the Czechoslovakian frontier. A workless man is tramping back and forth, trying to get from Italy into Yugoslavia or back again, driven hither and thither,—now by "the sentry in ashen-grey," now by "the sentry in dusty hue." An unknown man at one of the locks in the Kiel Canal greets a Soviet ship with the Rot Front salute. National dances in Hyde Park during the Olympiade, where

Soviet youth is dancing
On the old English greensward.

And lastly, he shows us Paris, that most amazing city, embodying all the contradictions of culture and civilization, prosperity and poverty. To this Paris came Tikhonov, loaded and winged with all these traditions. Tikhonov's Paris was the Place de la Bastille on the Fourteenth of July, 1935, when it was thronged by the antifascist demonstration. But in this, too, he saw, with a keen prescience that does his honour, Time's tragic crossroads, European culture between two wars—that which had been and that which was inevitably to come:

And above the Seine embattled
I saw a grinding dream:
Only a line of stacked rifles,
A weary monotonous stream.
And under them children were playing,
Digging the golden sand,
While shadows of rifles lay like a cross
Over those frail piqué-clad backs.
Their grandfathers fell at Verdun. . .

This book of Tikhonov's, with the Western-European impressions out of which it arose, and the year 1935 itself, constituted for the poet, as for many other Soviet writers and artists, a time for summing up the forces they had accumulated, and for consolidating their own creative experience. Put together, these might be regarded as what Dante called "the middle of life's road." True, we were rather older than Dante was when he met Virgil, but this was not so important.

From this standpoint, therefore, it is easiest of all to look back along the road the Soviet poet has travelled.

Tikhonov took to writing poetry after being at the front during the world war of 1914—1918. Horse and sabre are the subjects he is fondest of in his early works. War served as his school and his university. These early verses were written by a Russian youth who had looked death in the face and buried his dead friends in charred soil. Along all the ruined roads he tramped at the front, the belief that a great future was in store for his country never deserted him; it can be glimpsed in these first naive poems as well. Through the musings of a young man on his own unenviable lot as a soldier, persisted a wholesome confidence not only in himself but in his country, his contemporaries and the generation that had brought him into the battle-field.

Recalling his soldiering days in his later poems, Tikhonov was moved both by what he felt to be the historic inevitability of this war and his personal connection with it. Throughout the early poems there is a feeling that he has only just been demobilized, only just returned to peace-time work to writing. It was with this feeling that he began to work, it was this that inspired his first books—*The Horde* and *Country Ale*.

Those were remarkable volumes. When they first appeared in 1922—1923, they won the author prominence in the foremost ranks of the young Soviet literature. The man who

had written them was fresh and unspoiled and of a temperament he himself describes as

A bold, mad, holiday mood
With a Martian thirst to create.

There, in a few telling strokes, is a portrait which has lost no whit of its truth and likeness to this day; when we recognize in the prematurely grey-haired Tikhonov the gay, festive-hearted youth of the 1920's. It is also a collective portrait of a whole Soviet generation plunging eagerly into work, creation and the struggle for a better future for mankind.

Those remarkable early ballads of his—*The Blue Envelope, About Nails, Perekop,* the narrative-poem of the Hindu boy, Sammy, and many other things, sprang from this Martian thirst to create, and bore witness to breadth of vision, unprejudiced keen-sightedness, love for common manual labour, for roving about the country. Through them we see the poet himself, an unusually attractive and virile man, well-versed in the refinements and niceties of literature and poetry, but deliberately turning from them in search of fullness and freshness of feelings and impressions.

The poet's biography is a biography fairly typical of a Soviet literary man of the 1920's and 30's: of a man who is very sociable, industrious, with an enormous capacity for work, keen on social work of every kind, restless, and accustomed to covering great distances. Tikhonov has travelled the length and breadth of this vast country; he has studied the fraternal republics both as journalist, as a historian seeking the root of the people's epos, and simply as a poet. Passionately fond of mountaineering, he has climbed the great crags and peaks of Transcaucasia and Central Asia. It was perfectly natural for him to do this, both as a man and as an artist keeping pace with a great epoch, and deeply in love with the building of a new culture. Hence his varied and extremely useful social activities. No wonder that he is so well-loved in all the republics. In endeavouring to bring their poets closer, Tikhonov discovered new worlds of nature and history. That is why his translations of the Georgians are admirable examples of a disinterested preoccupation with the creative art of others, and at the same time are enriched with his own poetic individuality.

And all this was reflected with a kind of festive sprightliness and vividness in his verses. His Transcaucasian, Central-Asian and Karelian poems are not merely the outward and visible signs of a restless man's biography. They are a living memorial to friendship with people and nature, a memorial to the variety and intensity of man's struggle with nature and his victory over the dark forces of the world.

One of the best in the Kakhetian cycle is *Nocturnal Festivities at Allah-Verdy.* As you read it, a striking picture unfolds of a public holiday in the ancient land of the Georgians, the very heart of the Caucasus. The scene is lit by smoking straw torches and vibrates to the endless troubling stormy throbbing of the tambourine. The earth resounds with the thud of dancing feet, people eat and drink, make merry, dance and sing, and the author is swept away on this tide of primitive pagan jollity: "All unlike the self I knew, I sate me down by tamada[1]." Then a party of blind musicians appear in the heated crowd dancing in the firelight that scorches them. Where these unfortunates have come from, no one knows, but the poet's eye has discerned on the faded old khaki helmet that one wears the traces of a Red Army star. A barely visible badge, but it suffices to bring for a moment before the poet's vision the history of the country which until

[1] The Georgians have an ancient custom of electing the host of feasts. This elected host who conducts the revelling is called "tamada."

a short while ago was in the throes of the Civil War that established Soviet power in the Caucasus.

The old crumpled army hood
Made me almost believe
It a bird of some warlike brood,
Bringing everyone joy;
That, now the guardian-bird
Of the blind from the Alazan weirs,
It hailed me across the years
Like a welcoming kindly word.

This verse is typical of Tikhonov's mature work. With unexpected inrush of reminiscence the horizon of events opens wide, and the history of this people reaches out towards their happy future. Here we have the classic amazement and wonder at a mighty, primeval nature, at a strong hardy people, deep-rooted in their fertile native soil; beside this, you have a sheaf of searchlights penetrating dim gorges, picking out here and there from the darkness a group of people in the rags, the smoke and wounds of a stormy decade. This straight uncompromising searchlight, this feeling for history, is almost the strongest of the poet's feelings, his guiding sense.

Poetry is one of the most powerful weapons in the development of culture; behind it stands a past as ancient as that behind the sail, the axe, the spurt of flame from the flint in the hand of a primitive man. In times gone-by it was the sign of mastery, the proof of victory, of increasing creative power, as can be seen from the whole of the folklore, from the tales and epics of the peoples of the world,—the *Gilgamesh*, the *Edda*, the *Nibelungs*, and those treasures first brought within our reach during the last decade, the Armenian *David of Sassun*, the Georgian *Amirani*, the Kalmyk *Jangar*, and many another. Soviet poetry is the poet's self-knowledge, is his awareness of himself in relation to his time, as a son of his generation, a participator, witness and active influence on the events of his day. Poetry serves history if it does not wish to remain outside its time, or, at best, in some back-yard of what are known as the smaller forms. Only a destiny like this gives poetry the right to become the art of a great style, like the art of the Renaissance, classicism, or the realistic novel of the XIXth century.

In the path of development of Nikolai Tikhonov's poetry we discover one of the strongest confirmations of the rightness and perfect proportion of our attitude towards history.

When the war broke out, nothing could be more natural to Tikhonov than to put on again the khaki and the high boots of a soldier. As far back as the winter of 1939 he returned to darkened Leningrad from a front which was in close proximity, on the Karelian isthmus, and again and again we listened breathlessly to him. He showed an exhaustive knowledge of all the wars that have been fought on our planet for the last 200 to 300 years. These yarns of his were indispensable for rounding out one's idea of him. They bore witness to his lofty passions, his intensely sociable nature which hastened to share its surplus wealth with others. In Tikhonov's tales of extraordinarily intelligent animals, or the fantastically strange train of everyday accidents, of mysterious and unforeseen elements that break into someone's destiny at times, there is a truth much greater than in a plain, bald relation of facts. They bear the stamp of an untiring spirit of research, the spirit of the pathfinder and pioneer, which leads the author, now no longer young, and the wiser by over twenty years' experience, to untrodden paths, to fresh, untouched material, to seek more and more people,—listeners, readers, and comrades as well.

Tikhonov's is a happy destiny. He is one of the healthiest, hardiest,

most able-bodied people in Soviet literature. It is nothing for him to go without sleep for nights on end, to tramp any number of miles, wake at dawn after sleeping on the bare ground, and start off again. He is urged onward by a feeling akin to ambition, but much broader, more reliable. It is impatience. In this, too, as in many other ways, Tikhonov is a representative of the Soviet generation that has triumphed over the icy wastes, over the arid deserts of Central Asia, over the stratosphere, and fought for a record output of coal, ore and oil. Had Tikhonov not been a poet, it is easy enough to imagine him working in any of these fields. But there is no need to do that, for the types who work in these fields are to be found in his verses, and not even as heroes, but as the living embodiments of the author himself.

There is another feature which, in connection with the war and the defense of the country, has now acquired primary importance in Tikhonov's art and his behaviour: he is the poet of Leningrad.

This amazing city was destined, at the beginning of the 1920's, to be the most poetic city in the country. Alexander Blok was just dead, and his tragic and brilliant shade haunted the sleepless nights of all callow rhymers. The city was filled to overflowing with books, with the cultural treasures amassed in the course of two hundred years. For the first time in history its palaces, museums and libraries were thrown open to the people. This in itself was a sight at which to marvel. Add to it the architectural ensembles, the creations of Rossi, Rastrelli, Quarenghi, buildings which now for the first time had become memorials to culture. Here it was that Tikhonov had grown up; here he returned after he was demobilized, here his first poems were printed, and from here his fame, timorous and unsure of itself at first, and confined to a narrow literary circle, spread to ever-widening reading circles.

Throughout the course of his literary life Tikhonov remained faithful to his native city. He was at the head of the Leningrad Writers' Union, and was subsequently elected a member of the Leningrad City Soviet. But the bond of union between him and the city of his birth was closer and more direct than that. The firm and precious tradition that links him with the best of the XIXth century Petersburg is potent in Tikhonov. He is, moreover, despite all his mobility and closeness to the life of today, a sower of enlightenment, "both in principle and practice," as they expressed it at one time. The tones of all the great Russian voices are heard in his voice.

In these days of the war for our country, he has suddenly become, for us the ambassador of a heroic city. In his wasted face, in his proud and mournful eyes, we may read the whole story of the interminable winter months of siege that held the cradle of the proletarian revolution in an iron ring.

This time Tikhonov has told us much less than usual. We saw a grave and grizzled warrior, the son of a great generation, that has clenched his teeth and sworn to win, to survive, no matter what the cost, no matter what effort, privations and sacrifices survival may demand.

That is how Tikhonov sounds in the newspaper columns.

This time will pass and be over. Fascism's downfall is imminent. All that the Soviet people are suffering will soon become part of their history. It is clear beyond a shadow of doubt that one of the first to write the epic of the great war for the fatherland will be Nikolai Tikhonov. And I think we cannot do better today than to wish him to embark on a work of this scope.

P. ANTOKOLSKY

Shakespeare Conference Held in Moscow

The traditional Shakespeare Conference was held in Moscow from the 21st to the 23rd of April of this grim war year. This was the fourth conference held annualy within the walls of the All-Russian Theatrical Society in Moscow. It began with my report on the subject of "The Struggle for Humanism and Shakespeare's Creative Work."

It seems to me that the works of that great writer, who "was not of an age, but for all time," have become today especially near to us. We should ponder still more over his work, study Shakespeare on the background of the present stupendous events, and uphold till the day of victory those thoughts and feelings which enrich, inspire and fill with their ever living fire his immortal plays performed on the stages of hundreds of theatres in our country. Don't we witness today the "universal wolf" who has broken loose, who tries to turn everything into his "prey" and who will "eat up himself?" After this monstrous sight, won't the dark images, like Iago, become still darker in our eyes, and the heroic images of fighters for the truth, like that of Hamlet, become still more splendid? Today we understand Shakespeare, the great revealer, better than ever.

In my report I have dwelt in detail on the way Shakespeare contrasted the conceptions of "habit" and "nature," not only in his comedies, as, for instance, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, but also in his great tragedies: "thick-lips" Othello and "honest" Iago, these definitions are diametrically opposed to the real essence of these characters. Perhaps on the stage Othello is outwardly much too charming as a rule, and Iago is somewhat of a Mephisto from the very beginning. And yet the "undressing," which reveals Iago's inner blackness and Othello's unblemished purity, must proceed gradually and surprise the audience, because, as Stanislavsky said, this undressing constitutes the "grain" of the play.

But that great work has a different side too. Summing up the experience gained by the Soviet theatre in staging *Othello*, that second, ideological side may be expressed best in the words of Theobald, the old English commentator, who, I may add, has been mentioned frequently of late in our Shakespearean research. Theobald saw the morale of the play in that "a woman may fall in love with the virtues and shining qualities of a man, and therein overlook the difference of complexion and colour." It gave me special pleasure to quote these words said by the excellent commentator whom we have named the "father of Shakespearean research," because we realize that these words are a simple and highly-convincing refutation of the "race theories" invented by the fascists.

In my report I have mentioned the female characters created by Shakespeare. In the light of these eventful and heroic days, we see them differently. At night Desdemona appeared before the Senate, and without fear she spoke aloud of her love for the dark Othello: "I saw Othello's visage in his mind." She followed her husband to war. That is why Othello called her "fair warrior." On some theatrical stages, however, pale and passive Desdemonas may still be seen, as if they belonged to an era of sentimental novels.

In its quest the theatre will find a

Nathan Altman's curtain decoration for "King Lear" produced at the Leningrad Dramatic Theatre

new shining, genuine Shakespearean beauty in these female characters. Only recently, for instance, Cordelia appeared very uninteresting on the stage and in the opinion of critics. But in the spring of 1941, when regisseur Kozintsev of Leningrad and regisseur Fyodorov of Sverdlovsk clad Cordelia, as she sped to her father's assistance, in golden armour, in the armour of the ancient British queens, she at once became a live and colourful figure.

The inner content of Shakespeare's works, however, is expressed not only in the characters but also in verbal imagery. In my report I have endeavoured to show, and this, of course, is of importance in principle to theatrical practice, that in Shakespeare's plays the words do not always necessarily belong to the speaking persons. In certain moments any of the persons created by Shakespeare can fulfil the function of chorus. At such moments Shakespeare's words become a slogan addressed to the audience. These Shakespearean aphorisms have an especially inspiring ring today, much as if they were written just now. And how, indeed, can the audience abstain from applauding the words: "The arms are fair, when the intent of bearing them is just," pronounced on the stage.

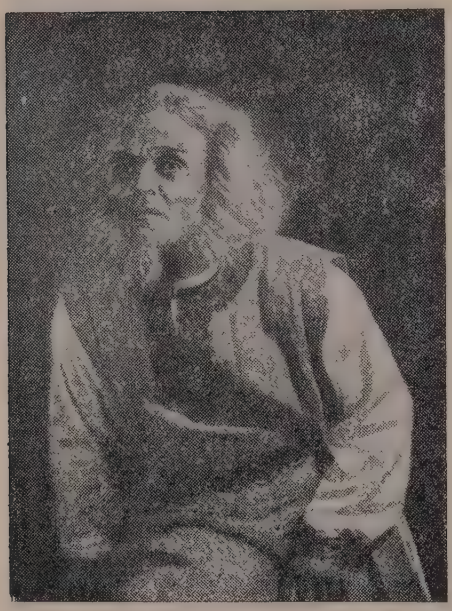
On the first day of the conference, a report was read by the young Shakespearean scholar A. Stein, on the subject of "Shakespeare's Humour." The speaker dwelt in detail on the character of Falstaff. His treatment is much like the brilliant characterization which Priestley gave of Falstaff; the latter was translated in 1939 and published in the Russian edition of *International Literature*; it enjoys special success among our admirers of Shakespeare. The speaker also mentioned Shakespeare's humour in poetry, especially the humoristic whims of

love in *Midsummer's Night Dream*. Analyzing Shakespeare's humour in its different aspects, the speaker characterized it as the most striking, complete expression of the humour of the English people. He compared certain details of Shakespeare's writings with the typical characteristics of British humour, which we find among the English even now, in these grim days of war. "English humour," the speaker concluded, "is that force which has not left the English people in the darkest moments of its history, which has not abandoned the English during the recent dark days of mass air-raids by German aviation, and in which we may discern the mighty voice of the unbending will of the great English nation."

The second day of the conference started with a report read by T. Rokotov on the subject of "Shakespeare and the War." In Shakespeare's writings a very important place is occupied by the theme of war. This theme is permeated with the legends of the war of the Red and White Roses, and the Hundred-Year War, which were still alive in those days. It is permeated with patriotism and love of the people for their country. At the same time, the speaker pointed out, Shakespeare's patriotism was the patriotism of a writer who made it his task to direct the development of his people and to point out to them the road to the aims which the great thinker and humanist has placed before himself. Besides, war, as an event which lends itself best to stage presentation, has naturally had a special attraction for the playwright. In portraying heroic characters in his plays Shakespeare liked to describe critical moments, both in the lives of individual men and of entire societies. T. Rokotov dealt with the Shakespearean era and spoke of the national upsurge which England experienced after the destruction of the Great Armada. All this renders Shakespeare's historical plays still more interesting to us today.

What was Shakespeare's attitude towards war? The speaker came to the conclusion that Shakespeare denied that war was a necessary accompaniment of human society. But at the same time, while considering that peace was better than war, that peace was mankind's natural state, Shakespeare would not prefer any peace to any war. He recognized the righteousness of a just war. As regards the reasons for the military conflicts described by Shakespeare in his historical plays, T. Rokotov analyzed Shakespeare's political views. As the speaker pointed out, Shakespeare was a monarchist, an enemy of the feudal lords who pulled the country back towards feudal dismemberment. In Shakespeare's opinion the country's national unity was a necessary condition for victory over the enemy. A second condition was the abolition of treason within the country. And, finally, these two

S. Mikhoels as King Lear and A. Zuskin as the Fool at a rehearsal of "King Lear" at the Moscow Jewish Theatre



V. Safronov (Leningrad) as King Lear

conditions became valid in the democratism of the leader and his proximity to the people. As an example, the speaker cited the case of Henry V. Shakespeare's profoundly democratic patriotism is near to us today and inspires us in the struggle against the dark forces of Hitlerism.

The conference listened with much interest to a report read by Honoured Artist S. Radlov on the subject of "The Staging of Plays in the Theatres of Elizabethan England". Radlov criticized a tendency towards an intentional simplification of scenic form which has become evident in many of our Shakespearean performances; in doing so, the regisseurs refer to the primitiveness of the stage in Elizabeth's times. The speaker doubted this "primitiveness"; what is more, he declared it to be a myth. "What is the basis of this widespread theory of primitiveness? The De Witt's sketch of the Swan Theatre? But De Witt was not a professional painter, he did not try to give a photograph-like resemblance, he merely described its general construction. Neither should we base our opinion on descriptions generally hostile to the theatre, like that by Philip Sidney. The latter was simply outraged by the violations of classic unity by that theatre. That was all. What would happen,—the speaker asked,—if, for instance, we should base our conception of the Russian opera in the first half of the XIXth century on the description of opera performances as given by Leo Tolstoy in *War and Peace*? Tolstoy surely was no less an authority than Sidney. The methods of scenic form and the technique of acting in Shakespeare's times are far from us, they are strange and unknown to us, but they could not have been primitive, any more than the theatre in Ancient Greece, for instance. Could have been naive and primitive the theatre which gave performances in a city which had created the Acropolis and Parthenon? Too often do we overlook the fact that Shakespeare was of the theatrical profession and that he wrote for the theatre. Why would Shakespeare, a professional, present on the stage of *Macbeth*, for example, witches, witches' dances around the boiling cauldron and the show of Eight Kings, if the theatre for which he wrote it did not possess the scenic possibilities to present these sights and fairy-scenes? The public theatres no doubt felt the influence of the private theatres, although they were opposed to each other as competitors. In their turn, the private theatres felt the influence of Court performances. The speaker, considered to be one of the best Shakespearean play regisseurs in our country, concluded his report by a description of his plan for the staging of *Macbeth*. He is now starting work on this play in the theatre of which he is in charge, and which is well-known for its numerous productions of Shakespearean plays, which have contributed a great deal to the popularization of the great British playwright in our country.

On the last day of the conference, I read a second report in which I summed up the Shakespearean activity of our theatre during the past season. Then followed a concert, in which the actors of the Moscow Art Theatre, Honoured Artist Popova and Ktorov, and the actor of the Maly Theatre, Honoured Artist Kovrov, took part. Scenes from *The Taming of the Shrew* and *As You Like It* were performed. A group of actors, lead by regisseur Fotiev, presented a new, abbreviated version of *Othello*, specially created to be performed for the men at the front, in blindages, dug-outs and front-line clubs.

The conference adopted a resolution calling for the organization in Moscow of monthly Shakespearean recitals under the auspices of the All-Russian Theatrical Society. These recitals are to prepare the way for the creation of an All-Union Shakespearean Society. This Society, a need for which we have felt for a long time, will be created after the destruction of fascism.

M. MOROZOV

Illustration to "Hamlet" by V. Favorsky

"Mademoiselle Fifi"

A scene from the opera "Mademoiselle Fifi"

Listening to Cesar Cui's opera *Mademoiselle Fifi*, now on the repertory of the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre in Moscow (the opera is based on Maupassant's story), one cannot help thinking: here it is, the brilliant foresight of a writer, whose power of artistic insight discovered the inner meaning of events with such keenness that many decades later his images live again and move us like topics of the present day

The remarkable story by Maupassant, who branded the Prussian oppressors with hatred and scorn, hits a different mark today, and hits it right on the head. This mark is represented by the descendants of the Prussian officers, the Hitler offsprings, the fascist barbarians who again trample over France, viciously reproducing their predecessors' destructive tendencies.

The old French castle of d'Uville is shown on the stage; the Germans are billeted there now. But it cannot be termed castle any more. What do the Prussians care for French culture? The d'Uville castle is no more. They, the Germans, are the bosses now. To the devil with the paintings of great masters, with rare books! To hell with the noble art of Sèvres and Limoges ceramics! The Prussian soldier does not care for museum exhibits. Take the youthful lieutenant von Eyrick—effeminate and elegant (no wonder they call him Mademoiselle Fifi): he discovered a fine pastime for himself in d'Uville. Indeed, isn't it funny when this "handsome rascal" von Eyrick chips off the tip of the nose of a beautiful marble Venus with a well-aimed blow, and shoots away at portraits? And what is still funnier, he places a powder wick into the neck of a Sèvres teapot and sets a match to it: isn't it fun to watch the dishes and mirrors fly about in small bits?! . . .

"Ah, Fifi, Fifi, still a child! . . ."

Yes, he is very young, this youth, purring like a cat and cruel like a tiger. He is slim and supple like a girl, this beast in his tight-fitting coat of a German lieutenant. There is nothing human any more in the image of this corrupted and innerly devastated invader, this polished Prussian cannibal.

You watch Wilhelm von Eyrick on the stage where he is shown as he behaved decades ago, but in every gesture, word and intonation of his you see today's army of von Eyricks, as destructive as their predecessor described by Maupassant, and differing by their "ideology" only. Before, perhaps, they used to destroy as a pastime, for fun; but the modern von Eyricks rob, burn, rape and murder for the glory of the "higher race" and in the name of a "new order."

For a long time, this small one-act opera by the Russian composer Cesar Cui, *Mademoiselle Fifi*, lay beyond the theatrical repertories. Indeed, among the compositions of this talented musician *Mademoiselle Fifi* does not claim to occupy a leading place. Perhaps it is the absence of a finished end which prevented its appearance on the stage; perhaps it is its peculiar, somewhat untraditional operatic form. Cui's *Mademoiselle Fifi* is written as a realistic musical story, based on dialogues sung by the acting persons as recitatives, without any long airs, duets and classic ensembles.

At the same time the composer succeeded in lending to his music the character of a stinging satire on the Prussian military clique, presented as grotesque and

stupid figures, to the accompaniment of wooden, stiff march-like rhythms.

The antithesis to all this is represented by the humane, emotional and ardent theme of Rachel, the unhappy erring girl who found herself in the d'Uville castle for the momentary diversion of the Prussian conquerors.

Girls timidly cowering in the doorway are shown on the stage: they were brought from Rouen, and the Prussian officers order them about brutally, as if they were just some sort of booty. But humiliation and threats do not provoke fear and subordination; on the contrary, they cause a rousing of that hatred which calls for protest and struggle. Perhaps only recently Rachel believed that to her, who had been cast out from "society," all roads are alike. But she was deeply mistaken in thinking that all feelings were stunted in her. Now Rachel sees the Prussian occupationists and sings a song of wrath about the beautiful France crushed by the enemy. That song she performs as a challenge, looking straight into the conquerors' eyes. Her song is wound up by an appeal for revenge and reckoning for the "shame and spilled blood" of the French people.

Someone among the boches pricked up his ears. Another is ready to reach out for his pistol to slay the defenseless woman, and a threatening circle closes about Rachel. But Fifi finds a different way out: he roars with impudent laughter, blows some bitter tobacco smoke in Rachel's face and mocks her cynically:

"To us belong France and the Frenchmen," Fifi declares with rapture, "all the woods, the fields and houses in France. To us belong all the women in France!"

The dignity of a French woman and patriot is awakened in Rachel, and it dictates to her the only step possible: death to the enemy! A swift blow with a fruit-knife, delivered by the French woman, puts an end to the life of the German conqueror.

The finale of the opera has been worked out by the musical leaders of the theatre, and the theme of Rachel appears in it once more. This theme resounds again today as a wrathful appeal to take up the struggle for a beautiful, free France.

E. KANN

"Straussiana"

An old lamp-lighter unhurriedly lights street lanterns. Bright, multicoloured lamp shades shed their light on the tables in the café. Happy, free, old Vienna is having its rest and recreation.

The sweet sounds of a Strauss waltz float through the air. The most unexpected couples spin around rapturously. Happy lovers and jealous ones are carried away by the dance, and so is the waitress, spinning around with her tray in hands. So is a respectful elderly governess enraptured by the music and altogether forgetting her two youthful charges. The latter profit by this unexpected freedom and do the most intricate steps lustily; even the policemen cannot help joining in the dance, stepping out in a ridiculous way. And really who can resist Strauss?

Thus begins the ballet *Straussiana*, staged by the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Theatre in Moscow. The authors of the ballet have found a happy solution to the interesting problem of blending a merry pantomime with multicoloured lyrical dancing.

The stiff governess has been carried away by the unexpected number of cavaliers, an event so unusual in her drab life, and the ingenious thief is making away with the handbag stolen from her; a most funny and amusing scene follows: a chase... on the spot. The thief moves his legs with unbelievable deftness, and the policemen's boots strike the ground with fury. The whole crowd slides into the rhythmic movement, without moving from the spot, and the audience smiles at this clever imitation of rapid movement, which actually creates a remarkable illusion of running.

The Strauss melodies change, and once more the couples glide in the waltz; delicate ladies now sway and bow almost to the floor, twirling around in dance. But suddenly the jealous woman appears before the carefree spouse, she herself having abandoned the partner, who is in love with her, only a little while ago. The audience laughs heartily when the dance gives way to a rollicking pantomime in which roguish female virtue chastises her partner in life who has allowed himself to be carried away too far.

Everything is light in the *Straussiana*, woven as it is from Strauss' melodies. Love springs up from the very rhythms of the music, and between waltzes and swift gallops the heart has time to experience both joy and slight pangs of jealousy, ethereal like everything else that night.

The violins in the orchestra sing lovelornly of life. The joy of life pulses

A scene from the ballet "Straussiana"

high in the dances performed on the stage. The creators of the ballet *Straussiana* have undertaken, and with success, to show the endless variations of the waltz, from its strictly academic forms, performed according to all rules of art on irreproachable *pointes*, down to bright, character dances, etudes which have borrowed from the waltz its rhythm and frame, reproducing them anew with marvelous inventiveness and excellent taste.

But where is the subject itself? Ah, don't be in a hurry! There, in the background of the stage, an elegant young musician is respectfully kissing the hand of a lady in a sky-blue cloak. One more happy encounter, one more human love. Perhaps this musician, who has chanced to enter the café, is Johann Strauss, the magician himself? Maybe. Everything is possible that Vienna summer night. Nobody will demand from the authors of the libretto to be shown authentic historical proof to the effect that *Straussiana* actually had or hadn't happened in the life of Strauss.

In a waltz full of dreamy poetry, the musician's beloved partner tells of the happiness which fills her heart.

But everything is so brief and unexpected that night, as if the events themselves have also been spinning around in a waltz. Replacing the *Tale of the Vienna Woods*, the cellos now sing of something sad.

And really, wearing a luxurious golden gown, as if just stepping down from a gala performance, an actress appears. A solo, expressive, graceful and charming,— and the musician's heart, perhaps as capricious as the melody created by him, is captured and turns towards her. Alas! this night's joys are so closely intertwined with the pricks of the arrows shot by the restless winged little boy! And now, in dance, one celebrates her victory, while the other, the abandoned one, expresses her grief.

Like butterflies around nocturnal lights, enraptured couples continue dancing, and one Strauss melody is replaced by another. Again we hear the eternally-young melody of the *Tale of the Vienna Woods*. Who knows how much joy and grief this night is yet to bring?

But the old lamp-lighter appears on the stage again, and out go the street lanterns. The curtain falls, and *Straussiana* is over.

In this performance the young ballet ensemble has shown a high art, a fine technique and brilliant abilities in comedy and lyrics. The regisseurs have arranged an elegant setting in fine harmony with Strauss' music for these talented young actors.

This play, though staged during the war, naturally does not pretend to have any connection with the grim events of our days. The audience leaves the theatre with a warm contented smile, having experienced the unparalleled atmosphere of old free Vienna, the city of waltz.

A. NOVIKOV

NEWS AND VIEWS

U.S.S.R.

On the anniversary of the death of the famous Russian sculptor I. Shadr (1887—1941), the Organizational Committee of the Union of Artists of the U.S.S.R. arranged an evening session. N. Mashkovtsev, an art critic, read the diary of the deceased, which he had put in order and provided with his comments. These notes, although not at all remarkable from a literary point of view, contain rich material for the artist's biography.

His real name was Ivanov, Shadr being his pseudonym, from the name of the city of Shadrinsk in the Chelyabinsk region, the sculptor's native town. He was one of the numerous children of a carpenter, whose excellent craftsmanship made him famous in the whole region. The boy's childhood was one of want, and as soon as he grew up he entered the employ of a local factory owner. The artist describes his first steps on the road to art with great humour.

The notes contain numerous remarks on the role of art under the conditions of those times, on the demands made on it, etc. Of considerable interest are his notes on the problem of silhouette in monumental sculpture (especially in outdoor monuments).

The notes contain many details showing the artist's working methods and his personality.

A collection of reproductions of Shadr's works and of his drawings and sketches were exhibited to the guests. Most interest was naturally manifested for the reproduction of Shadr's monument to Gorky (see p. 73) to be erected in Moscow, for which he had been awarded a prize.

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Esthonian scientists, musicians, artists, painters and writers continue to pursue their activity in Uzbekistan, Bashkiria, Kirghizia, the Urals and Siberia. Hans Kruus, dean of the Tartu University and doctor of historical sciences, has completed a book on the development of capitalism in Esthonia. At present he is writing about the Esthonian partisans, exterminating battalions, fighters, commanders and political instructors of the Esthonian national division.

The dean of the Tallin Polytechnical Institute is teaching at the Chelyabinsk Institute of mechanization of agriculture. Esthonian writers, actors, artists and musicians are carrying on their work fruitfully. V. Alume, violinist and director of the Tallin Conservatoire, appears in Chelyabinsk, while the art ensemble of Esthonia performs at Yaroslavl. The writer August Jakobson has finished a novel dealing with the great patriotic war.

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The hundredth anniversary of the birth of the remarkable Ukrainian composer N.Lyssenko was celebrated in the Bashkirian capital Ufa, on May 9th. Bogomoletz, president of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences and himself an outstanding representative of Ukrainian culture, the Ukrainian composers Verikovsky and Kozitsky, the Ukrainian writers Tychina, Rylsky, the well-known producer Smolich and others as well as representatives of the Bashkir people,—stressed N. Lyssenko's enormous role in the development of Ukrainian musical culture. The composer's works have not lost their charm to this day, and his operas are still to be found on the repertories of Soviet theatres. Such are his operas *Taras Bulba*, *Drowned woman*, *Christmas Night* and the famous *Natalka-Poltavka*. The composer has worked much in the realm of Ukrainian folk songs, and it was he who wrote the music to many of the texts by the great Ukrainian poet T. Shevchenko.

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The Red Army Song and Dance Ensemble, led by professor A. Alexandrov, is known far beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. From a small group of twelve in 1928, this ensemble has grown to two-hundred and fifty during the fourteen years of its activity. The heroic themes supplied by the great patriotic war have aroused the creative enthusiasm of this powerful ensemble. New patriotic war songs, which have become the favourites of the Red Army, have been composed. The ensemble performs at the front, where upward of one thousand concerts

were given, sometimes within close proximity to the enemy lines, to the accompaniment of roaring guns. Most famous and popular among the ensemble's repertory are the following: *Stalin Cantata, Sacred War, Song of the Great Soviet Union* and the *Partisans' Song*.

Other popular ensembles of song and dance are also familiar to the army in action. The Ensemble of the Folk Dances of the U.S.S.R., led by the outstanding artist of the Moscow Opera and Ballet Theatre Igor Moisseyev, is now performing for the Pacific Navy. The Taldom Ensemble of Song and Dance (Taldom is a small town in the Kalinin area) is well-known on the Kalinin front. Together with the Red Army this ensemble advanced, following the retreating fascists; and there where only the day before battles were raging, on the next day the invigorating songs of the Taldom boys could be heard.

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Despite the severity of the war atmosphere, more and more people crowd the theatres and cinemas. The theatres of the capital perform in different cities of the Soviet Union. The Vakhtangov Theatre of Moscow has been playing in Omsk for over six months and staged its best plays there: Gorky's *Yegor Bulychov*, Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and Solovyov's *Field-Marshal Kutuzov*.

On the occasion of the Red Army's twenty-fourth anniversary, the theatre performed a première of *Oleko Dundich*, a patriotic play about the Serbian hero of the civil war. Now the theatre is rehearsing a new play on the subject of the great patriotic war, entitled *This Is the Western Front Speaking*. Other plays, like Rostan's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Labiche's *Straw Hat* and Hervé's classic musical comedy *Mademoiselle Nitouche*, are also on the theatre's repertory. The Vakhtangov Theatre also gave eighty performances for the rear garrisons of the Red Army and for military hospitals

Four of the country's best theatres are now playing at Novosibirsk: the Pushkin Dramatic Theatre of Leningrad, the Leningrad State Philharmony, the Jewish State Theatre of Minsk and the Moscow Marionette Theatre. The plays *Lenin*, *Suvorov* and *In the Ukrainian Steppes* enjoy great success in Novosibirsk. During its stay in that city, the theatre has produced thirteen old plays and four new ones. All the theatres are very active in the Red Army. The Pushkin Theatre has given a thousand performances in different garrisons and units.

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In the course of the last ten months, the "Soviet Writer" publishers have issued more than eighty books dealing with the great patriotic war. Sketches of the front, poems and stories by the best Soviet writers have been published in two million copies.

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The first volume of the *History of Diplomacy* published by the "Gospolitizdat" met with exceptional success. The five hundred thousand copies were sold out within a few days. This volume of the *History of Diplomacy* shall be translated into several European languages.

The second volume is now in its preparatory stage. In addition to V. Potyomkin, the following took part in writing it: academician E. Tarle, corresponding members of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. A. Pankratova and I. Mintz, and Professor V. Khvostov. The second volume will be somewhat larger than the first. It will deal with the history of world diplomacy, from the period of the Frankfort peace down to the second world war. The first part of the book ends with the Versailles peace. The second part will describe the period after the first world war up to our times. The concluding part of the book contains a description of the organization and methods of modern diplomacy.

As in the case of the first volume, the authors used original diplomatic documents and the many memoirs written by such outstanding men in the political and military world as Bismarck, Bülow, Grey, Poincaré, Lloyd-George and others. The authors have also made use of materials supplied by the many volumes of the well-known Soviet edition: *International Relations During the Era of Imperialism* and the documents published in the so-called coloured books issued at different times in various countries.

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An extensive exhibition dealing with the rout of the German troops at the approaches to Moscow was opened at the State Historical Museum in Moscow.

The numerous exhibits recall the grim days of autumn 1941; they tell of the courage and valour of the Soviet warriors who defended Moscow. In addition to documents, posters and pictures, there also are many trophies captured from the enemy, medals, iron crosses and orders taken from fascist soldiers who had found their death in the spacious fields around Moscow.

A special section of the exhibition is dedicated to the fearless men and women partisans. Among the exhibits here we

find the personal effects of the Hero of the Soviet Union Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, whom the fascists have tortured to death.

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The publishing house "Iskustvo" (Art) has just set to work on the publication of three illustrated albums on Polish, Serbian and Czech art. A great number of artistic reproductions supplied with adequate literary texts will give a vivid representation of the evolution of art in these countries beginning with ancient times up to the present day.

The great interest which the U.S.S.R. takes in the fraternal Slav nations was amply proved by the outstanding success of the Second Pan-Slavonic Conference recently held in Moscow. With the purpose of further acquainting the broad circles of Soviet society with the literature of the Slavs, the State Literary Publishing House is preparing a series of new model translations of the masterpieces of Slavonic literature.

The verses and poems of the great poet Adam Mickiewicz have also been translated anew, as well as the historical novel by Henryk Sienkiewicz *The Knights of the Cross*. As is well known, this novel depicts the struggle of the Slavs against the German knights and the defeat of the latter at Grünewald.

As to Czech literature, the first to be issued will be the works of Jaroslav Hašek, a writer well-known to the Soviet readers owing to his *Selected Tales* and *The Good Soldier Schweik*; next will come a collected volume of Czech fairy tales compiled by Alois Jirásek. The first set of volumes of the *Slavonic Series* will be completed with a translation of *The Serbian Epos*.

The whole of the publication is supplied with a great number of illustrations and specimens of national art.

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The State Literary Publishing House (Moscow) is preparing for publication a series of popular books under the general heading *Our Great Ancestors*.

The patriotic war waged by the Soviet people against the nazi invaders fixes public attention on certain antecedent historical dates and leads one to the drawing of parallels. Soviet playwrights and stage and cinema regisseurs, each one in his own field, do not confine themselves to plays which reflect the present heroical struggle of the Russian people against the foreign invaders: they also revive both on the stage and screen great events of the glorious history of Russia.

The series *Our Great Ancestors* is dedicated to the exploits of Russian heroes during seven hundred years, beginning with Alexander Nevsky (1220—1263) who defeated the "cur-knights" at the Lake Peipus, and the victory of Dmitry Donskoy at the battle of the Kulikovo Field. The XVIIth century is represented by a book about the Nizhny-Novgorod Elder Kuzma Minin and Prince Dmitry Pozharsky. The central figure in the book on the XVIIIth century is Field-Marshal Suvorov, the hero of Ismail, who won immortal glory by his Italian campaign. The series ends with an issue dedicated to the biography of Kutuzov, the hero of the patriotic war of the year 1812.

The books of this series are published in many millions of copies and will be illustrated by eminent Soviet artists.

* * *

The cultural life of Leningrad has not slackened notwithstanding the constant bombarding of the city; it is, on the contrary, intensely active in all fields.

It would be opportune here to mention the activities of the Hermitage Museum, the director of which, Joseph Orbeli, refused to be evacuated and remained at his post, keeping up all the time a lively intercourse with the local artists and art experts.

As an instance of this we can cite the fact that the event of the eighthundredth anniversary of the birth of the famous Azerbaidjan poet Nizami (born in 1141) was celebrated in the Hermitage by a meeting with a large scientific program (the projected large-scale celebration of this outstanding jubilee throughout the Soviet Union was impeded by the war).

At the same time a group of artists who likewise declined the offer to leave Leningrad is now busy working at the organization of an extensive exhibition of Soviet art in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Soviet Union.

The Leningrad section of this exhibition is to give a graphic and comprehensive representation of the militant aspect of this city in the days of the patriotic war, its mode of life, its front, and some of Leningrad's most prominent heroes and social workers.

A number of talented artists are busy working on these themes.

ARGENTINA

An association of intellectual workers—artists, journalists and writers—of Argentina, which was organized in the summer of 1935, recently held its Third Congress of Argentine Men of Letters. This Congress addressed the people of Argentina, as well as all the liberty-loving peoples of the world, calling them to stand in defense of culture and civilization by ren-

dering all possible aid to the Soviet Union in the struggle against the nazi invaders. The paper of the association, *Nuevo Gazette*, writes: "Now is not the time to take interest in poetry for poetry's sake nor in questions treating on the theories of literary technique; these matters will prove of no intrinsic value if the great fight which is being carried on with fascism is lost. A struggle is now going on which will determine the fate not only of art, but of humanity itself. And if art is to exist at all in the future, it must now go into the thick of the fight. There is no choice."

* * *

A new volume of selected poems by the poetess Julia Prilutzkaya Farni de Sinni entitled *Sixteen Sonnets* has been published by the magazine *Vertice*. According to the Argentine papers, Prilutzkaya's talented lyric poems are permeated with the vague and moody restlessness so characteristic of our troubled times.

The volume is illustrated by the Argentine artist Jorje Largo.

VENEZUELA

A volume by the eminent critic and historian of literature Mariano Salas, dedicated to the problems of Venezuelan literature from the XVIIIth century to the present time, has been published in the town of Caracas under the heading: *Progress of Venezuelan Literature*. This book contains more than twenty critical essays on the works of the most prominent poets, writers and essayists of Venezuela. Ample reference and bibliographical material is appended to it.

NORWAY

As a result of Quisling's repressions, the primary schools in Oslo cannot go on working, as out of the nine hundred and sixty-six school-teachers of the town only thirty-seven have agreed to join Quisling's "Union of Teachers." About six hundred teachers have been arrested and sent to the concentration camp in Grini and the camp in the vicinity of Lillehammer.

An endless number of concentration camps have sprung up in this once peaceful country, and the schools have been closed. Only one of the secondary schools in Oslo is now functioning. The lessons are attended by about hundred pupils, whilst formerly thousands of children received their tuition at the town schools.

In the rural districts of Norway there are only two schools working. At the same time,—as the Swedish press informs us,—the Germans have opened about ten new concentration camps. The following cynical remark concerning primary education was made by Hoff, the district instructor of the Quisling organization in Fredrickstad: "The four hundred and fifty schoolmasters in this district will have to dig ditches for a couple of years in order to reform their way of thinking."

POLAND

In spite of the terrible repressions going on all over the territory of Poland, as many as a hundred and twenty illegal newspapers are carrying on their strenuous work. These papers reveal the freedom-loving spirit of the ever unbending and uncrushed Polish nation. Of all the countries crushed by Hitler, Poland is the one in which illegal press is most widely spread. Quite small clandestine printing houses issue newspapers, proclamations, pamphlets, manifestos, leaflets, and sometimes mere cartoons with epigrams on the Hitlerites and their hangers-on.

ITALY

Spiteful attacks have lately appeared in the Italian press aimed at the illustrated magazine published in the Soviet Union specially for German soldiers,—the *Front Illustrierte*.

The Italian soldiers are warned by the military authorities that they will be severely punished for the reading or the rendering of the contents of any of the Soviet publications.

The sixth number of the *Front Illustrierte* issued in the end of March made a deep impression on many of the German soldiers. Some of the soldiers laid down arms, and others began to meditate over the question whether they were doing right in taking part in the war in which bloody Hitler had involved them.

The number includes a photo of a group of German soldiers and officers of the 312th infantry regiment which surrendered to some Red Army units. This documental photo, supplied with an appeal inviting German soldiers to follow their example, seemed so convincing to many of the Germans that Mussolini's press sounded the alarm: "Italians, don't surrender!"

In connection with this a humorous little song is circulating among the Italian population: the burden of this song is that Mussolini, knowing well the psychology of his fight-shirking soldiers, doesn't even dare to urge them into the offensive,—the only thing he risks doing is begging them plaintively not to capitulate. The satiric song ends with the words:

And when the enemy attacks,
Don't be so prompt to show your backs!

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