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GRIGORI MIROSHNICHENKO *

COLONEL PREOBRAZHENSKY OF THE GUARDS

This is the story of a Baltic airman, a hero of the patriotic war, a gallant knight of the air — Evgeni Nikolayevich Preobrazhensky, and of his comrades-in-arms of the 1st Guards Regiment of mine-torpedo planes. This story was written in collaboration with his closest friends—Major Plotkin, Captain Khokhlov, Colonel Romanenko, Heroes of the Soviet Union, to whom I am sincerely and deeply grateful.

1. ABOARD THE *DOUGLAS*

Captain Ivanov and the crew of the *Douglas* had been given up for lost. Some thought he must have crashed on landing; others were sure that the intrepid commander had met his death in battle with ten *Messerschmitts*, and some were of the opinion that the *Douglas* had caught fire as it was flying through the dense fog over the lake.

"It's out of the question," Colonel Romanenko said to me, when the subject of Ivanov came up. "Why, I've known him for ages. He's an old hand—a forester of the air—water won't down him, fire won't burn him, he's a very prudent flier, and even if, as seems probable, he was brought down, he wouldn't alight on enemy territory."

"Then where is he?" I asked. "He's been missing four days now."

"Captain Ivanov will turn up yet," said the colonel confidently.

The mists had not yet cleared and were still drifting over the treetops, sometimes rising a little but only to descend more thickly. Next morning the weather was no brighter and promised nothing good for us.

The men hung about the aerodrome waiting impatiently for Ivanov. I needed him badly, for I wanted to fly to Preobrazhensky's regiment and meet the colonel himself, a Hero of the Soviet Union, a man who had bombed German cities, factories and communications.

I had only met him once before; that was at the little house in the country where the family of Ivan Georgievich Romanenko lived.

Preobrazhensky had made a very deep impression on me that first evening. I had given my word that

* Grigori Miroshnichenko is one of those Soviet writers who were formed by the events of the Civil War of 1918—1920. As a young volunteer he enlisted with the Red Army. He wrote a book about the Civil War under the title of *Yunarmia* (Young Army).

The great patriotic war against fascism which broke out on June 22nd, 1941, found Miroshnichenko in Leningrad. At once the writer went to the front, joined the Baltic Fleet and took an active part in the defence of Leningrad.

The novel *Colonel Preobrazhensky of the Guards* (published here in an abridged form) is a result of Miroshnichenko's recent experiences.

I would visit his aviation regiment, meet his pilots, and carry out the assignments set me by the staff.

"Ivanov hasn't turned up. Perhaps I ought to postpone my flight?" I said to Ivan Georgievich.

"Not on any account. You'll fly, of course. Tomorrow."

"But what's become of Ivanov?"

"Ivanov'll be here tomorrow. We'll spend the night in this little place, and talk things over, and perhaps tomorrow will be a wonderful morning."

The night was starlit, with a light mist and a hard frost. We spent it in a quiet little village, which nestled snugly in the woods.

We went into a bright, warm, tidy room, and, settling ourselves close to the stove where a cheerful fire was crackling, stayed there the whole night. The colonel talked to me about his friend Preobrazhensky, and told me stories of his pluck and of the kind of things he did. I listened, and the stories made me long to meet him in the flesh. The more I heard, the more impatient I felt to run out of this little room straight to the aerodrome and fly away to join him.

The sun rose slowly. The mists had disappeared in the night.

Fascist planes drifted with wearisome slowness over the village, the woods and the frozen lake. The booming of the anti-aircraft guns reached us, also muffled, rapid artillery fire from somewhere not very far off. Then there was silence; that meant our bombers and fighter-planes had given the "night-aces" something to keep them quiet.

Suddenly, the splendid *Douglas* came cruising over the aerodrome.

"Captain Ivanov's turned up at last!" Romanenko exclaimed delightedly, clapping his gauntleted hands together.

The *Douglas* described a beautiful curve and came gliding gracefully down.

The crew got out. The riflemen-wireless-operators,—sturdy young fellows,—smiled cheerfully, shifted from one foot to another and lined up in silence. The swarthy, rather surly mechanic's mate Ivan Razlomov climbed out, then the air-mechanic, then the navigator Viatkin. The last to emerge was the stalwart Captain Ivanov himself. The five men stood in line. Then Ivanov stepped forward.

"Colonel, we've arrived safely," he said quietly.

"Where've you been all this time?" the colonel asked, acknowledging the captain's report with an inclination of the head.

"We had to land on an aerodrome for repairs after a fight."

The whole mystery was cleared up at once: Captain Ivanov had been in some heavy fighting with German planes.

"They wanted to singe us. As if we'd let them!" Ivan Razlomov said. "A lovely bird like ours! No, we won't stand any of that stuff from Fritz. They'll get more than a singeing themselves if they try it."

Captain Ivanov stood to attention, awaiting orders from his colonel.

"Well, and how are you getting on, Comrade Ivanov?" the colonel asked. "Keeping the Leningrad people regularly supplied?"

"Yes, the same as ever. . . but. . . isn't there any chance of my getting over to you, to the fighter-planes? I'd like to have a go at those aces you hear so much about these days."

"Now, look here, Comrade Ivanov, you fly no worse than a fighter-plane on that *Douglas* of yours. . . Wait a bit, we'll raise the blockade of Leningrad, and then you can come and get a fighter-plane from us. And for the present—see that you get a hot meal, and a bit of a rest, then we'll go up again and make for Preobrazhensky's regiment."

"Right you are," said Captain Ivanov. "We'll raise the blockade, as you say. No doubt about that. But you've got to let me come over to you afterwards."

A good satisfying dinner. A short rest. Then the loading of the plane, and the crew took their places again.

The huge bright orb of the winter sun was high when Ivanov's aircraft took off from the snowy earth. A farewell circle, then we headed eastwards.

There was a hard frost and the air was dry and crisp and ringing. To right and left—fighter-planes. Like hares through the bushes they plunged and bounded, escorting the *Douglas*.

I jotted down a few notes on my surroundings:

"Over the lake. Dim blue hollows. Toy ships in icy, lard beaten; round black spots of wherries. A lake like a wintry sea. Twenty minutes of flight. Bright sunshine all the way. A town on our right. Germans have occupied it. The whole town like a charred faggot. *Douglas* climbing now. Below us we can see the unharvested fields, stacks of hay and straw under the snow.

"Now we're over a patch of sparse black woodland, touched with hoar frost. Men in German helmets, men with automatics, are roaming this wood. They aren't shooting, though. They're forraging for food, shelter and warm clothing. It's no use, you lousy thieves, you'll die in our woods just the same. You'll leave your bones in our fields, you'll find your grave under our soil. You roam the woods, and maybe you'll find a crust somewhere, but it will stick in your throat like a stone. The vision of that charred and blackened town haunts me.

"We're over the lake again. We've been flying twenty-three minutes now. The sun is on our right. Ships and laden barges sailing,—all to Leningrad. Bread, arms, equipment for the front.

"To the left of us, twelve *Douglases* sweep out on the opposite course,—all making for Leningrad. I can see a smooth rolled road. Laden lorries—all heading towards Leningrad.

"The ruins of a railway station. The fragments of two *Junkers* not yet burnt out, as the faint wreaths of smoke show. Perhaps they were brought down by Romanenko's men. By the water-tower, a *Messerschmitt-110* has crashed, its engines deep in the earth, its swastika-marked tail broken. Its bombing days are over.

"The engines drone monotonously. Captain Ivanov keeps climbing. The passengers are feeling fine. A wave seems to catch the plane under the wings and fling it higher. The gunners-wireless-operators keep a sharp look-out on the air and grip their machine-guns tighter.

"Now we're accelerating a little. Forty-five minutes in the air already. The *Douglas* quivers but keeps steadily and confidently on its course. Wing over: the fighter-planes are left behind, their services no longer needed. But we're still over the front-line. A turn to the left. I get the impression that Captain Ivanov is following an aerial track known only to him, the old hand, the forester of the air.

"We've been up for an hour and fifteen minutes now. We're somewhere over the town of T. Overturned enemy trucks, fragments of airplanes and armoured cars. The enemy has left his bones here. Let them rot. Let their corpses freeze. This, by the way, tooks as though somebody has made a good job of it. No doubt Colonel Preobrazhensky's young 'falcons,' as they're called.

"Engines working in higher gear now. One senses the tremendous flying skill of Captain Ivanov. He leads the German a dance. They've hardly time to get ready to shoot before the plane has taken cover again. The wireless-operators are highly amused, they open the hatches and peer out.

"Captain Ivanov showed the Germans a trick, skimming so low over the trench-mortar nests that the soldiers took fright and plunged head foremost into the deep snow as if it was

water. It's certainly no joke to be a German in our snowy lands, and what's more, winter has only just started. The real winter will come, and what will they do then? They'll die off in hundreds like flies. Let them die—we'll help them to it.

"We've been up an hour and three-quarters now. There's a big letter 'T' on the ground below us; that means landin 's allowed. Tiny houses. A frozen river. Children sliding down the banks. It's Sunday. The boys look up and wave to us."

We make a beautifully smooth landing. When the engines are shut off, the chief of the regimental staff—an alert, immaculate, cleanshaven man called Captain Borodavka—comes up to us.

"Is Colonel Preobrazhensky here?" I inquire.

"The colonel has just gone up," he replies. "But we're going to meet him."

We took leave of Ivanov and went away.

2. CAPTAIN BORODAVKA HAS TALES TO TELL

Captain Borodavka led me to a peasants' thatched house where I was welcomed like one of the family by Tatiana Yablokova, the mistress of the house—a fair, rosy-cheeked, keen-eyed woman, her son Kolya and a slender little girl called Manka, who wore a blouse of unbleached linen and a white pinafore.

"But uncle Zhenya's out," Kolya drawled, taking me by the arm.

"Mother baked some buns today," Manka volunteered. "Are you going to have some with me?"

"Make yourself at home," said the mother. "The colonel will be home soon. You'll just have to wait a couple of days."

I could not help eyeing the accordion inlaid with mother-of-pearl that was lying on the table before me.

"Who plays it?"

"The colonel," Captain Borodavka replied. "Here's another accordion of his. He plays the concertina, too. He's musical."

I took up the instrument. It was in perfect tune, mellow and sweet, in full bloom as musicians say.

"I'm lucky with my musicians as a rule," said Captain Borodavka. "But such devotees as the colonel are rare, I can tell you."

After playing "Moscow Lady" at which the children brightened up, I sat looking about the home of Colonel Preobrazhensky, Hero of the Soviet Union. A naval overcoat bearing stripes hung on a nail. The bed was simple, very plainly covered. A plywood table on thin clumsy legs stood in the middle of the room. There were family portraits on the walls, an image-case and an embroidered towel, a stove, a second bed for Oganesov, the regimental commissar, and a brass-bound trunk; there was no other furniture in the room.

"We live pretty shabbily, don't you think?" the woman asked me, noticing my curiosity.

"No, very well indeed," I replied, and she was obviously pleased.

Manka kept pressing buns on me:

"Eat them up. Mamma won't mind. . . Uncle Zhenya likes these buns."

An hour later we went to dinner in the ward-room, where I found Preobrazhensky's pilots, technicians, engineers and navymen. They were all strong, healthy, hearty people; their talk was breezy and cheerful, and no matter what subject they touched on, the name of their commander Colonel Preobrazhensky invariably came up.

When we reached home at last, we lit the lamp, made up the stove and got so deeply into conversation that we never noticed how the night passed. Captain Borodavka told me a good deal about the colonel's childhood.

"When they were living in the village Volokoslavenskoye, our colonel

and his pals stole old Fyodor Ivanovich Suslov's daughter, Shurka. It was this way: Shurka wanted to get an education. A smart plucky young thing was Shurka, and the old fellow was the surly sort and as stubborn as a mule. He used to make her work in the fields; he'd say: 'You've had some schooling in the village, and that's all you're going to get.'

"Now, Evgeni was the most downright young fellow in the district for getting his own way. His father was the schoolmaster. So Shurka went to him.

" 'What am I to do, Evgeni?' she asked him. 'You're the pluckiest of the lads round here. Get me out of the village and help me to go away to school.' Evgeni himself was at a teachers' training school at the time, in Cherepovetz. He was sorry for the girl.

" 'All right,' sayd he, 'we'll kidnap you, that's all there is to it.' And so they did. They took her to town and got her into a school.

"Fyodor Ivanovich Suslov went clean off his head, not knowing where to look for the girl. He was searching for her about a month, and it was by sheer accident that he found out. Evgeni and the old man happened to meet one day. Neither of them opened his mouth at first, then the old man said: 'Well, how much longer are you going to keep your mouth shut, Evgeni? What have you done with my girl? Answer me, or I'll show you what in a minute!' At that Evgeni pulled himself together and blurted out: 'Shurka won't be hanging around at home with you any more. She's going to live her own life. She's at school.'

"Old Suslov went green in the face, clenched his fists and spat on the ground viciously. He wanted to fight, but Evgeni skipped aside and cleared out.

"Shurka got the schooling she wanted long ago. From Cherepovetz she went to Leningrad. She has a degree now. Fyodor Ivanovich Suslov's altered too, these years: he's chairman of a collective farm.

"During the Finnish campaign, when Evgeni Nikolayevich was decorated—he got the Order of Lenin—the old man started to make a move towards reconciliation. He wrote letters, but Evgeni had no time then to answer them. And now," Captain Borodavka wound up his tale, "Evgeni Nikolayevich has got some leave after these last flights of his and he's gone for three days to his old home in Volokoslavenskoye. That's not far from the town of Kirillov, and there he's more than likely to meet old Suslov. They'll have their talk out this time and be friends afterwards.

"Volokoslavenskoye is a very old village. In times gone-by vessels used to sail from the Volga along the Sheksna, the famous Kovzha, to Lake Nikolotorzhskoye, otherwise Nikolsky Torzhok. From this point barges were dragged overland three miles to the Porozovitza river. To this day the land there is bare and trampled, the colonel told me, not a tree, not a blade of grass, not a weed will grow on it. For how many hundreds of years the Russian muzhiks, harnessed to traders' vessels, rafts, barges, laden with all manner of cargoes, must have bent their backs to haul them on their way to Lake Kubenskoye, to Sukhona, and from thence to the White Sea in the North. Ay, they hauled many cargoes! Bent their backs, wore down the earth with their slow plodding tread. And the earth turned to dust and rose in clouds on the way. The very name of our colonel's native place tells you its story—Volokoslavenskoye, from the old word meaning hauling or dragging."

Captain Borodavka was absorbed in his stories; in his way of telling them, in the warmth and sincerity of his words, I sensed a great affection for his commander.

3. THE COLONEL FLIES HOME

The colonel flew in before he was expected. He had given up the meeting at Kirillov, where the students and schoolchildren were to have met and talked to him; he did not put in an appearance at the "Northern Craftsman" cooperative either. His departure had been unexpected even for his own family.

He had put off everyone and everything and returned to his unit.

The silvery, two-seater sportsplane appeared over the aerodrome when the ground-men on duty were not expecting anyone.

The colonel strode quickly into the room in his fur-lined overcoat and boots, and with his warm flying-helmet in his hand.

"Well, boys!" he greeted them. "What's going on here?" After shaking hands all round he laid a square package on the bed.

"Everything's first rate, colonel," Staff-Captain Borodavka replied. "We weren't expecting you today. Look at the weather."

"Oh, the weather!" the colonel chuckled. "It was the weather that brought me here from Kirillov today. But after this bad weather there'll be a spell of good weather, and then we'll do some flying."

After ascertaining that nothing of any importance had occurred in his absence, the colonel turned to me and said:

"I was beginning to think you'd forgotten our agreement, commissar, and that you were never coming to see me."

"Oh, no!" I said. "As a matter of fact our agreement was counter-signed by Romanenko."

"Romanenko!" the colonel exclaimed. "Where on earth is he? Have you seen him?"

"Yes, I have. He asked me to give you his regards and a good hug."

"Ah, is that what he said? Ah, Ivan, Ivan, my lad!" cried the colonel, hugging me for want of his beloved Romanenko. "Sit down, I want to show you something new I've got," and he unwrapped the package lying on the bed.

It was a Kirillov concertina shining with wine-coloured varnish, beautifully inlaid with mother-of-pearl, engraved with tinted vignettes. It lay there—sparkling, smiling, it seemed, in all its pristine beauty.

"That's a concertina!" broke from me involuntarily. "Where did you pick it up, Evgeni Nikolayevich?"

"Did you ever hear of the 'Northern Craftsman' cooperative?" the colonel said significantly.

"No, I didn't," I said, on purpose to draw him out.

"Then you know very little about concertinas. Once, long ago in the piping times of peace, there used to be the famous blackvarnished Mishenko concertinas, then the Pashenko concertinas with different-coloured varnishes—the Rostov and Moscow styles. From the Rostov type came the Trustov concert kind, but they all came originally from our Kirillov, Volokoslavenskoye craftsmen. It was here that the concertina was invented. It was here that it was made, and to this day our craftsmen keep the world-wide fame they won for themselves. You won't find concertinas as well-made anywhere as here. Old Panov, the head of the workshop, made this one himself. He's very old now. 'Here, Evgeni,' he said to me, 'take this and enjoy yourself playing on it.' 'Why should I take it?' I said. 'I don't need it, I've got two already.' 'Then I'm giving it to your boys, the fliers,' he said. 'I'm giving it to your regiment.' 'Oh, if it's for the regiment, that's quite another thing,'—and so I agreed to take it. The old man himself made it, adjusted the cords, tuned them."

He lifted the instrument and with a toss of his head, like a delighted child, played one of the racy, rattling songs peculiar to the Vologda district,

played it with such feeling, such a ringing crispness, that I sat spellbound. The bass notes chimed in with the high voices; the cords modulated to A-flat, the harmonious repetitions sang and swung smoothly out into the lively old country melodies.

The musical Vologda folk had put their whole soul into these songs.

Couplets, catches for girls' voices, the gay tunes country lads love, and the Kirillov wedding-dances were trolled out with the spirit of eternal youth.

"There's Panov for you. Ay, old Panov can do a job!" Preobrazhensky cried, pausing for a moment with the concertina extended in his hands. "Panov was invited to Berlin at one time. Contracts were offered him by different firms. He was invited to Vienna, to a place where they made these things. Panov refused. He's a real Russian, you know! 'Let's keep our Kirillov the concertina-capital,' he said. And he's right, don't you laugh at him, commissar, the concertina capital is Kirillov. Oh yes, and just look what Panov himself has written."

He fumbled in his pockets.

"Where did I put that paper of Panov's? He gave me a letter to the regiment. Now what did I do with it?" Then he suddenly remembered: "Oh yes, I stuck it in my satchel."

I watched him in silence.

"Here it is,—read it."

It ran as follows:

"We, the workers and employees of the 'Northern Craftsman' cooperative, brand the Hitlerites with everlasting disgrace as a band of robbers. We feel confident that our valiant Red Army, our falcons of the airforce and our Red Marines will soon deal the final shattering blow at these bandits and enemies of the people. Victory will be ours. We shall destroy the fascist pack.

"To you, the proud falcons of our country, we, the whole collective of workers and employees, send this present. Play your songs on this concertina; it was made for you by Ivan Zakharovich Panov. And remember that the whole Soviet people is thinking about you.

"Proud falcons of ours, rout and smash the fascist hordes!

"We send you our best wishes.

"Signed on behalf of the meeting by: craftsmaster Panov, Zakharov, Mamliukov and others.

"November 17th, 1941."

"I'll line up the boys," Preobrazhensky said with a sort of dreamy enthusiasm, "and I'll read them Panov's letter from the capital of concertinas."

I looked at the colonel, at the thick hair combed high, at the fine thick brows slightly raised over the clear, wide-open eyes. He noticed my scrutiny and said:

"What are you looking at me like that for, Grigori?" And he laid aside the instrument.

"Oh, I just happened to remember old Suslov."

The colonel got up. He was frowning.

"So you heard all about it?"

"Yes. I know that you and your great pal wronged the old chap."

"We wronged him! When was that? Ages ago. The old fellow's changed his mind now. Fifteen years have come and gone. What wrong can there be? I've righted the wrong and made peace with him."

"What, you made peace with him?"

"Yes. He's glad now for Shurka's sake that it all happened. I'd hardly got home, hardly had time to look at my wife, Taissia Nikolayevna, and pet my daughter Olga, and kiss that little ruffian Vovka, when a letter came. And from whom, do you think? From Fyodor Ivanovich Suslov. From the collective farm. He'd found out somehow that I'd flown to Volokoslavenskoye. . ."

He pulled Suslov's note out of the pocket.

Since the story of Shurka and the enmity that arose out of it were serious and of long-standing, I give it in full:

"Evgeni Nikolayevich,

I have a great favour to ask of you. Come to the meeting of our collective farm. All of us, including myself, are anxious to see you, if it's only for a minute.

F. I. Suslov, chairman of the 'Victory' collective farm."

"I went to their collective farm meeting," Preobrazhensky continued. "And I said to them: 'Well, you wrote me that I had to become a hero. Didn't you?' 'Yes, we did,' they agreed. 'Look,' I said, 'here are the decorations the government has awarded me. So we'll take it that the task you set me has been done, comrades. And what about you? Have you done the task set you by the State?' 'Yes,' says Suslov. 'So your collective farm's better than any other, is it?' I went on. 'Well, it's the foremost only as far as the village Soviet is concerned, but it's a bit behind with regard to the district.' I got down off the platform. 'Wait a bit,' Suslov says. 'Where are you going?' 'What is there for me to do here in a collective farm like this? A farm that's a bit behind, as you call it. Do you understand what you're saying? You've failed to do the task the State set you! There's a war on, don't you realize it yet? A desperate war! And you talk about being a bit behind-hand?' And with that I put on my cap and made for the door. 'Wait, Evgeni,' Suslov called after me. 'Wait a second. Let's look into the matter properly before you go off like that.' 'What is there to look into properly? You haven't given the State what you said you'd give? You're behind-hand. The collective farm isn't foremost in the district, after all. It isn't the foremost. Why did I come here then? Why did you invite me? Why did you, Fyodor Ivanovich, send me notes? I'll never set foot in your place again. To think of it: I got leave from the front, I left my pilots, engineers, mechanics—everybody—just to come and see you, and what do I find? A fine specimen of a 'Victory' collective farm you are, and no mistake. Where does all this victory of yours come in, I'd like to know?' Suslov just stood there scratching the back of his head, the rest were ashamed even to look at me. And I stood with my nose in the air, glaring at them, furious. 'Listen,' says Suslov. 'Let's make peace. . . it isn't as if we were against doing things, it's only that we got held up with the transport. But we'll set that right by morning. Hey there, you fellows,' he shouted to the rest, 'don't stand there looking like sheep, get to work, harness the horses. There's a war on! We've got to straighten our ranks. That's no way for us of the 'Victory' collective farm to be. Don't take offence, Evgeni, please come and see us tomorrow. We'll have things straightened out by then.'

"The collective farmers rushed home as though the houses were on fire. Paid back what was owing to the State. Even something over and above. And came out first and foremost in the district. Well, and they gave me a dinner, they were so overjoyed. I've never seen such a dinner in my whole life. There was vodka, there was beer. Roast lamb. Roast goose. Roast sucking-pig. Oh, your Sorochintzy Fair was nothing to it!

"'Now you tell us, Evgeni,' Suslov kept at me, 'tell us how you bombed those black towns of theirs in Germany.' So I told him about it. The old fellow threw his arms around me and kept saying: 'I'm grateful to you, Colonel Evgeni, for stealing away my Shurka when you did. She's quite an important person now. And thank you, Evgeni, for bombing Berlin. Bomb the blasted place again. May Berlin be burnt to cinders! Let them have a taste of what our folks have to give them. We've paid our debt to the

State, haven't we? We have! And we'll give more if it's needed!'"

I sat listening to Colonel Preobrazhensky, the member of the "Victory" collective farm, and I didn't want him to stop. I wanted to hear more and more about the people he described so simply. For he revealed to me the characters, the thoughts and hopes of ordinary plain Russian folk.

4. THE VILLAGE UNDERGROUND

The colonel roused us in the morning. But Kolka was up even before the colonel, and poured out the water for us to wash. Later on Lieutenant Borzov came in. He was a handsome, well-built young fellow with brown eyes, pensive and rather bored. We asked leave to go to the neighbouring village to meet the collective farmers there.

"You don't mean you're going in those togs? That old tunic is much too small for you and those pants—they're much the worse for wear and skimpy into the bargain. . ."

"They promised to make me some pants."

"And why haven't they done it?"

"Too much work. . . And the material hadn't come, they said."

"Who said?"

"Militsin."

"Go back to the tailor's shop and tell Militsin from me that if they don't make you a tunic and pants in three days, I'll put him under arrest."

"Right, Colonel," said Borzov. Then turned and went out.

He had come and gone in a depressed mood. You could see it in his movements and in his face. There was something weighing on his mind. Somewhere deep down—the eyes could not deceive us, after all—glowed the dull embers of an injury, of resentment and despair. What could have happened to him?

The colonel looked at me attentively for a moment and remarked:

"M-yes. . . It's a sad story. A first-rate pilot, too. There aren't many like Ivan Ivanovich Borzov, I can tell you. But he seems very downhearted lately. Something's getting him down, and he finds it difficult to throw it off. We'll have a talk about him sometime, but not just now, we've got to go to the aerodrome and make the rounds,—see everything's in order."

So we set out through the village for the aerodrome and headquarters.

The premises of the latter were underground. Captain Borodavka was poring over maps, giving pilots and motorists their jobs for the day, hurrying on the fitting-up of the underground premises and the houses in the village where liaison officers and others were quartered.

Captain Borodavka had his hands full. He worked swiftly and calmly. As all the pilots said, his Olympian imperturbability achieved everything. He was reserved, alert; nor was it merely alertness: there was the precision of the commander, a cultivated orderliness and organization evident in the way he worked.

The desk at which Borodavka sat had to be perfectly clean. The boots Borodavka wore had to be polished till you could see your face in them. His tunic and trousers must not have a speck of dust or a thread or a spot on them. His hair was always neatly brushed back, he was immaculately shaven; in short, neatness, cleanliness and freshness were in everything about him. The chair on which Borodavka sat, the room in which he lived, the headquarters where he spent all his time, had to be impeccably clean and tidy.

Borodavka was spending the night here in the office. He reported in detail to the colonel when he came in.

"Carry on," said the colonel with a comprehensive glance around. He paused a minute before the map, defining the line of the fronts, then checked up on the men in duty, on

communications, which were behind the partition in the dug-out, gave orders to get the engines ready for the flight, peered into every nook and cranny of that splendid underground headquarters, then off we started for the underground quarters of the second squadron.

There was a sharp frost. A light feathery snow was falling.

"There's going to be a new gun-emplacement here, the deepest of all. With a power-station, workshops, concealed communications-points—a regular subway like the Moscow underground," the colonel explained.

I saw nothing but deep snowdrifts and a barely noticeable black spot where a chimney protruded. It certainly never entered my head to suspect that here was the subway itself, the underground palace, the whole system, finished and complete.

"Why did you tell me there was going to be a subway here?"

"There is, but not yet."

"I wonder what I'm to understand from that?"

"That it'll all be ready tomorrow."

We descended by clean boarded steps into the ground. Here a narrow corridor, skilfully faced with boards, a square landing, another flight of steps, a spacious lofty entrance, two corridors branching off to the left led us into the living quarters.

"This is the dining-room, here's the Lenin corner, the cinema, the workshops and the reading-room."

What loving care, what sound knowledge of the business had gone into the construction of all this! But the colonel was dissatisfied. He expressed his dissatisfaction to the commissar of the second squadron, Commissar Uskov, whom we often met before this:

"I don't see that the place is properly clean. And there's no snugness about it. The corners haven't been warmed. There are no washstands. In fact, there are lots of necessary things missing."

The subway, lit by electricity, awaited its tenants. They were to arrive next day and begin life here.

"There was a time," the colonel said softly, "when certain hot-heads among us denied the necessity for places like this and hid behind the slogan 'contempt for death.' Now that particular variety of contempt for death is simply suicide. Every life must be taken care of."

He was right: I had seen something of this the first few months of the war, and I knew what painful consequences it had had.

We turned to the third squadron. Everything was in exemplary order here, the colonel was delighted.

"What's that you're building?" he asked Lieutenant Kalinin, who was standing by the shell of a new log hut.

"That's a meeting house," Kalinin replied.

"When will it be finished?"

"In three days' time."

"Will you manage it?"

"Yes."

"I'll have a look at it."

He saw to everything: nothing escaped the eye of the master. As we were preparing to go, Lieutenant Shoshmin came up with his camera. He was just ready to take us when Preobrazhensky held up his hand. Shoshmin had not had time to press down the catch.

"No photos are being taken this time," said the colonel coldly.

Shoshmin got excited, but the colonel repeated firmly:

"No photos. Clean up the dirt here first."

"We aren't going to have our pictures taken this time, commissar," he said, turning to me, "though you are a guest of mine. But they might as well know that it's their own fault."

That day I visited all three squadrons, read stories to the men, talked to them and got to know some of them.

My acquaintances in the second squadron were feeling rather depressed.

"They sent a present for you from Kirillov and look at the way you've let yourselves down," the colonel said. "Come along, commissar, we'll drop in on them again in a couple of days' time. And then we'll see."

"Everything will be straightened up by then, Comrade Colonel," Uskov ventured. "Absolutely everything."

The colonel said nothing to this, and we left.

5. IVAN IVANOVICH BORZOV

The telephone rang, and the colonel answered it. He was talking about Lieutenant Borzov.

"Borzov should be given proper conditions," he said. "Borzov must be well. Bear that in mind, Comrade Borodavka, Borzov is getting ready for a flight."

He hung up.

"You know, Borzov can't walk and he's got to fly," he explained to me. He rang up the army doctor.

"Balandin? Listen, Comrade Balandin, try and manage to get Borzov well. Do what you like, but Borzov has to be well by tomorrow; go and see him, will you?"

The colonel hung up, then telephoned to the base commander.

"Comrade Svirin, Borzov's sick. Has he got proper linen? Will you get his tunic and pants made soon? See to it in the shortest possible time. He's got orders to fly."

All the orders and instructions the colonel was giving made the impression that Lieutenant Borzov really deserved all this attention.

"Borzov's is a long and complicated story," said the colonel. "And it's caused me a good deal of trouble one way or another. Young as he is, Borzov could be lost to aviation forever. He's been guilty of a very serious offence: he showed himself undisciplined in the air, with the result that a plane was wrecked. Conduct of this kind borders on serious crime. After the first a person of weak character may commit other still more serious crimes. . . The man needs to be helped, encouraged, till his will grows stronger, and to have the blot removed from his name. He's a son of our own country."

"Has he proved it?" I asked.

"He fought like the bravest in the air. He bombed German towns, bombed and destroyed military objectives in Finland, Königsberg, Vindava and Libava. He's done a lot. Above the clouds, through fog, through the thick darkness of the night, through the slashing rain of thunderstorms his plane's made its way. Always making for the point where the enemy was and destroying him."

"Then, what's wrong? What makes you so upset about him? And what's to hinder both you and him from looking upon what happened as an episode—something that's passed like a whirlwind and is gone forever? But perhaps you haven't told me everything? There must surely be some worse sins to his account since you're so upset."

Impulsively the colonel moved over me and spoke eagerly, rapidly, as though he wanted to pour out in a single instant everything he thought of Lieutenant Borzov.

"I'm as fond of that boy as if he were my own son. He's an honest, skilful pilot, with a real gift for his work, and devoted to it, too. If he hadn't been what I think him, I'd have dropped him. But I know I'm not mistaken. The government wasn't mistaken in him when it decorated him twice with the Order of the Red Banner. But neither was the military tribunal that sentenced him mistaken, either. No one was mistaken in him. A young fellow as brave as a lion. What he needed was that people shouldn't shun him, but give him a chance to redeem his fault."

"Who gave him the chance?"

"The airforce command. And he's proved himself. He's been recommended for a third Order of the Red Banner. But that's not the point. To carry a paper in your pocket saying that you've forfeited your freedom for a period of ten years is a disgrace, a blot on his name. And this weighs on Borzov's mind. Oh, if it could only be removed, if only! I've pleaded for him. I've written letters—to this one and that one. There's nothing doing so far. . . But I'm sure. . ."

He paused, then lit a cigarette and, going over to the window, stood gazing thoughtfully out to where little boys were coasting down the river-slope on their sledges, and the dove-grey winter woods stood half-veiled in frosty vapour. Above, the sky was an almost purple-blue, heavy and menacing.

It was very still, like winter-time in the steppes. What Colonel Preobrazhensky was thinking of at that moment, I could not tell, but the inquiring mind, the warm impulsive heart, the cares and thoughts of this man were obviously all taken up just now with the fate of Lieutenant Borzov.

You could feel it in everything—how the colonel valued Borzov, understood him.

And Borzov, though he must have guessed who it was who gave him the right to fly, to do the brave things he did, was not fully aware yet of that profound and sincere affection the commander felt for him.

Disciplined and calm, Borzov came to the commander burning with the desire to obey his orders, ready to go through fire and water to destroy the enemy. He took on the most dangerous jobs and did them well. Life prompted, and the regulations demanded this of him; he redeemed his wrong-doing with intrepidity.

It was hard to believe that Lieutenant Borzov had been sentenced so recently. Only the look in his melancholy eyes gave any hint of it.

Dr. Balandin came in extremely upset.

"Borzov's seriously ill, he's not fit to fly," he announced.

"That's bad."

Borzov himself entered in flying-togs. He could hardly stand on his feet.

"Allow me, Comrade Colonel. . ."

"Well?"

"I'm ready to fly. I'm quite fit for flying."

"But the doctor tells me you aren't. You've got to lie up awhile. . ."

Borzov, obviously displeased that the doctor was present, said nothing. It was an expressive silence: he was pleading to be allowed to go up.

"Have they made your tunic for you?"

"No, it's not ready yet," Borzov replied moodily.

"And what about the pants?"

"They're not ready either."

"Why?"

"They haven't any stuff. They've a lot of work on hand."

"But I gave orders."

Another silence. Whenever the question of flights came up, his eyes glowed, but as soon as the conversation turned on his clothes or the doctors, indifference settled down on him.

"Call Militsin."

"Militsin's here!" Militsin himself replied from outside the door.

"Have you made Borzov the things I asked you to make him?"

"No, I couldn't. We've got no tailors."

"When will you make them?"

"I don't know, Comrade Colonel. There isn't any material. They haven't brought us any."

"You're under arrest for three days. Go."

"Right, Colonel," Militsin said and slipped out.

"To think of it!" the colonel went on. "No tailors and no material to be had for a pilot, a fighter pilot! What a state of things, to be sure! As

for you, Comrade Lieutenant Borzov, you're to go straight home with the doctor and lie down. Try to get well."

"Right," said Borzov, then asked leave to go. Balandin followed, with his shoulders hunched up to his ears.

The day was drawing to its close. Dinner-time was long past. Kolka had come home from playing. Tatyana Andreyevna's work in the collective farm was over and she was seated by the stove, mending Kolka's socks.

A thick fog floated over the village, the dim, misty woods and the river. A drizzling spring-like rain was falling on the snow.

The colonel sat down to write his report. Then the drone of an engine, distant and long-drawn-out, reached our ears, and we both rushed over to the window.

"Now who could that be?" said the colonel, straining his eyes for a glimpse of the airplane through the thick drizzle. We threw on our things and dashed off to the aerodrome. A white plane was circling over it and soon landed. A short sturdy man, like a bear-cub, climbed out of the cockpit.

"Comrade Colonel, Drozdov's here. He's brought us good news. This is a red-letter day for us. He's brought us back Borzov."

"What do you mean? Borzov's here."

"Yes, he's here. And a very important letter's been brought for him."

"Give it here," said the colonel. With the letter in his hand he got into his car and told us to come with him.

We got in. Drozdov started to tell us about the paper he's brought as though he's performed some heroic exploit.

The car rushed us to Borzov's house. On the way the colonel read the oblong sheet of paper, folded it up, put it in his pocket, then got it out and read it again. Neither Drozdov nor I know what was written on that sheet of paper.

Borzov was lying down in a spacious room. Balandin was seated beside him. On the table lay a new tunic with naval buttons and a new pair of trousers. When the lieutenant caught sight of the colonel in the doorway, he jumped up.

"Lie still," the colonel said. "Take it easy."

"Allow me to get up."

"All right, get up if you want to."

Borzov got to his feet.

"Oh, so we have a new tunic?"

"Yes, and breeches too."

"So they made them for you after all. That Militsin should have been under arrest long ago."

"Looks like it, Comrade Colonel," Borzov agreed.

"Well, put the things on and let's have a look at you in them."

Borzov obeyed. The tunic fitted beautifully. The touch of white at the neck relieved the dark material. The trousers were neatly pressed. When he was ready, the door opened and the squadron leaders came in. Preobrazhensky stood at attention. Borzov could not understand what was going on. Then the colonel began to read aloud:

"The Military Tribunal of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet in the persons of the chairman, Divisional Military Magistrate Kolpakov, and members: Divisional Military Magistrate Dorman and Brigade Commissar Akimov, having considered the recommendations made November 12th, 1941, by the command of the Air Force of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet to exempt from punishment Second Squadron-Leader of the First Aviation Regiment Lieutenant Ivan Ivanovich Borzov, sentenced by the verdict of the Military Tribunal of the Leningrad Marine Garrison September 13th, 1941, under article 193 17a of the Criminal Code of the R.S.F.S.R. to forfeiture of liberty for a period of ten years without deprivation of rights, execution of which sentence to be postponed according to additional clause to afore-mentioned article of the Cri-

minal Code of the R.S.F.S.R., and having heard the report of Comrade Dorman, the conclusion of the Assistant Military Prosecutor of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet Troyansky. . ."

Borzov stood as if petrified. Not a muscle moved in his face. He was absorbed, lost, aloof from all external ideas, forgetful of all else but what the colonel was reading.

". . . has decreed: taking into consideration that, according to the command of the Air Force of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, Borzov, subsequent to his being sentenced by the Military Tribunal, proved himself a self-sacrificing fighter against fascism, carrying out the instructions of the command meritoriously in the struggle with enemy troops, and thereby showing that he is a staunch and devoted defender of his country. . ."

A ghost of a smile hovered over Borzov's lips. He leaned forward eagerly, avidly, his eyes fixed on the paper as though it was the dearest thing in life. Then his eyelids drooped a little and he seemed to have fallen asleep. The colonel went on reading:

". . . Borzov should be exempted from serving the sentence passed by the Military Tribunal and regarded as acquitted.

"As witness the signatures attached."

Preobrazhensky gave the order: "stand at ease," but Borzov alone continued to stand at attention, staring into space with wide eager smiling eyes. He could find no words to express his joy, but the others read it in his face.

"Comrade Lieutenant," said the colonel at last, "put on your orders."

Lieutenant Borzov obediently pinned his war-decorations on to his new tunic and returned for ever to the splendid family of the fearless falcons of the air.

6. VASSILI IVANOVICH MOLOKOV

Colonel Preobrazhensky had very little to say about himself. He admitted he had never thought of becoming an airman.

In the quiet little town of Cherepovetz, where he had been educated, he prepared to become a teacher. Nevertheless, this village lad contrived to go in for things military: shooting, the rifle range, the Young Communist League marches which were so popular with all the young people from the teachers' training school, attracted him, too. There was everything, except an airplane.

Said Evgeni:

"The airplane will come."

And it did come. When it first appeared in Cherepovetz and the pilot took people up for flights, Evgeni Preobrazhensky was in hospital. What would he not have given at that moment just to stand beside the airplane, just to touch it!

Then came the recruiting for the airforce. Evgeni was still in hospital. He hurried to get out of there. And when he came to the local authorities, he was asked:

"Have you handed in the quota, Comrade Preobrazhensky?"

"What quota?"

"The Red Air Fleet quota."

"No, I haven't," he replied. "I've only just come out of hospital."

"You'll give me names for five pilots tomorrow. And see that they're steady, reliable fellows, the kind that make regular fliers."

Preobrazhensky sat down on the edge of a chair, asked for pen, ink and paper and there and then drew up a short list. It included himself, his close friend Artzymenko, Shura Suslova, Misha Pepelev, Mitya Razhev and Vanya Oseryev.

"Here you are," he said.

"But who have you got here? What did you put her in for?"

"Shura, you mean?"

"Yes, Shura."

"Let Shura learn to fly as well. Shura Suslova's worth two of us in handling a job like that. She's clever!"

"No, Shura won't do."

The boys went to the regional centre, and there the medical board ruled them all out except Evgeni Preobrazhensky. Even Artzymenko was crossed off the list for not being up to the required standard.

Preobrazhensky's carreer and exploits go back a long way. They begin with his first solo flight.

A maiden flight is no ordinary event. It does not simply happen and leave no trace. A first solo is a red-letter day for a pilot, he remembers it all his life.

Magon, the instructor of the Stalin Aviation School where Preobrazhensky was taught, was a brisk, impetuous, daring fellow. He taught them well, taught them to fly over land and sea, over the wonderful town of Sevastopol, over the bay that cut far into the town, over the Malakhov tumulus. Magon flew over the historic bastions, over the fortress that crowned the hill like a symbol, over the rolling steppes where Russian generals fought in days gone-by for Russian glory, for honour and for their country.

Magon and Vassili Molokov, who was one of the formation commanders there, loved that town. But nobody loved it more than that impressionable, hot-blooded youth who had come there all the way from the village of Volokoslavenskoye, who saw it from the skies, and understood it all—the magnificence of that town, and its historic struggle.

"Evgeni, you ought to know one thing," said Magon, that day long ago when Evgeni made his first solo flight. "I'm excited today. . . You'll make a flier, you're a born flier, you'd think Allah himself had ordained that you should fly. And I'm overjoyed. You'll soar away over the town, and only when you're up in the air, you'll understand what a joy it is to fly and to see! You must understand, my boy, what a power that is!"

Preobrazhensky understood this power. He took off like a young eaglet. And how he soared upwards!

Vassili Molokov had come to the aerodrome. His flying helmet hung at his belt. His eyes were quiet, and he was calm as always. He looked deep into the young man's eyes and then asked:

"Who's flying solo today?"

"Pilot Preobrazhensky," Magon replied saluting, a little agitated.

Vassili Molokov glanced up at the sky through half-closed eyes.

"Let him fly," he said in a low voice. "Let him fly." Then he looked at Preobrazhensky again and added: "He has good eyes, eyes you can rely on."

Vassili always judged whether a man was ready for flight or not by his eyes. Those who were sure of themselves always had good eyes, and looked straight ahead, frankly. Those who were not, looked away. Uncle Vassia, as they called Molokov affectionately, would always make control-flight with the pilot. He would get in without saying a word. The pilot steered, while Molokov sat still, saying nothing, offering no help. His glance would travel downwards, upwards, over the wings, over the instruments. And all without a word. You could do as you liked. When the plane landed eventually, he would hang his flying helmet at his belt again, and if he smiled you knew he would say at once:

"He can go up on a solo flight. . . Get ready."

Then they would come and hang little red flags on the wings, deck out the plane like a bride,—and a silence would fall upon them. They all knew that today a new airman would be added to their family. Today everybody—the old kings of the air and the young pilots—had to make way

for a new man in the sky. It was his birthday.

Preobrazhensky took off, described a circle, and then he saw nothing but his plane, a patch of sky, a scrap of earth. He saw nothing of Sevastopol, of the famous bastions, of the broad bay or of the grim vessels of the Black Sea Fleet in the harbour. All his thoughts were on his flying.

He took off a second time, and the same thing happened.

Vassili Molokov stood watching, and his eyes were bright and lively. His eyes expressed everything he felt. He understood how a pilot learns to find his way about the sky.

Preobrazhensky took off a third time, guiding his plane with confidence. He could see all his friends now and the blue sky.

"He understands it," Magon observed. "Whoever's flown even once on these wings is the sky's captive forever!"

And now Vassili Ivanovich Molokov was standing watching from the aerodrome with head thrown back.

"Excellent! I wish you luck!" he said to Preobrazhensky and stretched out a warm hand, which the young pilot grasped eagerly and seemed to have been holding in his grasp from that day to this.

"Thanks," said Preobrazhensky. "I've to thank you, Vassili Ivanovich. And you, Comrade Magon. It's you two who have raised me to the skies. I'll never forget you. I'm an airman now."

7. THE MEN OF KRONSTADT REPLY

The fascists were pressing on towards Leningrad. Their generals had visions of a tank-parade on the spacious square in front of the Winter Palace, of monuments of great leaders, poets and thinkers flung down from their pedestals.

Through the pleasant, beloved suburbs of Leningrad, past the historic palaces, the iron-shod boot of the fascist has passed. The huge blunt snouts of his guns have pointed against that great city.

The men of the Red Baltic Fleet clenched their teeth, made a titanic effort, and with their brothers of the Red Army stood like a wall around their city. Those were the days when under trench-mortar and artillery fire, a ceaseless bombing, hundreds of thousands of Leningrad people dug trenches, built parapets, enclosed the industrial districts within an iron ring of barricades.

A large share in this tense struggle with the enemy fell upon Leningrad's outpost, the frowning stronghold of Kronstadt.

When the fire of the heavy guns aboard the battle-ships and cruisers, the ceaseless cannonade of the Northern and Southern forts, manned by newly-formed brigades of marines, thundered at the fascists, they were furious. Decadent white-guards waiting for Goebbels, wretches who have forgotten their native tongue in the underworld of Berlin, wrote in the despicable leaflets they showered on the heroic fortress: "Men of the Baltic Fleet! Give up the defence of Leningrad. It is useless for you to try to save this doomed city. There will be open fields where Leningrad stood and open sea where Kronstadt stood."

But the crews of the guns, the submarines and the aeroplanes expressed their attitude to this kind of propaganda in no uncertain terms by striking shrewder and harder blows at the enemy. Then the Hitlerites resorted to violent methods to wreak their revenge on Kronstadt.

Early one morning the sirens wailed the "alert"; our fighter-planes chased away the fascist scouts. The "all-clear" was sounded. Then the alert again. And this time the enemy planes appeared in greater numbers.

Anti-aircraft gun-fire capped Kron-

stadt with red. The white clouds of smoke-screens billowed about the grey steel of the ships, pierced momentarily by the flashes from the ships' anti-aircraft guns.

From north, south, east and west, like birds of prey, planes swooped on Kronstadt: they were all here—*Junkers-88*'s, heavy *Junkers-87*'s, old-fashioned *Junkers-86*'s—every sound machine that the enemy could find. This was called a "star" raid. Citizens hid in dug-outs and bomb-shelters. The foundations and cellars of red-stone slabs had been solidly laid in Peter the First's days.

Rows of children's beds stood in the cellars. There were crashes from time to time, a door was torn off its hinges with the force of an explosion, a high-explosive bomb fell nearby. People were toiling tensely not far away from here; in the model military hospital a surgeon in a mask was bending over a patient, the commander of a submarine.

The fascists' main thrust was aimed at the navy. But here the enemy was out in his reckoning. With unerring anti-aircraft gun-fire and a small group of fighter-planes, outnumbered by the enemy, the men of the Baltic achieved the impossible: the majority of the dive-bombers were chased away, forced by the Baltic fliers to drop their deadly cargo where it could do no harm—in the water.

. . . Colonel Preobrazhensky was standing at the aerodrome in the midst of his pilots, navigators and riflemen-wireless-operators. Afanassi Fokin was grim and frowning, Ivan Borzov thoughtful, Efremov, Babushkin, Piatkov and Zelinsky were talking. The bombers' regiment was waiting for orders.

"You must bomb!" the colonel said. "You've to let the enemy see what Soviet sailors can do to make him pay for his vile attempts to destroy Lenin's city. We'll bring him to the dust."

Vassili Grechishnikov, Dashkovsky, Drozdov and Fenyagin stepped forward. Their leather flying-helmets hung at their belts. They moved towards the planes with firm, unhurried tread. The familiar smile had vanished from the colonel's face, lost in the creases of the thick, knitted brows and the concentrated expression.

"All aboard!" he said very distinctly. They all got into their places, tried the engines at low, then increased the pace to full power. The sun blazed down mercilessly. There was a drumming in one's ears. From the gulf came the murmur of the tide as the green waves swept inshore and broke against the rocks.

The first to take off was the colonel. His machine taxied swiftly along the broad, smooth runway of the spacious aerodrome.

The plane was off like a bird over the forest, the sandy slope and the miniature blue lake.

Fokin, Efremov, Piatkov, Zelinsky and the others circled like gulls over the aerodrome, then with a roar of engines and swaying of long wings swung into formation of nine and flew away. A second nine followed the first, then another and another. There seemed no end to them.

The silence of the seas and the quiet of towns and villages was broken. Airplanes headed northwards.

There was an even regular drone of engines. The earth rocks far below. The navigators held green charts with queer black dots on them.

The dun-grey cliffs stirred and awoke to life. There was a glitter like broken glass here and there on the lakes which pressed close to the gulf and, spreading, cut into the dense green mildew of the bogs, crowded about the stony, sandy roads and, screened by solid squares of black woods, vanished at last into the mountains.

The bombers were making for the clouds, flying openly, without seeking cover. Over the port of Turku they unload their bombs. Thousands of them. There was not a quiver in the

wings of the airplanes, not a tremor in the hands of the navigators.

The grey granite was silent. The islets, towns and Finnish villages were familiar to our airmen. They knew well whither those white threads of winding roads led.

A light breeze burst into the cockpit. Enormously long shadows of sprawling wings glided inexorably on over water, woods and fields, from objective to objective.

Here is the town they are making for. Here are the high white oil-tanks. A narrow river divides the mouth of the old town and leads to the sandy slope of the half-concealed port. A jumble of slate-blue roofs, black houses and factory chimneys on either side of the river. This is the ship-yard where vessels come for reconditioning. Another further on. The smoking funnels of tall ships in harbour can be clearly discerned. Ancient towers appear on the shore, store-houses vanish from sight.

"Here, take that!" Khokhlov the navigator exclaims, sending down his curses. "That's for our country!"

The colonel keeps steadily on his course.

"Here's some more for you!" the others exclaim. One after another they press the bomb-release.

An armaments works bursts into flames; they won't be making guns there any longer. The "Vulcan" ship-yard is ablaze; it won't be reconditioning any more ships.

The store-houses catch fire, and munitions are blown into the air. Warships are blazing and sinking in the port. Flames creep over the oily waters. Explosions come from tall white oil tanks; petrol bursts into flame. The fiery-breathing mass soars skywards in long black ribands of smoke. The whole scene,—the gulf and the narrow blocks of the streets near the harbour,—resembles a drawing in charcoal.

The airmen know where they are heading, know every point and miss none. The planes the colonel was leading had done their work. In regular formation, eased now of their burden of bombs, they returned through the anti-aircraft gun volleys to their base: not to regard their debts of vengeance as paid, but to get new supplies of bombs and return. Out toward the colonel flew another formation of nine. It was followed by others. A hundred planes in all. The port must be wiped out. New planes arrived and in the course of fifteen minutes destroyed the stone walls and port buildings. The whole place must be wiped off the face of the earth, so all men should know how greatly we love our own land. In all three hundred aircraft came! The very earth trembled.

. . . A pile of ruins, a vast conglomeration of wreckage, was all that remained of port and ship-yards. That was the beginning of our revenge.

8. WHEN EAGLES GATHER

July was hot. The days were stifling. Behind the screen of lush midsummer foliage where the tents were pitched, the pilots were summing up results, talking of the last campaign against the White Finns, of the navigators, mechanics and motorized troops who had won distinction in battle. Colonel Preobrazhensky was relating some of his experiences.

A headquarters-runner appeared, saluted, and reported:

"Comrade Regimental Commander, the brigade commander is asking for you over the phone."

The colonel rose and went out with the man.

"What are you thinking of doing today?" the brigade commander asked him.

"I'd like some kind of tough job to keep me busy."

"O. K.! I have just the job for you. Hand over the command of your regiment and come to me. I'll give you twenty-five minutes to do it in."

The colonel was taken aback: "They're transferring me, but what for?" he wondered. "What have I done?"

"To whom do you wish me to hand over?" he asked.

"Tuzhilkin," and with that the brigade commander hung up.

Thunder-struck, just as he had stood at the telephone, the colonel went to Tuzhilkin.

"Take over the command of the regiment, Major Tuzhilkin, and don't ask any questions."

His successor was embarrassed, rather flustered.

In twenty-four minutes time the colonel had resigned and, taking Kretenko and Rudakov, his riflemen and wireless-operators, with him, he started for brigade headquarters.

It was not very far. "I've been asked to resign, but I must obey orders."

Kretenko and Rudakov waited in another room, while the colonel went in to see the brigade commander.

"I hardly recognize you, colonel," said the other, holding out his hand. "What's the matter? Why are you so upset?"

"I obeyed orders. . ."

"Very good," rejoined the brigade commander, "now let's talk over new affairs."

"That is to say. . ."

"To put it plainly: I'm giving your regiment to someone else. Tuzhilkin's acting colonel."

"But, Comrade Brigade Commander, tell me the reason why you asked me to hand in my resignation. As you are well aware, the regiment has done everything that it could."

"Yes, I'm well aware of the fact. Sit down and listen to me."

The colonel sat down.

"It would become you better, as the commander of a regiment, to listen to what I have to say and not get indignant. We need a regimental commander for the First Regiment. A man who'll go through fire and water. An absolutely fearless commander."

"But what about the colonel in command? Is he such a bad commander?"

"No, he's a very good one," said the brigade commander, "but he isn't capable of carrying out the job that lies before him. So go and take over the First Regiment. Your new work will put you in a better humour."

The colonel reached the First Regiment. Then he met a lieutenant-general of aviation.

. . . "Sit down, comrades," said the lieutenant-general when Commissar Oganezov had arrived. "I want to talk to you. First, I must warn you that our conversation is strictly confidential. Berlin must be bombed."

The commissar sprang up when he heard this. And the colonel stood up smiling.

"This is what I've been dreaming of for a long time," he said, with a sigh of satisfaction. "But are we to bomb it from another aerodrome?"

"You've anticipated what I had to tell you," the lieutenant-general agreed, puffing at his cigarette. "You're to bomb Berlin from another aerodrome. Think it over and report to me in the morning."

The colonel and the commissar left the office and hurried back to the regiment, where, retiring to their room, they went over the list of men they had in mind for the crews.

They knew all the strong and weak points of their airmen.

"They're all stout fellows," the colonel observed, "those who are left behind will feel very hurt."

He did not wait until morning but returned to the general immediately.

"There you are, you see," said the general. "You've been hasty. Why have you put yourself one of the first? Do you think no one can fly there better than you can?"

"No, it's not that," the colonel explained. "But I'm in command of the regiment, and therefore I ought to be first and foremost."

"You seem to forget that you ought

to be directing operations from the ground."

The colonel understood very well what the general was demanding of him, but his desire to fly proved stronger.

"Let me go, general, don't strike me out, I beg you!"

"Very well, I agree. You'll go first. I give you three days to get ready. Let your men have a good rest first, give all the routes proper consideration, all the difficulties and contingencies likely to arise. Take only the best men with you."

"I shall. I've given everything proper consideration. The eagles will be forgathering this time."

The little house that stood by itself on the river bank was scarcely noticeable. None of the pilots and navigators knew what was before them. Preobrazhensky, Plotkin, Grechishnikov, Dashkovsky, Fokin, Efremov, Belyaev, Drozdov, Trychkov and a good many more now made this little house their living quarters.

Masha the waitress got their meals for them. She did her best for them, and incidentally she noticed that they had all become almost unrecognizably grave.

9. "MY POSITION IS BERLIN"

Weather forecasts indicated sudden changes in the temperature of the air, particularly over the sea and at the approaches to Berlin.

"And the weather's not likely to improve in the course of the next few days," was all the chief of the weather-bureau could promise them.

"We're flying," the colonel announced. "We've got to get through to Berlin."

Thrilled at the prospect of the job before them, pilots, navigators, wireless-operators and gunners went to their machines. The latter had been ready for some time: the engines tried out, the racks loaded with bombs of different calibres, communications verified, the oxygen apparatus and navigation instruments set in place, the machine-guns tested.

"To your places," said the colonel.

Before they took off, he gave them parting instructions:

"No radiogrammes over Berlin. No machine-gun fire. Make as little noise as you can."

With head held high he went towards his plane. Grigori Oganezov, his friend and regimental comrade, went with him to see him off.

"Evgeni," said Oganezov when they were about to part. "See that you get there, you know."

"What do you mean?" the colonel demanded. "You'll offend me, of course I'll get there. Tonight I'll pay a visit to Berlin. You have no idea of the hatred that draws me to Berlin. I'll get to Berlin all right."

"Evgeni," Oganezov ventured once more. "I only want to ask you not to take needless risks."

"Everything will be done. Goodbye!"

"Well, I'll be seeing you soon again."

The colonel embrassed him, grasped his hand, looked him fixedly in the eyes for a moment, then, without speaking, climbed into the cockpit

Signals faint as glow-worms twinkled over the dark sea of the flying-field.

The power of the engines swept the loaded planes along like a storm. After Afanassi Fokin's plane raced Belyaev's, followed by Fenyagin's and Vassili Grechishnikov's. The last glided over the smooth, paved way like some gigantic bird, and took off cleanly and gracefully. A master of the art of flying soared into the star-strewn spaces. The last jerk of the broad wheels was accompanied by a gentle switching of the engines, which were apparently shut off, muffled. But Grechishnikov's engines

had been neither shut off nor muffled: they were humming very softly.

Deck signals twinkling, Belyaev pushed ahead with Fokin on his left, Fenyagin on his right; Grechishnikov found a place further to the left.

The night was moonlit and starry. The limitless plains of the sky spread before the winged men of the Baltic as they soared over the world over sleeping towns and villages, over Dvinsk and Memel, over the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea.

Fokin, Fenyagin, Belyaev—how many German tanks, boats and guns had they sent to the bottom of the sea?

Let the enemy count them. . .

The last four airplanes—Preobrazhensky's, Dashkovsky's, Trychkov's and Plotkin's—were falling into formation up above. Efremov, a daring and impetuous pilot, had gone up before them. Then steady young Kravchenko, Ryssenko, Khokhlov, Shvetsov, Trotsko, Egelsky, Rudakov, Petrov, Kretenko, the wireless-operators and gunners. There were many flying this time.

Colonel Preobrazhensky glided out ahead of them. A last farewell sweep over the quiet aerodrome. Then westwards to Berlin!

Altitude 7,200 meters. Starlight. Earth like a dark stain below. Night kept her own counsel. Up in these heights the frost was sharp, and hands reached for the oxygen masks. Two and a half hours up already. The sea was calm and silent as earth itself. The dismal, wearying landscape, the soundless shores stretched on without end.

Germans on the left already; Germans on the right, too. The weather seemed to be changing. An abominable ashen-grey vapour was drifting in trom every side and fast becoming fhick, solid mist. It seeped into the cockpit and made it clammy. Earth was lost sight of, the sea was hidden; gradually the islets and the fantastically-indented shores slipped away into the grey fog. Everything vanished. The pilots were "flying blind." Then suddenly clouds drew together, close and strong as granite, and a wind arose tossing the aircraft.

In silence they bore on through the clinging grey murk, farther deeper. Hands grew numb. Eyes watered. A greyish frosty crust dimmed the oxygen masks and goggles. It was difficult to scrape off the crust and clean the glass. It could only be done with a pencil, which left scratches through which fine thread of night light penetrated; but even they froze over at once. A cold sweat poured down the forehead. The chest felt chilled as though a huge lump of melting ice had been thrust against it. There were spots before the eyes. The instruments shifted, turned over, you had to keep a sharp eye on them. Navigator Khokhlov pushed his stiffening fingers into the fur gloves.

"How're you getting on, sonny?" the colonel inquired by the microphone.

"First rate," replied the navigator.

"My fingers are freezing," the colonel informed him. "And where are all our fellows? Why can't I see them? I can't see the land either. Where's the land?"

"Overhead," the navigator said facetiously, and chuckled. "But we're not far off now. . ."

The navigator was studying the chart, marking a line on it with a long well-sharpened pencil.

"Listen, sonny, can you see our planes coming?"

"Yes, they're coming, Colonel. I can see the silhouettes right and left of me."

"How are our gunners?

"Kretenko's all right. So is Rudakov."

Tired and worn Kretenko and Rudakov were mopping the perspiration from their faces. They wanted to tell the colonel that Stettin, brilliantly lit up, had appeared on their left and that

the searchlight station was apparently inviting them to land at the aerodrome. Night-training flights were in progress the aerodrome, the navigator had time to observe it, too, and he accounted for the Germans' hospitality by supposing they had mistaken Soviet aircraft for their own. Searchlights laid their cold beams along the flying field. It would have been a simple matter to bomb it, but the navigator refrained. The bombers glided silently over the brightly-lit city and pressed on to Berlin.

Stettin was left behind and the weather was thick again. The leaden hail beat more insistently on the glass.

"Oh, if we could only set there! If we were only there!" the airmen said.

Their thoughts sped on faster than the planes towards their objective.

The planes side-slipped, lost altitude, fell towards the invisible land, but the hands of the pilots righted them, forced them to obey and to climb higher and higher, foot by foot.

Easy enough to fall now, to plunge down on the barrage balloons,—there were so many of them in the way; easy enough to let go will-power and consciousness and drop like a stone. The elongated leaden barrage-balloons rocked in the wind when the planes swept over, almost touching them.

"Climb to 8,000," the navigator sent word. "Climb as high as you can, and let's get through those damnable clouds."

"What a long time this takes!" the colonel said. "I can't get through, If I could only find a window, just one little rift in the clouds. . ."

"Listen, Evgeni. It'll soon be Berlin. Hold on, old chap, hold on!"

Suddenly the cloud-screen split, exposing a blue-black sky spattered with stars. The Milky Way drew a boundary line across the sky. The moon swam out with a liberal splashing of pallid light. Below lay a city, a mirror-clear reservoir, and the River Spree. Works, parks, power-stations, warehouses, any number of warehouses. Berlin glittered with lights. The outskirts, the centre, the city's contours, streets and canals were all plain. Berlin was evidently not expecting visitors. The electric lamps cast their gleams over the streets.

The colonel could not see his friends, but their planes were flying on his left. The pilots were Plotkin and Dashkovsky. There was one on the right, too—Trychkov's. "The rest will come up," he decided, when he noticed the planes at last. He flew level over the outspread city and gave the signal to make for the objectives. Calmly, unhurriedly, the aircraft dispersed. Losing height, the colonel flew straight for the huge black pile of buildings that was the Siemens' works.

Streets flashed, lights flashed before the eyes. Baltic seamen were coming to avenge for the blood that had been shed, for the ruin of their cities—Novgorod, Kiev, Smolensk, Nikolayev; for their children, for their outraged women.

Navigator Khokhlov stretched out his hand towards the heavy-bomb-release, and leant on the terrible lever. Bombs fell. Never before had they exploded with such a deafening roar. The explosive blast hit the mark and swept through blocks of Siemens' works. The walls rocked, broke, crumbled, slid apart with a crash. The chimneys cracked and fell across the long street and the roofs of the houses.

Two bombs fell to the right. . . Two bombs to the left. . . The biggest of all fell to the centre, where the spire on a wing of a building stuck up, where a watch-tower rose above the surrounding buildings, where an ancient fire-tower stood. It fell between gigantic cranes and blocks of the principal buildings.

Wireless-operator Kretenko saw the ruin below and burst out laughing. He could not help it. Down there in

the flame and smoke and countless explosions was his share of revenge. He radioded the world:

"My position is Berlin! Orders have been carried out. Am returning to my base."

At that base, where the incoming wave beat and broke against the shore, people were not asleep. They were waiting. The commissar wasn't asleep. Neither was the lieutenant-general. Neither was Masha the waitress. She was preparing tasty dishes for the pilots' supper, substantial, satisfying sandwiches, fresh creamy milk, cucumbers just picked, ripe tomatoes. Then, after smartening herself up, she sat down to read at her little round table.

The way home was long and hard.

Berlin still continued to shudder convulsively and sink into dead stillness. One area was plunged in darkness, then another, then a third. Alarm lights flitted here and there about the town.

The power-station blew up. A railway station resembling a fourdeck ocean-going steamer split in two. Stores of shells hissed and exploded.

Tremble, Berlin! We shall come back!

Berlin was plunged in darkness. The bombs had all been dropped.

In forty minutes our airplanes were back over Stettin. The city was seething in flames. Stettin was ablaze. Sheaves of artillery-fire flashed up from earth, a sea of shell-bursts, a sea of fire. But the planes kept on their homeward course.

"We'll get back," said Khokhlov. "Random firing's nothing for us to be afraid of."

"Yes, we'll get back," the colonel agreed.

Someone came up on the colonel's right.

"You don't happen to know, sonny, who's fastened on to us?"

"I fancy it's Afanassi Fokin. But I couldn't say for certain."

"No, it isn't Fokin. Look's more like Misha Plotkin. That's his gait. See how he gallops along and steps on the gas."

The plane that had fastened on to them seemed to be now ascending, now descending the fiery ladder, now flying straight, keeping to their course.

Then all of a sudden, like glaring eyes, dreadful headlights appeared ahead of them.

A German fighter! Out to intercept them. He would strike just now.

"It's a fighter!" the navigator warned. "Don't open fire!"

The night-fighter dashed by like a wild beast, so close under their wings that had he risen another centimeter they would have collided. But the enemy rushed blindly on without grasing the belly of the bomber, and went about his business.

They had long been flying over dark woods, but Stettin was still burning.

"Stettin's blazing!" said Kretenko. "And how!"

"I can see everything. One of my men must have turned back and set it on fire."

The engines were running as smoothly as ever. The instruments worked with their usual precision.

. . . The news went round the aerodrome like lightning:

"They're coming! Preobrazhensky's coming back!"

One pilot told another, the commissar told the navigator, the navigator told the wireless-operator: "They're coming!"

It was a lovely morning. The salt tang of the sea was borne to the men at the aerodrome. Gulf and forest glittered in brilliant sunshine.

"They're coming home. Bringing us good news. Splendid chaps! Come on to the aerodrome! Let's go to the aerodrome!"

Masha jumped up to run with the

rest, but she couldn't and she wanted very much to congratulate the pilots. She stayed at her table.

"They're coming!" could be heard on all sides in the hurrying crowd. Doctors, nurses, tailors from their workshops, clerks from the offices.

The noise of the engines drew nearer. Then it grew very quiet. For an instant the engines ceased altogether.

From out of the clouds over the very middle of the field and the heads of the waiting silent people, swift-gliding, numbered bombers appeared.

"Preobrazhensky's leading!" cried the army doctor, and his hands trembled with joy.

Now the navigator's cabin could be seen quite distinctly, the short wireless masts, with their connecting antennae, and the machine-guns. The heavy bombers stretched out one behind the other as though linked by an invisible chain.

They droned over to the brick buildings and slid softly down to earth. Men dressed in flying suits and fur boots and carrying leather helmets, climbed out of their machines. The men were pale and weary, with red inflamed eyes, and wind-parched lips. Pilots and navigators lined up in a row and put on their helmets. And when the lieutenant-general hastened up to them, Colonel Preobrazhensky reported:

"Comrade Lieutenant-General, we have all returned safely. We have bombed Berlin."

"My dear fellow!" exclaimed the lieutenant-general, throwing his arms around Preobrazhensky. "You've all done your utmost. And I'm very glad, for your sakes!"

Feeling tired out, the colonel asked permission to sit down on the ground. It was granted. Without saying anything he sat down, unfastened his flying suit and looked up quietly at the men around him. He was breathing heavily. Navigator Khokhlov, pilots Dashkovsky and Trychkov seated themselves beside him. Their eyes were closing but they strove not to give in.

The ground on which the colonel was sitting felt warm and familiar. He touched it and looked fondly, caressingly at the green grass rustled in the wind.

No one ventured to speak, to disturb the long-awaited rest.

The lieutenant-general took off his cap and laid it on the ground. He, too, asked no questions of the pilots, but he followed their every movement. The colonel himself was first to speak. He jumped up, slapped his leg smartly with his helmet, shook his weary head as though he were flinging it aside.

"Boys!" he exclaimed. "We had Berlin just like that. Come along home, and I'll tell you all about it!"

They all got to their feet and followed him, feeling cheerful and pleased.

10. THE GERMANS GOT THEIR PACKET

Late that morning the colonel received a letter. It was from home,—from the father.

"My own dear son Evgeni,

No doubt you've made mincemeat of those foul German snakes by now. 'The Germans will get their share from me!'—those were your words. I know you were always one to practice what you preached. Keep a cool head and a steady hand, my bright young falcon. And never worry about your children. Galya has just drunk some new milk. Your little Olechka lets us know pretty often that she's all alive and kicking. We take her out in the clothes-basket on sunny days. The old homestead is still living, gaining in years and strength, and we're growing stronger along with it. Your mother and I are carrying on our jobs in the collective farm insofar as our strength will allow. This is a war in good

earnest. We hate the enemy more and more. We're just boiling to be up and at him. I listened in to Stalin. Those were great thoughts he gave the people. Everything became clear to us. The only sad thing is—I'm old. I'd like to take my rifle and shoot a few Germans. And now, my own dear boy, I wish you the greatest successes, and the best of luck and happiness.

Your Dad."

An hour later another letter arrived:

"Where are you, Evgeni? Answer us. Write me just a tiny letter, a couple of words—any 'I'm well.' That'll keep up from worrying. Galya reads books now. Little Olechka will be able to call you Daddy by the time you come back. She'll soon be four months old. Vovka is always insisting that I should carry Olechka in my arms. We've got famous artists in our family now. Look at the enclosed and admire it."

The "enclosed" was a buge Volga steamer with a tall funnel and two guns, sailing down a river apparently full of dangerous rapids. This was Vovka's drawing.

Eagerly, even greedily, the colonel read the letter from his father and wife and looked at his son's drawings, but he was in a hurry and had a great deal to do, and he could not answer the letter that day. He took them with him on his second flight to Berlin.

It was late. Beyond the distant dam a searchlight flashed, slicing the sky with a clear yellow beam; then vanished. From the shore a rocket, then a second, a third, soared over the gulf.

The airplane engines drowned all other sounds on the flying field. With a roar the bombers swept down the field, flited over the ploughland on the outskirts of the village and headed westwards.

Led by the regimental commander, Grechishnikov and Fokin, taciturn Plotkin and Efremov flow in the direction of Berlin.

The bombers were nearing Stettin, where they were met by two layers of solid artillery-fire; first the nearer, then the further would flare out. The searchlight-beams crossed.

The fields cleared of smoke and flame, and the city lay exposed. A dead city. The sheltering pall of night had disappeared. The colonel seemed to preen his wings, if anything, still straighter and longer than before.

A thunder-storm burst. The searchlights were extinguished. Stettin was left behind. But the bursts from the anti-aircraft batteries went on convulsively.

The dense cloud-banks were suffused with a froth, now rose colour, now yellow, and again bursting like bubbles. From below came the explosions of shells.

Gunner and wireless-operator Byelov, a pleasant, snub-nosed young fellow, was moved to express his feelings in song:

"Oh, rage as you will but don't drone over me,
For that may cost you your head, don't you see?"

"Comrade Shvetsov," wireless-operator Kretenko inquired, "which of you is acting the nightingale up there?"

"Oh, it's Byelov,—he burst into song all of a sudden. Why, was he singing out of tune, or something?"

"No, he is not a bad singer at all. But he forgot himself. We've got to stop all that. . . with Berlin right here under our noses," the wireless-operator explained.

The beams of the searchlights had caught Fokin's machine and would not let it go. Fireworks were playing over the wings of Plotkin's plane as though huge paws had reached out and grabbed him. Behind Plotkin came Efremov, daring the dazzling rays.

Out of the distant darkness headlights twinkled, lighting up a plane

for an instant, then vanishing. Twinkling, once more vanishing. Trychkov and Fenyagin climbed, flew blind awhile, inhaled some oxygen.

For twenty minutes they were accompanied by frightful explosions; for thirty minutes they were lit up by the searchlights and the twinkling headlights of German fighters. Yet to none of them did the thought of turning back ever occur. Every man kept the course that had been plotted out for him.

Two enemy fighters swept past somewhat below them. The colonel paid no heed to them, as though he had not even seen them.

For thirty minutes the anti-aircraft fire went on. For forty the searchlights danced madly. This was Berlin!

"Listen, Herman," the gunner said, unable to keep silence any longer. "Surely this is Berlin?"

"Yes, it's Berlin all right," Herman agreed, and with a flash of lamps: "Make for the Stettin railway station. It's in the North of Berlin."

The colonel flew westwards to the Wietzleben station.

Efremov chose the industrial district of Spandau, while Plotkin circled over Lichterfelde.

Now they had all dispersed, each in a different directione.

On the left a huge green moon rose.

Berlin was not expecting visitors this time, either. It was still smoking. From the day before.

The tracer-bullets were like threads of silver rain.

Now the Siemens' works, the metal works, power-station and storehouses were all plainly visible.

"Come, get ready! I'm going to lose height a bit. Let'em shoot if they want to!" said Fokin.

The alarmed Germans were shooting at random; the moon was catching it hot from them.

Fokin went into a tailspin, almost settling on the roof of the Stettin railway station, so quiet now.

Shvetsov released the bombs.

The station burst into flames, the roof fell in.

"Calculate your shots," Fokin reminded him. "Do the job by degrees. Send one down, then wait a bit, we'll buzz around awhile. Then drop another. . . I keep going about fifteen minutes. We have to get on the Germans' nerves, and then knock them on the head. And you, Petrovich," he spoke into the phone to the other operator, "chuck down some leaflets."

Petrovich took out a package of leaflets and dropped them overboard. They spoke of the number of German soldiers who had perished on the Eastern front. The bony hand of Adolf Hitler reached out towards graves of the fallen, to raise them from the dead and fling them anew into battle. In one little square a drawing of a burned *Junkers*, in another the "invincible" "Prince Eugen" tank, wrecked, plunged nose downward into the earth. Decimated divisions and figures. Lots of figures. The plague raging in Europe!

"Herman," said Fokin very softly. "Do you see that works right over there by the searchlights? Drop a couple on it."

"I haven't any left, Comrade Senior Lieutenant."

But Fokin wasn't ready to leave Berlin yet. He had to do some buzzing and circling over the works and factories first, make a note of the best points to hit the enemy, memorize the streets and houses of Berlin.

"Time we were going, Comrade Fokin, time we were going!" the navigator warned.

"Just a minute. What a pity we ran short of bombs!"

"Comrade Fokin, the other planes have cleared out long since."

Berlin is ablaze!

Germany! How low you have fallen! And this is only the beginning.

On the way back the colonel said to his navigator:

"Our luck was in today. Look at the weather. To the left of you."

A blue leaden cloud was creeping up on them.

Once more, as they were returning, the bombers fell within the fiery circle. Forty minutes of firing. For forty minutes the German searchlights throbbed and jumped convulsively.

The interceptors darted in and out, their headlights piercing the gloom every moment. The night spaces were slashed and gashed by the searchlights. Columns of fire reared themselves between earth and sky, and flakes of faded blue, orange, deep blue, spread sideways like a glittering spider's web, to blend somewhere to the right, behind the moon.

"That's Danzig down below," said Afanassi Fokin in a weary voice. "And I haven't any bombs left. What a damned shame!"

"Yes, it is," Shvetsov agreed. "And you know, it's a long way back, Afanassi."

"You sound a bit fed up. . . Pull yourself together, man!"

Shvetsov's hand stirred. He got up from the navigator's seat to lie a little forward and keep a lookout. He started to creep.

The temperature was minus forty-six. He found he could not crawl. It was getting hard to breathe. The navigator stretched out his hand towards the table to check up on the course again. His chart lay on the table but he could not raise his hand. It no longer felt like his own. His eyes kept closing.

The earth was growing dim and misty, swimming, falling, soaring. The earth had suddenly become elusive.

The compass jumped. There was no visibility at all. Earth was hidden from view and ceased to leap and swoon.

"Listen, Herman!. . Herman, I say!"

No reply.

"Petrovich, are you still alive, old chap?"

Still no reply.

The wireless-operator was sitting bareheaded. He had no oxygen mask on, his head was hanging and, huddled close against the wall of the machine, he was suffocating.

"Petrovich! I say, Herman!"

There was no reply.

The colonel reached the base by morning. And the morning was a fine one, glowing in crimson and mauve. With the sunrise came a gusty wind, bringing a cool breath of the sea from the gulf and the tang of salt seaweed and rushes.

Up the long track came the chief-of-staff in a cap with a white top.

Plotkin landed. He crawled out on the wing and sat on it for some time before he could get up. Then he reported:

"I bombed Berlin, according to orders."

Weary as he was, the colonel brightened up and smiled.

"Well, what about it? Do you think the Germans got their packet? You must be feeling pretty tired?"

"I must admit I am. You know yourself what it's like, don't you?"

"Of course I do. I'm tired, too. Flying to Europe is no joke. Go and get some rest now."

Plotkin was moving off with his slow heavy gait. Than, remembering something, he turned back.

"I forgot to ask you, Colonel: have all the pilots turned up?"

The colonel said nothing. Then he glanced up at the sky and said:

"Not all of them. Trychkov and Dashkovsky aren't here. All the rest have got in already. Afanassi Fokin isn't here yet, either."

"What?"

"Afanassi isn't here," the colonel could hardly get the words out.

The aerodrome was very still. Those who had come in were long since asleep. And those who had come out to meet them had been sent back by the colonel.

The distant droning of engines was heard.

Trychkov arrived. So did Dashkov-

sky. Trychkov climbed out calmly enough. Then flung his flying-helmet on the ground.

"What were you thinking of, Volkov?" he demanded of his navigator. "What put it into your head? You were landing me on an enemy aerodrome. I asked you — where are you taking me to? And what did you say? You said: 'Land on the left.'"

"And what happened next?" Preobrazhensky asked on the alert.

"Then, I let down the chassis, circled twice and started downwards. There I was getting the kindest of invitations, and my wheels had nearly touched ground when—lo and behold!—I saw cigars! We haven't any cigars like those, I thought. Where am I going?

"'Where've you landed me?' I shouted to Volkov.

"'I'm sure I don't know,' said he.

"That's Volkov for you, just follows his nose, somewhere, anywhere. I swear I'll never fly with you again, my lad. Never! If you were to kill me for it, I woudn't. I only just got away. By the skin of my teeth."

"What have you got to say for yourself, navigator?" the colonel asked.

"Everything happened exactly as Trychkov told you. I lost my way."

"Lost his way to an enemy aerodrome," the pilot corrected him. "There's a nice mess for you."

"Go to bed. Have something to eat first. We'll thrash this question out later."

"Right you are!" said Trychkov, They walked off together each angry and absorbed in his own thoughts.

But no matter how long they waited for Fokin, there were no signs of him. That splendid pilot was missing.

Preobrazhensky was the last to leave the aerodrome. Mishka Plotkin lingered with him.

"Well," said the colonel. "It's a bad look-out for Fokin. And a great blow for us."

Plotkin said nothing.

They woke Khokhlov, who was lying down, dressed in singlet and shorts.

"Khokhlov," the colonel stooped over him. "You know what's happened, don't you?"

"What?" cried Khokhlov, springing up at once.

But before the colonel could get the words out of his mouth a compelling voice said: "This is Moscow calling. Comintern station... Wave length..."

And after a brief pause a woman's voice announced:

"On the night of August 8th a group of our airplanes made a second raid on Germany, mainly for reconnoissance purposes, and dropped incendiary and explosive bombs on military objectives and railways in the vicinity of Berlin. Our pilots observed fires and explosions. German anti-aircraft artillery was active but with very little effect.

All our airplanes, with exception of one, for which a search is being made, returned to their base."

"You say Fokin hasn't turned up yet?" Khokhlov repeated, with a wild look. "But I can't believe that of Fokin. You must be joking. Fenyagin mightn't turn up. Eslin mightn't —but not Fokin. No! I won't believe it. I won't. Let's go to the aerodrome. Come along quick. Fokin'll turn up yet!" And Khokhlov threw on his clothes, buckled and balted himself, snatched up his cap and only as he was preparing to depart, paused by the stony composure of Plotkin, who was sitting still dressed in flying togs and helmet.

"Why dont' you say something? Is he... is he dead, then? What—crashed?"

"None of us know anything," the colonel told him. "Except that he bombed Berlin and made a good job of it. I do know that."

"Hello, hello! This is Moscow calling... On the night of August 8th a large formation of British bombers undertook a raid on Germany. A great

number of heavy bombs were dropped on the industrial centre of Essen.

Other formations of British bombers attacked the docks at Boulogne. With the exception of four bombers all the aircraft returned from these operations to their base."

"So you see—their fellows haven't turned up either," Khokhlov said with a sigh. "Their people, too. Four planes. Oh, but Afanassi and Herman... I can't believe it. I'm sure they're alive somewhere."

Steadily and evenly, the clock on the table ticked away minutes. It was so still that the slightest stir outside sounded as loud and startling as a pistol-shot.

The three airmen, the three old pals, were sitting here, thinking, and their thoughts bore them far away to Berlin, where the lightning of the batteries flashed, where the whole sky seethed like an infernal cauldron into which pilot Fokin had cast his deadly cargo.

The silence lasted a long time. Too long. The missing airman's friends suffered, believed, wavered.

The three pilots started a conversation.

"I know what it is," said Plotkin, coming to himself with a start. "There must be a lot to do in Berlin. In the first place, if you have a look at the map..." He pulled a map out from under the pillow. "Here, see, there's a railway station. Here's another. Fifteen lines. They connect Berlin with the most important centres in Europe. Destroy them! Here are canals, see. Canals connect Berlin with the principal ports—Stettin, Hamburg."

"There's Hamburg," said Khokhlov, coming closer. "It's the biggest port in Europe. Trans-oceanic cargoes come here. Deprive Germany of her routes and communications."

"Don't forget," the colonel remarked, "that four railway lines converge in Hamburg. Don't forget the Elbe. Here's the outlet to the North Sea. And Stettin, with its shipyards, its machine-building works, trading position, the chief German port in the Baltic. Afanassi Fokin did a bit of good work on Stettin, night before last. But where is Fokin? I keep worrying about him."

"Yes, it's painful for us all," Khokhlov said. "But we must have patience. We're going to keep our accounts with Berlin. The reckoning will be paid."

The colonel get himself some notepaper and sat down to write a letter home.

"Dear father, dear wife and my precious little children,

This is the first chance I've had of answering your letter. I am quite well. Galusha's drawing of a little house with a solitary birch in front of it flew all the way to Berlin with me. And for this nice little house and pretty little birch-tree and the wrecked happiness of our people we avenged ourselves on the fascists. Yes, we wreaked a terrible vengeance on them. The Germans got their packet. Only there's one thing that weights heavely on all of us. You'll read in the papers, very likely, that all our airplanes, with the exception of one for which a search is being made, returned to their base. It's our Fokin who's missing, and we're all grieved about it. But still I have an idea we'll find him yet.

Your own *Evgeni.*"

(*To be continued*)

Soviet Caricatures

DIRTY LINEN

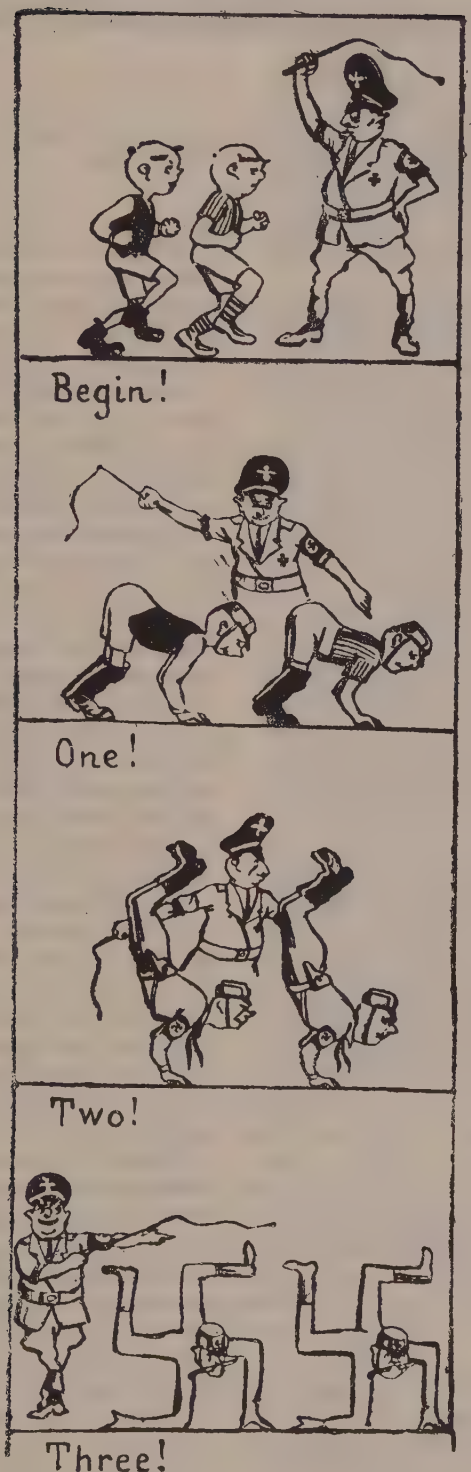
No sooner had Laval come to the helm than Berlin and Rome started to bring pressure to bear on Vichy government to induce them to give up the French fleet and agree to the occupation of Tunis, Savoy, Nice and Corsica.

(From a newspaper item)

Drawing by Kukryniksy

Two washerwomen grim and stern are busy at the tub:
They twist the rulers of Vichy, and rinse, and squeeze, and scrub.
No conscience and no honour Laval has e'er possessed;
It's hardly to be hoped at all he'll stand such squeezing-test.
The washerwomen wring out dry (at such a job they're fine!)
Darlan, Laval and Doriot, and hang them on a line.

SAMUEL MARSHAK


Begin!
One!
Two!
Three!

Men of the Landing Party

1. HEADING TO THE WEST

The dense, vicious blackness of the starless night was ripped up by a red flare. This was the signal for starting. The rumbling, roaring darkness became alive with motion.

One after another, with a short but regular interval between each start, the heavy planes ran along the aerodrome and took off. Red and green stars, the board lights, moved away in pair from the starting point. The airplanes soared up, rose to a higher altitude and circled above the aerodrome as if making a farewell salute; then they took their course towards the West.

The planes were full of people; every "passenger" had a parachute and a bulky knapsack. The commanders of each craft again repeated to their men all the details of their complicated task and told them how great their responsibility was.

In the neighbourhood of the village (we shall call it "Luchi") two high-roads pass which connect the German front with the rear. From the South-West the nazis transfer ammunition and oil by rail, from the North they transport men and provisions. This point is strongly fortified.

In this area of the front a prominent Soviet general is carrying on an offensive. He is driving the nazi troops back westward. A blow had to be dealt to the enemy from the rear; this was to be done by the men of the landing party.

. . . They were now nearing the front-line. The planes climbed up to a higher altitude, and immediately the heavy straining drone of the motor filled the whole cabin.

Here, and there flashes of light flared up down below. The fire of bursting shells sprang up and vanished close at hand,—the German anti-aircraft guns had opened fire.

Suddenly ghastly rays of light flashed against the planes. The airship had been spotted by the enemy's searchlights. Shells exploded nearer and nearer. The searchlight did not let the cabin out of its meshes. Dancing flashes of light picked out the faces of the men and drew them out of the darkness. Instantly the pilot throttled the motors, the plane slipped downwards. Now the searchlight was fumbling somewhere behind it. A long multicoloured chain was creeping snakewise along the column of light: anti-aircraft machine-guns were shooting with tracer-bullets.

A few minutes more—and they passed the front-line.

The senior aircraft officer, Lieutenant Batenko glanced round at all those present in the cabin. Quite near to the trap-door Andreyev was dozing. You wouldn't give him more than eighteen. A smile broke out over Batenko's broad face, he remembered the story of this "small caliber parachutist."

When volunteers for the parachute-landing troops were called for, Andreyev and his chums appeared before the medical commission. Due to his small stature and light weight, he was found unfit for this kind of military service. This resolution stung him to the quick: how was it possible that he was unfit? He had more than once held the 3rd—4th place at the ski-races of the Frunze district in the town of Ivanovo, he had never returned empty-handed from a hunt,

and now—just fancy that!—to be pronounced unfit!

With great ardour Andreyev began to persuade the doctor to admit him to the landing troops:

"I can be anything you like to begin with. . . Do you want me to be your cook? This has been my specialty for four years. How about it?"

And so the thing was settled. Hectic days of training now started. Andreyev would prepare lunch, feed the men, and then run to the training-ground. If jumping from a tower was being practised, he would entreat some fellow to give him his turn, and if nobody consented, why, he would furtively climb up to the tower of his own accord and make the jump. Besides this he learned how to assemble a parachute.

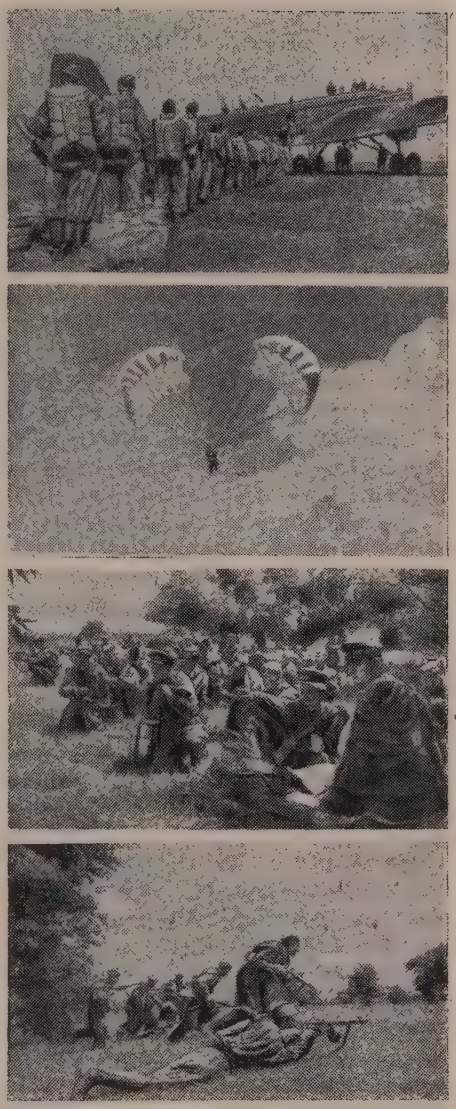
One day the order for a flight was given. No one knew that it was going to be merely a practice flight.

That day Andreyev worked quite exceptionally hard: he cooked the supper quicker than ever and left the distribution of the food in charge of his help-mate.

At the aerodrome he was the first to equip himself with the parachute. Nobody could help laughing at the sight of this Patashon. He looked like a kind of self-moving suit-case. One could see nothing but the parachute moving about with just his head and heels peeping out.

Then Andreyev disappeared. At the roll-call he was found to be missing. At that time he was already in the plane as an aerial "stowaway." And when the trap-door was opened, he was the first to jump,—so afraid he was of being stopped.

At first they thought of punishing the cook severely for his pranks, but the commissar of the detachment ordered him to be given a sound scolding for insubordination and to enlist him in the landing troops for his courage. And so now, even though Andreyev could rightly consider himself to be a full-fledged parachutist,



The X. unit of parachutists were given the assignment to land troops in the district of N. in order to supply a partisan detachment operating in the enemy rear with ammunition, foodstuffs etc. In spite of unfavourable weather conditions, the parachutists fulfilled the assignment and helped the partisans to carry out a number of operations against the fascist invaders.

1. *The group of parachutists going aboard the plane.*
2. *A parachutist descending.*
3. *The commander of the group explains their military assignment to the parachutists after they have landed.*
4. *Parachute troops go into attack.*

he nevertheless still prefered to keep as near as possible to the trap-door.

. . . The pilot reduced the gas, and the plane moved downwards; a loud command was heard: "Attention!" A second passed. The navigator opened the trap-door, and out tumbled the "stowaway," coming first as if fearing that here again he would be hindered by the doctor. Following his example, the other parachutists threw themselves out one after another.

It was beginning to dawn. The little black dots that had detached themselves from the aircraft could be distinctly seen from afar. The wind was driving the parachutes with great force.

The nazis having heard the drone of Soviet planes, rushed out of the houses, panic-stricken, thinking that it was the beginning of the habitual bombing. Peering up into the sky, they understood that a parachute landing was being effected.

One of the parachutists, Zdanovsky, noticed that during his descent down below on the snow-covered ground small dark figures were slowly moving in the direction of the flight of his parachute. Persistently he strained his sight downwards. The figures now were growing. Who could they be? Were they friends or nazis?

Now one could already make out the tall, stooping figures of those men with automatic rifles. There was no more doubt: the people down there were fascists. They didn't shoot, evidently having decided to take hold of a Soviet parachutist alive. The parachute swept swiftly towards them. Glancing quickly around, Zdanovsky saw that all his comrades were descending much further to the South, near the outskirts of a forest. Now Zdanovsky was also borne sideways, but all too slowly, it was too late.

With a great effort he forced his hand behind his beltstrap. At last he got his grenade. The "pocket artillery" shot down from the sky.

Apparently the Germans were not expecting such presents from above,—they were walking in a group; and now four of them lay writhing in death-agony on the snow.

Here was the ground at last. But at the present moment Zdanovsky was not too keen on exchanging the aerial ocean for firm land. A group of Germans rushed at the Soviet parachutist. He saw cords in their hands; they wanted at any price to get the parachutist alive.

What was to be done? At first Zdanovsky decided to entrench himself as quickly as possible and to open fire at his enemies, but then he felt that the north wind was growing stronger,—his parachute was flapping like an unreefed sail. "Leave the parachute open," was his subconscious thought. This was a brilliant way out. A sharp gust of wind tore the ground from under his feet, snatched up the parachute and lugged it towards the forest.

The Germans opened fire at this unusual mobile target. The senior political instructor was being swiftly carried off at a height of five to seven meters above the ground. The fire of an automatic flashed from out of the columns of snow-dust which had risen in his wake: twiddling about in the snow and slipping along on his back, he was firing at the Germans by way of an answer.

Shots also came rattling from the outskirts of the forest: the men who had already landed were covering the descent of their comrade. From over there they could see what a fix Zdanovsky was in, how the nazis were creeping up, evidently anticipating an easy prey. And no sooner had the men landed than they hastened to the rescue.

Now Zdanovsky was bearing straight down at them. Near the forest they seized the parachute as it scudded along close to the ground and helped the valiant commander to unfasten the straps. He stood on his feet quite safe and sound, and calmly said:

"Hello, mates, here I am!"

"Well, Zdanovsky," laughed Batenko, "it looks as if it was quite a mistake your being a parachutist, you ought to be a seaman on a sailing ship. . . Seems as if you always have a fair wind."

More and more parachutists were now gathering at the edge of the forest, their unit was growing. The Germans were all the time illuminating the village with rockets.

Penetrating into the thick of the wood, the landing party began to break up into subdivisions. There was no time to lose. Before the fascists could rally fresh reserves, they had to be dislodged and driven away from the place. Through this village the way lay open to Luchi. The parachutists were preparing to get into action.

2. "WHITE ANGELS"

The wind had fallen. Heavy clouds were sprawling all over the sky. It started to snow in thick fluffy flakes. The men of the landing party moved on skis towards the village N. The weather was favourable. The snow-fall screened the parachutists from the German air forces. Forward! Swift onslaught—that was their motto. They had approached the village and began to deploy their columns in preparation for the fight.

Just then firing was heard from the neighbouring village. None of the men in that group had been given the order to attack this point. Yet there could be no doubt: fighting was going on there.

What did it mean?

Later on everything was explained. Having drifted over to that village, Commander Kaspersky, Lieutenant Bakanov and Sergeant Semeshchenko had landed about ten metres from its boundary. All the people in the place were fast asleep. Approaching one of the houses, the parachutists noticed on the door a bit of paper with some German words on it. Some Hitlerites must be quartered there! The necessity of obtaining intelligence decided them upon the course of seizing a war prisoner. Cautiously they peeped in through the window,—a woman was heating the stove. Kaspersky knocked softly. The old house-wife opened the door.

"Any Germans here?"

"Why, of course! Now, where have you sprung from? Is it from encirclement you've come? Get away quick, or you'll be the worse for it!"

"No, mother," whispered Kaspersky. "It's not from encirclement that we came, we've just specially walked into it."

The old body looked quite nonplussed.

Leaving Bakanov at the door, Kaspersky entered the house together with Semeshchenko. Lighting the room with their flashlights, they saw three soldiers on the floor, and a little further, a bed with an officer on it.

"Hands up!" cried Kaspersky.

Without standing up the soldiers grabbed for their arms. The officer peeped out from under the blanket, then drew it over his head again. Simultaneously one of the Germans fired. Semeshchenko sank to the floor. Quite automatically Kaspersky stooped to hold him up, and in doing so dropped his flashlight, but instantly, realizing the threatening danger, he dodged aside. And indeed the Germans riddled with bullets the planks on the very spot where he had just been standing. Immediately after this Kaspersky fired his automatic and heard a yell.

All this happened with such lightening speed that when Bakanov rushed into the house and lit his flashlight, the three "Fritzes" were lying dead and the officer was trembling and screaming under his blanket: he was in dire need of clean linen.

It was not only by the landing party that the firing in that village was

heard. The Germans, whose attention was fixed on the outskirts of the forest from which the parachutists were moving towards them, also detected it and came to the conclusion that they were surrounded, and had better cut for it. Two of the officers left their men and made off through the kitchen-gardens.

On their way they stumbled across the collective farm watchman Lazutin. Uncle Mitrich,—so they called him throughout the village,—was famed in all the countryside for his daring and ready wit. In his youth he had gone in for bearhunting with a bear spear, he could sing lustily, to his old age he had kept his deep-toned voice,—he was extremely resourceful, and there was no one like him at hoaxing people. His fellow villagers used to speak of him with admiration, calling him a regular "artist." But since the Germans had come no one ever heard his songs or jests, he never joked now. Only on that day, when he learnt that there were some Soviet parachutists in the next village, Mitrich beamed and was himself again.

. . . Panting, the officers run up to Lazutin and addressed him in a friendly way in broken Russian. At first Mitrich thought he was dreaming. He could not make out what had taken place and whether those people before him were actually Germans or not. And when one of the officers offered him a thick cigar and lit a match, the old man was quite perplexed, a sort of stupor came over him.

"Russ dad," said the officer, "we must walk not far, kilometre ten, aber softly. There, where no Russ soldat, partisan."

"Well, that's easy enough," said Mitrich, who had now grasped the situation. The reason of the officers' "friendliness" was quite clear, and there were mischievous sparks of intense exultation in the old fellow's eyes. "That's quite possible, at all events we can dispatch you safely. Only you see, my good people, when you are in my sledge, you must be well covered up, or I'll not be patted on the head by the partisans."

"Schnell, schnell!" the Germans urged. "Quick, quick, can hide, can!"

With his senile trot Mitrich hastened out into the passage, scrambled over into the farm-yard, nearly getting stuck in the paling fence, led out the only surviving old jade, harnessed it in the low country sledge, into which he stacked some hay, and said to the Germans:

"Now lie down, my good masters!"

The officers huddled down in the sledge. Mitrich covered them up with hay and laid an old piece of sackcloth on top of it. They started. On the way an officer's head with bulging eyes popped out from under the sackcloth. He wanted to see whether the old man was taking them in the right direction.

"No, no, mister officer!" Mitrich cried out discontentedly, "no peeping out, please! You might be noticed, and that would surely get me into trouble."

The officer hid himself; Mitrich gave a slight turn to the horse's head. Hay-dust stopped up the fascists' noses. They sneezed. Turning round, Mitrich whispered:

"Be still, you there! You'll be the undoing of me."

He drove up to the village, his face wreathed in broad smiles, and beckoned with his finger to a group of Red Army men and commanders.

Military technician Kosinetz was the first to come up to him.

"Pray tell me where are your chiefs here?" asked the old man. "You see I've brought them this cargo. I'd like to deliver it to the little angels and as quickly as possible." (By little angels Mitrich meant the parachutists: "little white angels dropping down from the sky.")

"What kind of cargo is it?"

"Well, sonny, you'd better have a look at it yourself."

With these words Mitrich lifted up

A landing party of tankmen carrying out a military operation

a corner of the sackcloth. From under it there appeared the stupefied faces of the two officers. Red Army men were standing around with their tommy-guns. Mitrich's face was radiant. It was the prank of his life. He got a formal voucher from the military technician, and returning to his sledge he urged his jade on:

"Now, little trotter, let's go find some new passengers."

. . . The fight in Mitrich's village never took place. The soldiers, left without officers, hastened to give up their arms. Thus the landing party's very first day of fighting was a great success. The Germans were far from expecting the sudden appearance of our units in that district, and especially from the West.

And so the way to the village Luchi was now open. The men of the landing party could now proceed to the carrying out of their basic task. Mitrich became their chief scout. Not only he but the inhabitants of all the neighbouring villages vied with each other in supplying the parachutists with the information which was so necessary to them for the further development of their operations.

The village of Luchi fully commanded the whole countryside. From the air it looked like a large saddle. Several roads started from it, connecting this strongly fortified post with the large garrison that was guarding the approaches to the most important main road.

Along the high-roads the Germans were transferring reinforcements to their front which by that time had many rents in it.

In Luchi about five hundred German soldiers, an artillery and a mine-throwers' battery and machine-guns were stationed.

All round the village a system of interconnecting passages was constructed, strongholds were built under the huts, many snipers and men with tommy-guns were ingeniously concealed in all the garrets.

The landing party fully realized that to take this strongly fortified post would be something of a job. A prominent Soviet general was moving from the East to join them. The commander of the detachment

ordered the operation to be started at night. It was decided to carry out the attack from all sides, in a circuitous way, through the forests and from the enemy rear.

The attack began upon a signal given with two red rockets. The fascists steadily resisted the advance of the parachutists, profiting by the superiority of their fire-arms. After the night battle, at day-break a new group of parachutists arrived, and straight from their flight they joined the action. By evening the men succeeded in outflanking the enemy from the East.

The Germans rallied reinforcements from the neighbouring villages: the battle for Luchi was now in full swing.

3. ONWARDS!

The fight for Luchi was a hot encounter. Its tactical development was such as might be expected in the conditions of a landing party operation: the enemy brought pressure to bear on them from all sides. In this there was nothing to surprise the parachutists. Only a few months before had they suddenly got into the enemy rear, they would have considered themselves to be surrounded, they would have fought fiercely and stubbornly, but their psychological attitude would have been quite different from that of the landing party in its present situation.

Those were not vain words that the valiant commander of the parachutists Kazankin kept repeating:

"We drop down from the sky to surround the Germans."

Some time had elapsed after the events which we have just described, when a radiogram from the commander of the Western front troops, General Zhukov, was delivered at the commanding post of the landing detachment, addressed to Kazankin and the Commissar Olenin; it ran as follows:

"Today a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet was published according to which you are awarded the Order of the Red Banner. We heartily congratulate you on this high Government award and wish the men of the landing party further successes in their heroical military achievements."

That same day Kazankin said to his men:

"Our strenuous endeavours on the field of battle are highly appreciated. My reward is also your reward. Onward, friends!"

This happened later on, when having overcome difficulties the men had already carried out the greater part of their principal military assignment. We shall now go back to the time when the hot battle for Luchi was still going on.

The chief of the health department of the detachment, Military Surgeon of the second rank Abusaid Valievich Isaev, never for a moment left the Red Army men and commanders of his detachment which was carrying on the storm of Luchi. Lieutenant Petrov, a great friend of the doctor's, was in one of the vanguard groups. Just before the beginning of the fight, he said to Isaev as he ran past him:

"Well, if anything happens to me remember that I would prefer to be treated only by you, old saw-bones!"

"You can rely upon it," Isaev shouted after him, "my hand won't quiver."

When the nazis had been driven out of two houses standing on a hillock at the end of the village, and the men rushed forward, Isaev decided to organize a casualty clearing station in one of the houses.

Together with three ambulancemen he entered a large besmoked room. A few minutes ago the fascists had been in possession here. Dirty rags were strewn about on the floor, worn out shoes; in one of the corners, some pornographic postcards were tacked

on to the wall. A pass to a bawdy-house was lying on the table.

Quickly the ambulance-men knocked down the German's plankbeds and started rigging up an operating-table. At that moment the window panes smashed to pieces, and together with the frames were hurled into the room with a loud crash. A mine had exploded quite close to the house.

Isaev was wounded; a mine splinter had hit his side. With the help of the ambulance-men he tried to dress his wound, but failed in the attempt and lost consciousness. He only managed to murmur softly:

"Not at all the right time for this accident to happen!"

To look at this man one would never take him for a surgeon. He looked every inch a soldier. Even here, in the enemy rear, one always saw him braced up and full of pep. While serving in the army Isaev had made seventy parachute jumps and was appointed instructor of parachute sport.

In pre-war days Isaev had had another occupation besides his medical work, that of training parachutists, and more than a hundred of his former pupils now had the opportunity of dropping on the Germans from the sky.

There had been cases when having flown up in an airship to make his or her first jump, some youth or girl would lose heart. Then pointing to his badge Isaev would say:

"Seventy times I've jumped, and yet I am not afraid. You do it for the first time and seem to be already scared," and giving the youngster a friendly tap on the shoulder he would add with mock severity: "Well, go on, go on! Everything will be all right. I'll go first and you follow me."

And instantly people would feel quite plucky. The doctor's large black, calm eyes seemed to subjugate everybody to his strong, assured will.

. . . Now Isaev was lying on the floor, unconscious. The ambulance-men quickly bandaged his wound, brought him into the next room and hastened to repair the damages, stopping up the broken windows with planks and matting. At the same time the others were already receiving the wounded, bandaging up slight wounds, but mostly just calming and cheering up the men.

"What on earth are we going to do without the surgeon?" The youthful, tousle-headed ambulance-man Vassia felt quite down-hearted.

"That's true, old chap, it isn't Moscow here, it isn't the 'big front', there's no hospital to ring up, the man you jump with is the one who treats you!" responsed an experienced parachutist. "Let's wait a little, and then we can send for Kaplan, maybe he is free."

Vassia remained to look after the doctor. Isaev had come to himself again. Till then he had hardly been able to move his lips, he had spoken incoherently about his wife who did not want to leave Leningrad, about his son whom he was expecting to meet.

Presently two seriously wounded men were brought in: one of them had both legs injured, the other one's left arm was maimed. They moaned loudly and called for the doctor. One of the ambulance-men ran to fetch surgeon Kaplan but did not return for a very long time: evidently the doctor had his hands full. The moans of the wounded could be heard through the thick wooden wall. Doctor Isaev opened his eyes and listened. His parched lips twisted into a sad smile. He asked for a drink. Having avidly swallowed several gulps of water, he tried to stand up. An ambulance-man supported him.

Isaev came up to the wounded men and asked for his instruments. There was silence in the room. People felt ashamed of their groans. They had understood what this wounded man with the glowing eyes was on the point of doing. He was going to operate on them. With silent admiration the ambulance-men were gazing at Isaev.

This was indeed an exploit, this was a man heroically carrying out his duty as a soldier and a surgeon.

Isaev began to make the first operation.

With the greatest exertion and willpower he forced himself to forget his own excruciating pain. He felt nothing, saw nothing but the injured part of the wounded man's body lying before him.

The operation was achieved successfully. Stirred to the inmost depths of their souls, the men watched every movement of the doctor's skilful, unerring hands, their faces expressing exclusive love, admiration and gratitude. Another operation followed. then one more. . .

. . . The din of the battle penetrated into the house occupied by the casualty clearing station. Any moment the landing party could expect to receive a blow in the back from the neighbouring villages which were still in the hands of the Germans. Two of the nearest villages should be taken at all costs. This would immediately disrupt a very important line of communication used by the nazis.

By means of a lightening air raid a group of parachutists succeeded in taking the disconcerted enemy unawares, and soon both villages were in the hands of the Red Army men. A regrouping of forces was soon effected. Now the combined strength of all three landing parties was hurled on Luchi. Lieutenant Petrov and his men were already moving towards the eastern outskirt of the village to join the group of parachutists who had passed on to the village through the forest.

. . . At that time doctor Isaev was getting through with his sixth operation. Suddenly the door of the hut was thrown open noisily. Two stretcher-bearers carried in Lieutenant Petrov, who had just been wounded in the abdomen. At the sight of his friend lying motionless on the stretcher, Isaev staggered. He knew Petrov's life was now in his hands, but his strength was failing him.

Isaev's eyes grew bloodshot with overstrain. A loose strand of his damp blue black hair stuck to his cold sweating brow. With a superhuman effort, setting his teeth and calling to his aid all his professional experience, Isaev started operating on his friend, whispering to himself:

"My hand won't quiver. I've promised this to you, dear comrade!"

He had just time to finish suturing the wound when the surgeon whom the ambulance-man had gone to fetch arrived at last. It was through a dull film already spreading over his eyes that Isaev looked at him. A terrible reaction shook the overstrained man. He dropped his instruments, swayed and fell to the floor, lifeless.

At the price of his own life, this surgeon and hero had saved seven other human lives.

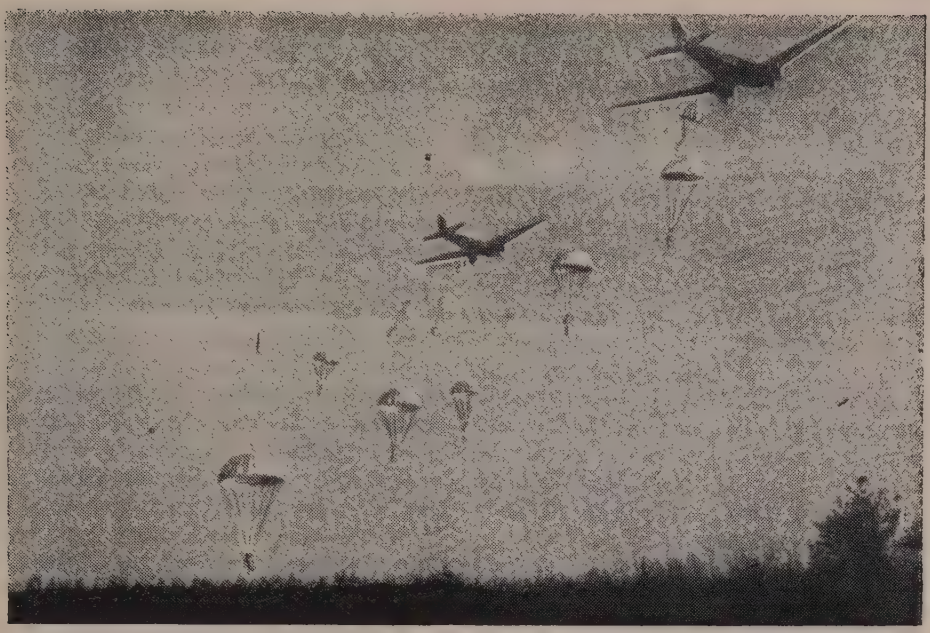
On the following morning the Germans came down on Luchi with a heavy bombing raid. Six times the nazis raided the village. At the same time they kept up a mass artillery and mine-throwing fire.

The German general ordered Luchi to be taken back at any cost. Choice SS units in cooperation with tanks attacked the village. The Germans rushed on with wild shouts of "Hoch!" But to build up an invulnerable defence is the law for a landing party; a place once taken is never to be surrendered. A bloody encounter ensued. In two hours' time hundreds of fascists' corpses and some disabled, burnt up tanks were scattered in heaps around the village.

The parachutists were keeping steady hold of Luchi, and throwing back the enemy they moved still further onwards.

4. HOW THE TOWN WAS TAKEN

Some time before the above described events took place, to the



The parachutists bale out

North-West of Luchi, and at a considerable distance from that village, a small group of parachutists had landed.

The night was still. The full moon poured its cold bluish light on the snow-covered expanses. All of a sudden among the snow-drifts a barely visible red dot twinkled; it was immediately followed by a green one, then both of them vanished as suddenly as they appeared. Those were the signal lights for assembling the parachutists.

The senior of the group was Commander Pikulev. He studied the surrounding conditions and came to the conclusion that the situation was a very ticklish one. The concentration post of Commander Anufriev's detachment was quite far off, and there were only nine men in the group. All the neighbouring villages swarmed with Germans.

What was to be done? To join the main body of the detachment? To await reinforcement and meanwhile to be idle and hide from the Germans?

No, men of a landing party never act in such a way. Their principle is immediate and decisive action. Once they have landed, they must fight without waiting for others to join them. If circumstances demand it, fight under any conditions. If there is no senior officer, you are to be the commander. The task that comes first is scouting.

Pikulev sent out scouts in different directions. Five of the men remained with him.

. . . Here is the edge of the forest; thickset old pine trees; overhead an enemy plane has just flown past; a forlorn-looking magpie has fluttered out of the wood. Everything around seems to be so still and quiet.

Yet Pikulev knew what he was about. The small group of dare-devils must stir up the local people into action against the foe.

Soon Kolik returned, followed by the rest of the scouts. Pikulev's surmises proved to be correct. They had landed in the vicinity of the large town N. There seemed to be no other

parachutists in the neighbourhood. There were no Germans in the next village. The parachutists betook themselves there and scattered in different huts.

How much joy they brought to the people who had suffered from the nazi oppression! No words were needed. The peasants saw that each of the parachutists had his tommy-gun, a warm coat of the best quality and padded warm trousers; they saw their good-humoured, healthy-looking faces and heard their kind, cheering words about all that was near and dear to them and that had remained far away beyond the front-line. . . Everything they said inspired such confidence and strength!

In the village a rumour reached Pikulev that close by another group of parachutists was active.

"Could it be Mazurkevich?"—the thought flashed in his mind.

The whole night was spent by the men in intimate conversations with the collective farmers. For a long time Pikulev held council with the chairman of the collective farm. That very night a number of cavalry-men galloped out from the village in different directions. And in the morning the men of the landing party went into the forest.

The forest was all astir. Here and there the bushes would move suddenly, a bearded head in a warm fur cap would pop out and look around. Along the solitary snow-covered paths old men, youngsters and girls made their way to the group of parachutists. There was no end to the questions about Moscow and Stalin, serious matters were discussed. The truth concerning our country and details of the landing of the Soviet parachutists spread all over the countryside.

The first part of the task was carried out. Now Pikulev's group moved southward, leaving behind it newly organized partisan detachments and on its way doing wrecking work. The Pikulevites cut telephone connections, blew up bridges and set up ambushes along the roads. To every Soviet citizen they met they related what was going on at the front.

"If I could only find Mazurkevich!" this thought would not leave Pikulev's mind. He was anxious to know the fate of his intimate friend. Besides with joined forces they could do so much more.

By forced marches, without stopping to rest, he was leading his men to the place where, as the collective farmers said, the other parachutist group was stationed.

And now on the forest roads the parachutists began to find traces of their comrades' work: here a toppled over German cart with its horse and driver dead; over there wires cut. . .

Following these traces and listening to what the collective farmers had to say, Pikulev at last found Mazurkevich's group. The commissar had thirty one men with him.

Words could not describe how glad these two valiant men were when they met. They embraced each other heartily.

"Well, old fellow, how was it that you failed me? Hadn't I said to you that you were just to hoot and we would be with you in a trice?"

And Mazurkevich was the first to roar with laughter not at his simple joke but for sheer joy that they had so miraculously met under the cold rays of the blinding winter sun, amidst all these undulating snow-covered hills.

"Well, but I have turned up now, old man, haven't I?" replied Pikulev. "Now that we are together we shall move mountains."

In the joint detachment they had already two mine-throwers, thirty-five automatics, several machine-guns and a large number of grenades. Now the landing party was a great and menacing force. They could carry out the basic task which the commander and the commissar had set for

themselves,—that of seizing the town N. together with the partisans.

The parachutists moved off through the forest. . . Suddenly a bearded man in a black cap with a band of cartridges across his shoulder loomed up in front of them and shouted:

"Stop! Who goes there?"

This meeting took place on a path so narrow that two persons could hardly pass each other. Beside the path, near a big tree-stump, a little cloud of blue-gray smoke drifted upward. A little further on there was a shed made of fir-tree branches, a kitchen and some tethered horses. With the greatest joy Pikulev and Mazurkevich realized that they had come across the legendary "Grandfathers" partisan detachment.

The town N. is a centre of important high-ways. To the North it is connected with the most important railway and high-way mainlines. In the town itself there are some munition stores, a big supply of provisions and forage plundered by the nazis, and a number of arms-repairing shops.

Pikulev and Mazurkevich realized full well that to seize the town, even though backed by "Grandfather's" partisans, would be a very difficult task. But their preceding work proved to have been by no means in vain. All over the district, small partisan detachments were active. The parachutists kept up constant relations with them and prepared them for the coming operation. One of the most powerful detachments organized by the parachutists had adopted the formidable name of "Hurricane."

The most strenuous work was now under weigh. Day and night the men of the landing party and the partisans brought down timber, lugged it up nearer to the roads, erected snow ramparts and blindages and mined the roads.

They did not do any wrecking work. The Germans knew that the neighbouring villages were in the hands of the partisans, but in the town all was quiet. The nazis had decided that they were in perfect safety. No one troubled them these days. Activity in the forest seemed to have died out.

This deceptive calm reminded one of early spring, when the snow still lies thick, but under it small rills and streamlets begin to stir, then to make their way through it, undermining it. At first they move but slowly, then faster and faster, and finally they merge and break right through the layer of snow, washing it away and carrying their waters to the great overflowing rivers.

The preparations for the blockade of the town lasted six days. At the appointed hour the men took up their posts on the ramparts. The parachutists, equipped with their tommy-guns, lay low in their ambushes. The order of the day was as follows: during the onslaught against the town no one of the fascists who refused to surrender was to be allowed to escape alive. Up to the outskirts of the town where the munition stores were situated a long narrow ditch was dug under cover of dark: its bottom was strewn with powder.

Everybody awaited the signal tensily. Pikulev and Mazurkevich were somewhat anxious. The wrecking group was to give the signal. But they seemed already to be behind time.

The parachutists and partisans who had moved up to the very approaches to the town felt their eyes smart, so intently did they peer into the darkness in the direction where the wrecking group was to act. Green circles and big fiery rings began to spring up before their eyes from the strain.

But suddenly one of these rings seemed to have been torn asunder, and a flaming snake started creeping along the moonlit sparking snow. This moment had been so long expected, and yet now they could not believe their own eyes. Then came

the thunder of the first explosion, and after it the peals grew more frequent: shells were bursting in the German munition stores. At the same time in one of the outskirts a big wooden bridge began to burn.

This proved quite sufficient to sow the wildest confusion among the fascists. They started frantically to remove all their belongings. To the accompanishment of the infernal music of the explosions, in the dancing light of burning houses a long train of waggons hurried northward along one of the high-ways. . . The parachutists allowed it to approach their ambush and then opened fire. At the same time along another high-way another transport was moving to the South. It was met on its way by the partisans of the "Hurricane" detachment. And indeed no hurricane or whirlwind could have caused greater disaster than they did in the ranks of the bewildered enemy.

The surviving Germans started running madly in all directions. The panic was undescribable. Soldiers in frenzy rushed from house to house, from street to street, from road to road, but wherever they rushed it was always lead they met with.

For a long time the garrison kept on trying to call for reinforcements. They might well try! All connections had been ruptured by the parachutists and the partisans. Short engagements broke out in the town itself: the local inhabitants began to deal blows at the Germans.

In the morning the parachutists and partisans entered the town, and the red Soviet flag flattered again in the blue sky over the building of the district Soviet.

Three days later, having made sure the defence of the town, the men of the landing party started on their march to join their detachment.

N. STAROSTIN,
Battalion Commissar

"TROPHY"

The K.V. tanks broke into the village. Tank Commander Kalinichev forged ahead down the smoky street towards where he saw some Germans still continuing their resistance. Every now and then he gave the driver Dormidontov the command: "Stop! I'm going to fire."

Suddenly in the midst of the swirling sea of fire and death the driver Dormidontov saw a huge dog tearing madly from house to house. It was a big, handsome, brownish-coloured pointer. At bay, he rushed now towards an empty house, now at the panic-stricken Germans running past him.

"Just a jiff—and I'll have him turning his toes up!" cries the gunner and wireless operator Shishov, pressing up against his machine-gun.

"What's the matter with you? Have you taken leave of your senses? It's a dog, not a fascist," says Dormidontov, giving Shishov an angry dig in the ribs.

For a moment Shishov slowed down the lowering of the cock, and the loud volley that followed just got two German grenade-throwers who had jumped out from behind a house.

"Those are the dogs to aim at," Dormidontov called cheerfully to Shishov, never leaving the lookout slit.

The fighting died down. The village was ours. Dormidontov at the first opportunity asked permission of the commander "to go and have a look at the pup."

Twenty minutes later Dormidontov appeared on the threshold of the cottage where the tankmen were quartered, the brown dog following meekly at his heels. The boys set up a hubbub of good-humoured chaff:

"Where did you catch that prisoner? Good for you, Zhenka!"

"Good boy, Fritz! Here, now, Fritz!"

"Come on, Carrots, give us your paw, up with your paw!"

Dormidontov had managed to win the heart of this thoroughbred pointer, and the dog now pressed itself up against him, raising his head right up to his waist and peering round suspiciously at all the others.

Dormidontov stroked the dog and gestured him invitingly to sit down beside him. The pointer obediently sat down. From time to time he shuddered all over his muscular, smooth-coated body. His big head jerked in the direction of the noise

"Delivering a Message."
Sculpture by S. Trounyansky

made by the crowd. His ears then pricked up a little, and he bared the sharp, white fangs glistening in his powerful jaws.

"It's a German dog, boys. Here's his number and something else written on his collar," said Dormidontov.

Everybody had already noticed on the dog's neck a little white medallion in the form of a shield with the stamped number and inscription.

"Belonged to some officer," someone remarked.

"No doubt," agreed Konstantinov, "he's lying about somewhere under a gate, the dirty cur, and his noble hound is here making himself cosy together with us."

They all laughed.

"So see here, boys," Dormidontov went on, "I'll look after the dog. The commander has already consented to its being kept in the battalion."

"Then let's give him a name," someone proposed, and from all sides suggestions began to pour: "Fascist," "Bandit," "Adolf," "Hitler," "Goebbels,"—as many as you like of such names.

"No, pals, none of those are any good," Dormidontov interrupted his friends. Mischievous sparks danced in his deep blue eyes, and in a mock-serious tone he continued:

"Comrades! Now *does* it suit a dog to be branded with a name like that? Why, it's an insult to him."

Dormidontov's words were drowned in roars of laughter.

"So how will we name him?" asked the tankmen in perplexity.

"I'll tell you something!" Dormidontov began again. "Didn't we get him as a war prize along with other German property? He's our trophy. So let's call him 'Trophy.'"

"'Trophy,' 'Trophy,'" the boys started repeating to themselves, and at once they all liked the name very much.

. . . Some months had passed since that memorable wintry day when we made a prisoner of the dog. Trophy was never away from the battalion. He soon got used to his new name, was very fond of Dormidontov and fretted for him to an unbelievable degree in the second echelon when his master was in action.

"And what if Trophy runs away to the Germans?" someone once teased Dormidontov, and this made Evgeni ponder deeply and seriously.

"We'll have to make him more at home," Dormidontov thought to himself, and after that he almost always took Trophy along with him, and trained him patiently and cleverly.

Trophy learned to convey dispatches from the company to the second echelon, to carry a machine-gun disk wrapped up in rags in his teeth, to carry an automatic gun by its strap.

Trophy's attachment and devotion to his new master grew day by day. When he went into battle, Evgeni always took tender leave of his friend: squeezed his paw, stroked him, put a piece of sugar in his mouth. When the five K.V. tanks returned together from the fighting-line and were nearing their base, Trophy would dash away and rush unfalteringly up to Dormidontov's tank.

"Trophy, good old boy, jump up!" Dormidontov would call out of the trap-door, throttling down the motor. Trophy with one bound would be on the tank, thrusting his head in through the trap-door and lovingly nuzzling the helmet and blackened, almost unrecognizable face of his friend and master.

Day by day the fighting grew fiercer. Sometimes Dormidontov's tank did not return to its base for two or three days running, and then Trophy, lonely and utterly miserable, didn't know what to do with himself. He had made several attempts to run to the front-lines, but, unable to discover his master's tracks anywhere, had returned hungry and wretched.

. . . Then one night the tanks went into battle again.

The Germans had decided to win back a very advantageous position that they had just lost. They launched a powerful counter-attack. After an engagement lasting two hours, the enemy took to their heels. The five K.V. tanks fought splendidly, especially Lieutenant Kalinichev's machine distinguished itself. The virtuoso-driver Dormidontov constantly hurled the tank now at the rear, now at the flanks of the German battle formations.

The fighting was over, but Commander Kalinichev's tank did not return. However much Trophy sniffed at all the machines, he couldn't find his master. He had remained somewhere on the battle-field.

Two hours passed, three, ten, twelve, and still there was no sign of Kalinichev's tank. Several pairs of scout-tankmen and infantrymen made their way right up to the German lines, but could not discover the missing tank anywhere: it was as though it had been swallowed up by the earth.

Somebody in the battalion suddenly suggested sending Trophy to look for the machine: "He'll know it from a long way off, and the Germans won't touch him. He has their medallion on his collar."

Early in the morning, when the first rosy flush was just tinting the sky in the east, Trophy was taken to a trench, shown the tracks of one of the tanks going in the Germans' direction, and told: "Seek, doggie!"

It was plain that he was only waiting for this. The clever dog made off at full speed, quite certainly understanding that there was only one object he should seek—his beloved master.

In a few hours Trophy appeared at the tank assembly ground. He grabbed the first tankman he came across by the overalls with his teeth and started pulling him after him.

"He's found him, you don't mean to say he's found him?!" exclaimed the astonished and delighted tankmen.

The scouts Valin, Arovsky and Nalchenko went off after Trophy, who lead them in the direction of the front-lines. After this the dog's course lay straight towards the enemy positions whence every now and again came rifle and machine-gun fire. It wasn't safe going at all. But Trophy rushed persistently forward.

The boys decided to go ahead a little. They crept stealthily after Trophy hiding among the low bushes. But they had not gone thirty meters when Trophy himself stopped them. Pressing close to the ground and putting his forepaws on something black, he turned his head towards the scouts. The men came up. Before them lay the body of a tankman in overalls, helmet and gloves. It was Vanya Pissarev, the artilleryman from Kalinichev's and Dormidontov's tank.

"Vanny! Whatever are you doing here?" said one of the scouts in a sorrowful half-whisper.

Pissarev was all riddled with bullets. In the bosom of his coat they found the documents and notebooks of the whole crew. Evidently he had stolen out of the tank at night to let them know of the breakdown and had been killed by the Germans on the way.

"Alive or dead, where are they now?" this was the question that troubled the scouts. "If only there was a note of some kind. But there's nothing!"

Trophy suddenly sprang up and tore like a whirlwind in the direction of the Germans.

"Where's he off to? The dog's gone stark mad!" exclaimed Arovsky.

"Why, don't you understand? He's gone off along Pissarev's tracks. Now he'll find the tank," said Nalchenko confidently.

In an hour's time Trophy appeared with a pocket-book held in his teeth. He laid it at the feet of the scouts and stood in an expectant pose.

The pocket-book was soon opened, and before the eyes of the scouts. . . oh, joy! there was a scrap of paper signed by Tank Commander Kalinichev.

". . . if only a little. Perhaps by Trophy. We're still alive. We're using our last ammunition. We've shot down at least a hundred of the scoundrels, but we're not giving in and never will give in.

Kalinichev."

Everyone at once remembered about Trophy's ability to carry disks and automatics. It was as though Dormidontov had forseen his predicament when he taught the dog these accomplishments.

The scouts at once got a disk from the infantrymen and wrapped it up in a rag. They put the disk between Trophy's teeth, and the dog immediately knew what to do. He was off like a shot in the direction pointed out to him along his own fresh tracks.

Three times made the pointer the trip to the tank and back from it. The machine was evidently about three kilometres behind the enemy lines. The third time Trophy returned with his coat singed in several places and with a note pinned to his collar:

"Dear comrades thank you, and our thanks to Trophy. What a dog! He helped us to shoot down three or four dozen of the bloody dogs. Farewell, dear pals! These are our last minutes. The're pouring petrol over us. We'll die, but victory will be ours! Send our greetings to the folks at home. We're letting Trophy out from the lower trap-door. He'll get through somehow. Good-bye.

Kalinichev, Dormidontov, Shishov, Soloviov."

. . . A week later we drove the Germans back and took the place where Kalinichev's tank was. Both treads of the machine were wrecked, and the Germans had poured petrol over it and burnt it.

Thus perished a handful of men supremely devoted to their fatherland, the heroic crew of a K.V. tank, one of those five tanks that made the famous journey from the Urals to Staraya Russa that we have already described.

Thus ended the splendid life of that merry fellow, a favourite with all the battalion, Zhenya Dormidontov.

The steel tomb of the four heroic tankmen rises like a black cliff on the field. The men linger here for a long time, taking off their helmets, and every time Dormidontov's fourfooted friend, Trophy—the dog loved by the whole battalion—runs up to the place together with the tankmen.

A. POLYAKOV
Battalion Commissar

IT WILL ALL COME BACK

The man had forgotten everything. Who he was. Where he came from. . . He had nothing. Neither name, nor past. His senses seemed to be wrapped in a dense murky mist.

Those around him could not offer any help. They themselves knew nothing about this wounded man.

He had been picked up in one of the districts just cleared of the Germans. They found him in a frozen cellar, all beaten up, tossing about wildly and raving. There were no documents on him. Nor did the Red Army men who had been thrust by the Germans into the same cellar know anything concerning the wounded man. He was sent with an echelon to a hospital in a remote spot in the rear. On the fifth day, while still on the way there, he came to himself. But when they inquired after his unit and his name, he just stared at the nurses and surgeon with a perplexed air, and the strain which knit his eyebrows was so great that the skin in the furrow on his forehead grew white. Then he suddenly uttered huskily, slowly, hopelessly:

"I don't know anything. Can't remember. I've forgotten all. What about me now, comrades? Oh, doctor? What on earth am I to do now? Where has it all gone to? I have clean forgotten everything. . . So what now?"

He glanced at the doctor helplessly. With both hands he clasped his close-clipped head, felt the bandage there; then his hands dropped; there was a frightened look in his face.

"Why, it's just all gone out of my head, all clean gone. Can't remember a thing! There is something popping up in my mind, something right here,"—and he made several circles in the air with his finger just before his forehead,—"but when I concen-

A shock brigade of the Kuznetzk Metallurgical Plant, victors in the All-Union Socialist Competition, in the shop

trate and try to grasp it, it just swims away. . . What is it that's happened to me, doctor?"

"Compose yourself, be calm," the young surgeon Arkadi Lvovich was trying to reassure him, at the same time making a sign to the nurse to leave the room. "All this will pass, you will recollect everything, it will all come back again. Only don't worry, don't worry, my boy. Let your head alone, we will furlough your memory for a while. And now I hope you won't mind if we put you down here just as comrade 'Can't Remember,' will you?"

And on the little board above his bed, on which the names of the patients are usually inscribed, they put down: "'Can't Remember.' Wound in the head. Occiput injured. Numerous bruises all over the body."

The young physician was greatly interested in this rare case of complete loss of memory. He watched Can't Remember with the keenest attention. Like a patient trail-finder, piecing together chance words he could gather from his patient himself with the stories of the wounded men who had been picked up together with Can't Remember, he gradually made his way to the sources of his patient's malady.

"This is a man with enormous will-power," the surgeon said excitedly to the chief of the hospital. "I can conceive now how it all came about. The Germans questioned him, tortured him. You see? And he wouldn't tell them anything. So he tried hard to obliterate from his memory everything he knew. The following fact is most characteristic of him. Some of the Red Army men,—of those who were present at his first cross examination,—told us later on that Can't Remember had only one answer for the Germans: 'I know nothing. Can't remember.' I picture the whole thing to myself this way: he locked the door of his memory with a key, and then and there he flung this key as far away as he could. At the cross examination he forced himself to forget everything that might be of any interest to the Germans, everything he knew. Then he was beaten mercilessly on the head, and his memory was actually knocked out of him. The result was complete amnesia. But I am perfectly confident that it will all come right again. Enormous will-power! It was that will-power which locked up his memory, and it will unlock it again."

The young surgeon had long talks with Can't Remember. Very considerately he would let the conversation drift to topics that might evoke something in his patient's mind. He spoke of the wives who wrote letters to the other wounded, he spoke about their children. But Can't Remember remained quite listless. Sometimes a vague kind of reminiscence would flash up in him together with the acute fits of pain he would suddenly feel in his fractured limbs. This pain was connected with something which was not quite forgotten. He saw a small dimly burning lamp in a hut, he recollected someone who was trying doggedly and cruelly to find out something from him, he recollected that he would not answer. Then they beat him, beat him. . . But as soon as he wanted to concentrate his thoughts on it, the scene, so feebly illuminated in his consciousness by the dim light of the small smoky lamp, instantly became all blurred, everything remained indiscernible, seemed to shift aside somewhere, away from his consciousness. It was just as elusive as those little spots which sometimes gleam for a moment before one's eyes, then flit away, slipping out of sight.

All that had happened seemed to Can't Remember to have disappeared down a long, dimly lit corridor. He tried to enter this narrow passage, to force his way as far as he could into it, but the tunnel grew ever narrower, ever more stifling. The wounded man felt he was getting deaf and suffocating in the dark. . . Painful headaches were the usual result of his exertions.

The doctor once tried reading newspaper to Can't Remember. But the patient began to turn restlessly from side to side, and the physician understood that he was hurting the most sensitive sores of his injured memory. He then decided to resort to more harmless methods. He brought an old church-calendar and read aloud the names of all the saints in it one after another: "Agathon, Agamemnon, Aggey, Anempodist. . ." Can't Remember listened to the whole lot with unvarying indifference and did not respond to any single one of the names.

The young physician then resorted to a new artifice. One day he came to see Can't Remember, who at that time was already allowed to leave his bed, and brought him a military jacket, trousers and boots. Taking the convalescent by the arm, the doctor led him along a corridor, then suddenly stopped before one of the doors there and flung it wide open. A tall pier-glass flashed before Can't Remember's eyes. A lean man in military clothes was staring at him out of the mirror.

"Well?" asked the surgeon. "Don't you know him?"

"No," answered Can't Remember abruptly. "The person is unknown to me. A new patient?" And he glanced round uneasily, searching for the unknown man who was reflected in the glass.

For New Year's Day parcels with presents for the wounded began to arrive at the hospital. Preparations for a Xmas tree

The workers of the X. aviation plant overfulfil their norms by 250 per cent

were started. It was with a set purpose that Arkadi Lvovich made Can't Remember take part in them. He thought that this pleasant bustling about with the toys and glittering tinsel, the sweet-smelling green needles of the tree, all these dear familiar things would stir in the memory of the man who had forgotten everything at least some reminiscence of the days which people usually remember all their life long. Can't Remember took to his task with great earnestness, obediently but never once smiling, he fastened the glistening knick-knacks to the resinous branches of the tree,—but all this was of no avail.

Lest any untimely noise should disturb his patient, the doctor had him moved to a smaller ward at the extreme end of the corridor, in one of the wings of the hospital building which faced a wood-covered hill. The foot of this hill skirted the industrial part of the town.

Early one morning Arkadi Lvovich came to see Can't Remember. The sick man was still asleep. The surgeon gently tucked in his blanket around him, then walked to the window and opened one of its casements. It was half past seven by the clock. It was thawing outside, and a sudden waft of mild air flitting in through the open window brought in with it from the foot of the hill a deep, velvety, droning sound. It was the whistle of one of the nearest plants calling its workers to their jobs. Now the drone intensified to its full sonority, then seemed to die away, obedient to the fluctuations of the wind as to the movements of an invisible conductor's baton. It was soon joined by the deep notes of the neighbouring plants, then echoed by the whistles of the distant mines.

. . . And all at once Can't Remember sat up on his bed and fixed his preoccupied gaze on the doctor.

"What's the time?" he asked swinging his feet over the edge of the bedstead. "Has ours whistled yet? Drat it, I've overslept!"

He sprang up, fumbling at his hospital dressing-gown, tossing all the bed clothes about in search of his things, and grumbling that he had poked his shirt and trousers goodness knows where.

Arkadi Lvovich rushed out of the ward like the wind and returned immediately bringing along with him the whole outfit with which he had vested Can't Remember on the day of the looking glass experiment. Now Can't Remember was dressing hurriedly, never even glancing at the surgeon, straining his ears for every sound of the whistle which was still floating imperiously, solemnly into the ward through the open window. Readjusting his belt on the way, Can't Remember ran down the corridor towards the entrance-door. The doctor followed him and in the cloak-room just had time to throw somebody's great coat over the man's shoulders.

Can't Remember walked along the street looking straight ahead. It was not his memory yet, it was merely an ancient habit of his that was leading him on down the street which he had just recognized. For many years running, every morning he had listened for that very same whistle,

scrambling sleepily out of bed and feeling for his clothes.

At first Arkadi Lvovich followed close behind Can't Remember. He had taken in the whole situation already. It was a lucky coincidence. Quite by chance the wounded man had been brought to his own native town, and now he had recognized the whistle of the very plant where he had always worked. Feeling confident that Can't Remember was walking towards the plant with perfect assurance, the young surgeon briskly overtook him and ran straight to the keeper's lodge. The elderly woman-keeper in the entrance passage was quite dumbfounded when she saw Can't Remember.

"Yegòr Petrovich!" she whispered. "Goodness gracious! You're alive! And quite safe and sound!"

Can't Remember nodded to her briskly.

"Hello, comrade Lakhtina! I'm afraid I'm a bit late today."

He began to fumble in his pockets, anxiously feeling for his pass. But here the janitor intervened, stepping out of the watchman's room and whispering something in the woman's ear. Can't Remember was let in, and he now betook himself to his shop and walked straight up to his machine-tool. He glanced at it with the experienced eye of a specialist, then turned around and seemed to be searching for someone in the silent group of workers who were watching him in amazement from a certain distance. Finding the man he wanted, he beckoned him to come up.

"Hullo, Konstantin Andreyevich! Will you kindly adjust the disk on this here dividing head?"

All the doctor's remonstrances were of no avail. Everybody wanted to come and have a look at the famous milling-machine operator who had so unexpectedly, so wonderfully re-appeared at his plant. "Barychev is here"—the news spread from shop to shop. Yegor Barychev had been considered dead. So much time had elapsed since anyone had heard from him. Arkadi Lvovich was watching his patient from afar.

Barychev took a second critical survey of his milling-machine and emitted a little grunt of satisfaction. The physician heard the relieved sigh of a young fellow standing beside him, who evidently had replaced Barychev at his machine. Then again the deep bass of the factory whistle resounded overhead.

Barychev fixed the pieces in their arbors, adjusted two large-diameter milling-cutters simultaneously, as he had always done, started the machine by hand and then smoothly connected the feed-mechanism. The cooling compound gushed forth, the metal clippings bristled out.

"He knows what he's about, doesn't he?"—"Works just the same as ever."—"That's the real Barychev way," was whispered on all sides with great appreciation.

Memory seemed to have come back to the operator's hands. Rows of finished pieces formed up beside his milling-machine. He looked about him and saw that the number of finished pieces produced by his young neighbours scarcely fell short of his.

"What has come over everybody here today?" he said turning to his friend. "Look here, Konstantin Andreyevich, all our youngsters seem to be up to the mark, don't they? Not much worse than us, old hands."

"Are you so very old yourself?" laughed Konstantin Andreyevich. "You are not yet thirty, are you? And to hear you talk, one could take you for an old grandpa. . . Well, as to production, our shop has taken to working in the Barychev way. Our output is 220 per cent. Now's not the time to dawdle over things, you see that yourself. When you went away to the army. . ."

"Wait a bit," said Barychev softly, and the wrench he was holding dropped out of his hand. There was a sharp clang of the metal against the tiled floor. Arrested by the sound, the doctor came hurrying up. He saw Barychev's cheeks grow livid, then ashy pale.

"Kostya. . . Konstantin Andreyevich. . . Doctor. . . How's my wife? And the kiddies? Haven't seen them since the first day when I went to the front. . ."

And his memory rushed back to him in the keep yearning for his home and family. Memory struck his very heart with the ardent joy of his home-coming and an unendurable passionate resentment against those who had tried to rob him of all that his life had contained. Now it had all come back.

LEV KASSIL

CORRESPONDENCE

The Letter of Soviet Writers to Jose Bergamin

To Jose Bergamin—Mexico.

Dear friend,

The loyalty of men and of nations reveals itself in days of stress. We knew that you were with us in our life-and-death struggle against fascism. Never shall we forget the straightforwardness and firmness shown by you and your friends, the Spanish writers, in the days when the Spanish people were engaged in the heroic defence of their fatherland against the invaders. Many among us had the honour of witnessing your epic resistance.

The soil of Spain, treasured by humanity, and its highly-cultured, noble and liberty-loving people were the first to experience the barbarity of German-Italian fascism. The Spaniards succumbed in the uneven struggle, but their example was not in vain. Now we are annihilating the German imperialists who destroyed Spain's ancient cities and murdered the best representatives of the Spanish people. Our pilots exterminate the vandals who levelled Guernica to the ground. Our sailors sink the ships of the navy which covered itself with eternal shame by the murder of the children of Almeria. The Red Army decimates the executioners of the Spanish people. We are fighting for our liberty and for the liberty of all peoples, for the right to independence aspired to by all the countries enslaved by Hitler, and for a life which we may, without blushing, call worthy of man.

You have seen our cities, flooded with light at night, you have also seen our peaceful fields. Hitler has brought death to our land. His soldiers have destroyed and burned hundreds of Russian towns. They hang the Russian patriots, they torture our children. They have ravished Russia's sanctuaries, Tolstoy's grave, ancient Novgorod and the tombs of our fathers. Our people have not hesitated to make any sacrifices and have risen to a man against the German invaders. And now our cities, shrouded in darkness, are stern and forbidding, and our meadows are in gloom. But each one of us has a firm belief in his heart that our sacrifices are not in vain, and that the Russian soil will witness the undoing of that enemy of all honest people,—base and cruel fascism.

At Kaluga, at Moscow and Kalinin, at Tikhvin and Leningrad we have dealt severe blows at the German army, which heretofore prided itself on its invincibility. Our army and our people are firmly resolved to cleanse our land from the invaders. Stalin, our People's Commissar of Defence, leads us toward victory, and we, Soviet writers, are proud of fighting in the ranks of a united brave people for a great, pure and just cause.

It is with admiration and hope that the liberty-loving peoples of all lands look at the Soviet Union. Other peoples—British and Americans, Yugoslavs and Poles, free Frenchmen and Norwegians, Czechs and Belgians, Greeks and Dutchmen—have joined us in the struggle against nazi-imperialism. We are sure that our

allies will go into the fray as readily and self-sacrificingly, for the final rout of Hitler's armed hordes in 1942. To us, to Europe and to the whole world victory will mean the saving of millions of lives, of thousands of cities and of the fruits of labour of many decades.

Spain's puppet government, the lackeys of German-Italian imperialism, yielded to the order given by their masters and dispatched to Russia the "blue division" made up of criminals, adventurers and traitors to the cause of Spain. Our men have already annihilated a part of that division; the falangist hirelings will not return to see their country again, they will not get out of Russia alive. But not a single Russian takes these traitors for the true representatives of the Spanish people. The falangists are our enemies just the same as the enemies of Spain.

We know that the day when Hitlerism is crushed will be celebrated by all peoples. It will also be a holiday to the country which has not forgiven Hitler the blood of Almeria. Our victory will help to attain liberty for Spain, which has been enslaved but not vanquished by foreign invaders. This realization inspires us still more, and it enables us to tell you in reply to your splendid letter: dear friend, the hour of victory and triumph is drawing near.

Ilya Ehrenburg
Alexei Tolstoy
Mikhail Svetlov
Boris Pasternak
Mikhail Sholokhov
Demyan Bedny
Agnia Barto
Konstantin Fedin
Vladimir Stavsky
Ovadi Savich
Timofei Rokotov
Mikhail Apletin
Fiodor Kelyin

Unbounded Admiration for Soviet People's Fighting Spirit

Letter from Heinrich Mann to A. Fadeyev, President of the Union of Soviet Writers, Moscow

Your letter dated September 10th and the address to the oppressed Slav peoples reached me three months after posting. I don't consider it too late to tell you that I fully share your sentiments. It is with the utmost disgust that all these months I have observed the brutal bestiality with which the German invaders treat the population of the countries they have temporarily conquered, conquered by the very basest methods indeed.

Russia does not belong to the conquered lands. The Soviet Union will never fall a victim to a Hitler and his henchmen. From the very outbreak of this war I knew how it would end and affirmed that the invaders would be repulsed and the Red Army would march into Germany.

This is by no means a personal opinion,—such is the inevitable course of events. One can hardly comprehend how a mediocrity that has not yet been found out, a common adventurer aspiring for power and victory could take on a struggle with a nation living a life so contrary to the shallow-minded nonentity that he is himself. For in your country, my friends, the battles for your ideas were laun-

ched long before any Hitler came in to existence.

Napoleon gave us the answer to the question of the comparative strength of the sword and thought. He said: the idea is invariably the conqueror. You are carrying into practice an idea that will rule the world before this century is out. This is just what makes you such astounding warriors. Your idea is a call, and it cannot but conquer.

I am full of an unbounded admiration for the grit of the Soviet people, for its fighting spirit and staunchness, its devotion to that one great end to achieve which it is worth while to live a hero or to die one. Your people embodies all the qualities of a master people. For a master is not one who belongs to any arrogant race, but one who has risen to lofty spiritual heights, one whose endeavour tends to a goal far beyond all personal aims. A man with the "Heil Hitler" shout on his lips displays, on the contrary, only his utter vacuity, proves that he is not worthy even of his filched attainments.

The successes of dull narrow-mindedness are already coming to an end. And let us hope—for ever. The very first nation with a loftier spirit that opposed them, make an end of their insolent confidence. It was a Slavonic nation. Would it then be possible to doubt the great future the Slav nations are marching to meet?

The address to the temporarily oppressed Slav peoples appeals to my innermost heart. And even louder than the expression of my indignation and compassion I wish to voice my certainty of their rising, of their fulfilling the part predestined to them by history. I too am absolutely sure that joining their forces with the glorious Soviet Union they will set an example to the world.

HEINRICH MANN

"All as one to the defence of the Fatherland!"

Poster by A. Finogenov

One of the Great Forefathers of the Russian People*

1378. . .

"Again the Tartars swept down on Russia. Where once sweet Slav airs were heard, where young girls sang as they wove wreaths thick with flowers, now only hawks flew off with hoarse cries of alarm, and owls wailed mournfully at night. Where formerly the wooden plough contended with the stiff earth for the harvest, and the call of the ploughman spurred his horse to fresh effort, now only moles burrowed through the barren fields that dreamed in vain of by-gone fecundity. Where once hearths and homes clustered numerously, and people thronged together for trade or toil, now all was overgrown with weeds, in which goldfinches made their nests. Again the Tartars swept down on Russia."

The Tartar hordes advanced on Moscow, they advanced boldly as though on an easy military jaunt. They were counting on a swift victory and rich booty.

When they launched this new campaign, the Tartars never doubted that as a result of more than a century of the Tartar yoke Russia was once and for all crushed, broken, dismembered and incapable of resistance. They hoped to take Moscow in no time and strip it bare.

But a Russia, a Moscow and a prince very different from their expectations awaited the Mongolo-Tartar conquerors. The Russian people rose in revolt against the Tartar yoke, at their head—the leader around whom all Russia rallied, the Moscow Grand Duke Dmitry Ivanovich.

It is of these historical events, of the great battle on the field of Kulikovo that played such an enormous role in the destinies of our fatherland, that the Stalin-prize winner Sergei Borodin tells in his book *Dmitry Donskoy*.

How stirring to Soviet patriots is the heroic tale of the war of liberation of the Russian people against the foreign invaders, what a warm response it finds in their hearts! Near and dear to us are our great and courageous forefathers.

The memory of these national heroes inspires our Red Army men who are waging against the German-fascist invaders the greatest war of liberation known to history. No wonder Borodin's remarkable book has become a favourite with the Soviet reader. The pen of this talented writer brings to life, makes real to us people of historical epochs long past, their manner of life, their culture, their struggle.

* * *

Moscow. . . To this great city so close to his heart the author devotes many stirring and inspiring pages. Moscow suffered many disasters: the Tartar invasion, dissensions, conflagrations, pestilence. Several times the city was burnt and ravaged by enemies, but again and again it rose from the ashes, grew up anew and became still more beautiful.

"And the heart rejoices: after every misfortune Moscow rises anon, but

* Sergei Borodin: *Dmitry Donskoy*. Moscow, The State Literary Publishing House, 1942.

more spacious and more lovely. And neither fire nor flood nor the sword of the alien can destroy nor demolish it, nor ever will while the Russian tongue unites many-tongued Russia. And the very word 'Moscow' means a she-bear, just try to get the better of her!"

Moscow is the heart of the country, it is only natural it should gradually have gathered round itself all Russia, piecemeal, by towns and apanages. From the little Moscow principality, as from a single seed, a huge power was to grow, a centralised State, capable of withstanding the shock of an enemy invasion. Without this, ruin and eternal slavery would have threatened the Russian people.

The Moscow Grand Duke Dmitry realized this still more profoundly than his predecessors. For this he fought, unsparing of strength or life itself. Page by page the virile personality of Dmitry Donskoy is revealed to the reader as that of a far-sighted statesman, a wise politician, a fervent patriot, a fearless warrior.

In narrative psychologically and historically true and artistically convincing, the author shows us how the Grand Duke Dmitry became confirmed in his high calling of military leader and builder of the Russian State.

In all his actions, in his speeches, in his relationships with people there is one guiding idea,—that in order to free Russia from Mongolo-Tartar domination it is necessary to unite the forces of the Russian people, strengthen the Russian State, weld it into one whole with Moscow as the centre.

Dmitry's uncle, Simeon Gordyi (the Proud), on his death-bed willed that there should be unity among all the Russian princes. But it was as yet impossible to call for an open armed struggle against the Mongolo-Tartar invaders. Simeon's will was carefully couched in allegorical terms. Dmitry's preceptor, the Metropolitan Alexei, taught him to strive for this

Dmitry Donskoy
Drawn by P. Sokolóv-Skalya

same unity. He, like the Moscow boyars, insisted that Moscow should play the leading part in the unification of Russia and the accumulation of forces for the overthrow of the hated Tartar power. "Rid Russian soil of the pagan yoke, Dmitry!" said he to the young prince. "And if thou wilt snap but one band of this yoke, thou shalt be blest. And leave it as thine behest to thy successors to do away with the cursed yoke utterly. Strong be a free people, whilst an oppressed one grows weaker day by day."

Dmitry grew up from his childhood with a consciousness of his future great mission,—to cast the yoke of the Horde from the shoulders of the people.

His preceptor Alexei trained Dmitry in firmness, made a warrior of him, prepared him not for books but for the sword. He grew up among campaigns, inured to a hard plain life. "Dmitry set military science above all others: the age was such, it was necessary to forge swords. The grandfathers devised, the grandson forged. And the sword had to be better than of yore, and not only the sword."

Moscow had many enemies. Every-

where there were rivals. But former enemies gradually became comrades-in-arms.

There was one enemy, however, with whom a life-and-death struggle must be fought: the Mongolo-Tartar conquerors. They barred the trade route to the East. They made themselves felt daily with the burning of Russian settlements and the ravaging of our native land. The Russian countryside groaned beneath the burden of the Tartar-Mongol yoke, piling up hatred for the conqueror in the hearts of the Russian people. But to fight this enemy it was necessary to make serious and skilful preparations.

Dmitry saw that his men fought with plenty of spirit, but simply did not yet understand the art of warfare. The Moscow warriors were trained; they gained experience and mastered the art of war. Weapons, too, were improved. Gradually and persistently Dmitry had imported into Moscow the very best weapons that could be got from abroad. Not only so: the Russians began to forge excellent weapons of their own. Dmitry ordered stone-walls and towers to be raised round the Kremlin.

Dmitry Ivanovich was the first Russian prince to decide to make an armed uprising against the Tartar-Mongol yoke. He did not wait passively, but forged the hour for striking, keeping careful watch on the internecine struggles of the khans of the "Golden Horde" and stubbornly gathering and accumulating Russian lands round Moscow by every possible means, economic, diplomatic and military.

In preparing the Russian people for the war of liberation from the Tartar invaders, Dmitry made use of tales of heroic deeds and ancient folklore songs and ditties whose content he himself suggested to the singers and psaltery-players. "We must sing so as to make the Tartars' feathers fly," the Prince's scribe taught, dictating the words of epic folk songs to the singers.

The book relates how greatly the church, and particularly the monasteries, helped Dmitry in the struggle for the liberation of Russian soil, gathering in their own cloisters means, men and stores to supply his needs. In complete accordance with historical fact the author gives a brilliant description of how the great Troitse-Sergievsky abbey rose and grew rich in the depths of the forest, and what a role it played in the preparation for the struggle for emancipation from the Tartar yoke.

Sergei, like Grand Duke Dmitry, prepared the people for the overthrow of the alien power. The call of the elder, who was much venerated by the people, resounded over the whole country.

* * *

The battle on the Vozha River first put to the test the strengthened forces of the young Moscow State. Here for the first time the Russians, under the leadership of Dmitry Ivanovich, gained a complete victory over the Tartars. The description of the battle at the Vozha River is one of the most brilliant passages in S. Borodin's book. The author depicts in masterly style the critical moment when the tension before the battle reached its climax.

"The Russians stood firm, waited. They neither ran nor shouted. It was unheard-of! The cavalry of the Great Horde was accustomed to trample underfoot all opposition, to overthrow, stamp into the dust, pursue, and hot on the heels of the routed enemy burst into the conquered territories. But these did not run. They were a wall, and the cavalry was no battering ram to beat down this wall."

The fiery impetus of the Tartar charge was broken. The attack was halted. Then, at a sign from Dmitry, the Russian regiments launched a violent assault on the Tartars. "And the earth shook for many versts around, and the grass of the fields bent as from

a gale of wind, the very clouds in heaven recoiled, and on earth the Tartar cavalry shied." Their leader Begich could not stop their flight. Fleeing for safety and flinging away their arms, the Tartars dashed into the water. Many were drowned in the Vozha. Only nightfall put an end to the battle.

The victory on the Vozha filled the heart of Dmitry, the hearts of the whole Russian people, with hope and good cheer.

Some fine pages of the novel are devoted to the role of the Russian people. Peasants, craftsmen, townsfolk, fighting men, are shown as an active and historically-progressive force. The people is immortal. And in its unity lies the source of the power and might of the country, the source of the courage of Dmitry himself. The people not only supports the Grand Duke, but impels him to a decisive struggle with the Tartar conquerors.

The character of the old shepherd Ivan is picturesque, and is portrayed in an almost biblical style. The old shepherd is like a living vessel into which the people have poured their resentment against the Tartar oppressors.

The author gives an excellent description of the growth of the internal strength and spiritual might of the Russian people on the eve of the battle of Kulikovo.

When in 1380 the hordes of the Tartar army again swept towards the banks of the Vozha and threatened Moscow, Dmitry sent out an appeal to the Russian soldiery. Thousands of new fighting men marched along the streets of Moscow, singing as they passed their homes, from whence wails and cries called to them. But, never turning their heads, they marched forward: "for the soil of Russia, for our towns and villages, each for his own little share of happiness and for his great fatherland."

In still greater numbers the Russian volunteers came pouring along all the roads to Moscow, gathering to repulse the hordes of Mamai. No sooner had the town-crier in the city squares, the priests from their alters and the messengers on the roads read out the appeal of Dmitry, than Russian volunteers began streaming towards Moscow from all directions.

The hour of the decisive battle drew near. "The enemy will be desperate," Sergei told Dmitry, "as the Horde, if it returns home defeated, is doomed. This is for them the decisive battle; but it is also decisive for us. The whole earth will flow with blood; yet, if the enemy prevail, our life is over. There will remain neither towns nor monasteries; where then will our books be cherished, all our wisdom, our knowledge and our faith? Ages of slavery will come once more, and never will the Russian land rise against. Quail not before losses or

Cover of S. Borodin's book "Dmitry Donskoy"

bloodshed. Our whole country relies on thee, that is a heavy burden and dark; bear up, my son, my lord, Dmitry Ivanovich, take heart!"

"Yield, I will not," replied Dmitry, "I myself see, Father Sergei, there is no place for yielding."

* * *

Cleverly making use of contrasts, the author at the same time depicts another process: the gradual weakening of the Golden Horde and its warriors, till then considered invincible.

The book shows how the composition of the Tartar army changed after the death of Genghis Khan, how effeminate, mercenary and cowardly courtiers filtered into it, and how the leadership of the Golden Horde became corrupted. Numerically it was still a mighty army. But dry rot was already at work within. Discipline fell off. The catastrophe at the Vozha was no accident. The book goes on to show, step by step, how the morale of the invincible soldiery of the Golden Horde was undermined by fear after the defeat on the Vozha River. Neither whips nor persuasion could raise the spirits of the Golden Horde troops, who once had flung themselves so fiercely into any battle.

Mamai tried to banish this fear and faint-heartedness by pandering to the greed of his soldiers. He promised each of them gold, horses and slaves to be got in battle. Mamai began feverishly to gather mercenaries. His own troops were already unreliable. He hoped for gold to acquire the soldiers he needed for his march on Russia.

The vast nomadic army of Mamai pitched camp at Zadonshchina. And Grand Duke Dmitry's troops also approached the Don. Dmitry was not alone. "In one cause, ready to die one for another, risen up to defend the same fatherland from the common enemy, there they stand,—twenty princes. Such a thing had never been since the times of Batyi: each had always sought only his own advantage." Dmitry addressed the princes: "Brethren! How is it to be with us? Before us lies the Don. Forward shall we go, or await here? Think, brethren!"

Dmitry's permanent military adviser, Chief Bobrok, counselled him to adopt yet another secret military stratagem of Genghis Khan and his successors. In battle it is always necessary to keep one's men fresh. It is necessary to divide up the regiments and lead them into battle in turn. Donskoy ordered a reserve regiment to be created to be thrown into the battle at the critical moment.

On the 7th of September 1380, the Russian army crossed the Don below the mouths of the Nepryadva River. The regiments were disposed in accordance with the new rules of strategy and tactics, taking into account the habitual proceedure of the enemy. On the 8th of September at dawn the war bugles blared forth. Dmitry rode round the regiments and to put them in good heart said: "Together we conquer, or together we fall. . . Fear ye not death, fear defeat, for it will bring us both death and dishonour."

The book brilliantly describes the fierce slaughter, the fury of the great battle. The outcome was determined by the regiment of reserves which, fresh and unfatigued, was suddenly thrown into the field against the exhausted enemy. The fresh cavalry, pressing hard on the heels of the enemy, giving them no time to collect their scattered wits, sent them flying helter-skelter, mowing them down as they fled.

Celebrating the victory, Dmitry shouted to his troops:

"Brethren! Where is our enemy? Behold him gone, swept away like dust before the storm!

". . . I see bloody wounds on ye, brethren! They will win ye undying fame for this glorious day when you

regaled the Horde with the sharp ends of your spears, and with your swords laid your guests to sleep on yonder wild steppe grass. Glory! And glory, too, to those of our brethren who have fallen here never to rise again!"

* * *

S. Borodin's novel *Dmitry Donskoy* is a talented book, well-conceived, full of fighting spirit and poetical feeling, telling of the glorious war of liberation of the Russian people with the Tartar-Mongol conquerors. The immortal deeds of one of the greatest of our forefathers, Dmitry Donskoy, who gathered together and protected the Russian lands, inspires our Red Army men in their great war of liberation against the German-fascist invaders.

The German-fascist yoke that the bloody Hitler has prepared for the peoples of the Soviet Union surpasses in its brutality all the cruelties known to history of the Tartar-Mongol oppressors. The atrocities of Genghis Khan, of Batyi and of Mamai pale beside the atrocities committed by the Hitlerites.

The German-fascist ignoramuses do not want to learn from the lessons of history. They have forgotten the shameful fate that overtook all the conquerors who tried to subjugate our great fatherland.

The Hitlerites have already paid the heavy price of their insolence. Far more than a year the glorious Red Army, under the guidance of its wise and beloved leader Joseph Stalin, has been carrying on an heroic struggle with the hitlerite hordes, and has inflicted a number of crushing blows on the enemy. The courage and staunchness of the Red Army men, their immortal exploits, in which the mighty spirit of our great forefathers lives again, arouse the admiration of all progressive mankind.

Facts will show in the near future that complete collapse awaits the insane plans of conquest of the hitlerite bandits.

A. PANKRATOVA

FRONT AND REAR IN LABOUR AND STRIFE

Stalin is calling: "In battle and work
Fight for the country!" And none of us shirk.

JAMBU L.

The importance of the press is steadily growing in these days of the great war for the fatherland. The press now is also a weapon of war.

Hardly a couple of days passed after the perfidious enemy had treacherously invaded our country, when the first instalment of the series *Front and Rear* (of which the State Publishing House of Political Literature has since published twelve numbers) was under press. This promptitude was not in any way a casual coincidence.

To fight till victory is won, to strain every nerve in this struggle, to rout the German-fascist robbers completely,—such from the very first minutes of the war was the sole thought, wish and endeavour of both front and rear in the U.S.S.R. The war cry of the Soviet patriots labouring in the rear is: the utmost for the front, the utmost for victory! The ordeals of war served to strengthen that complete unity of the firing-line and the distant areas which sprang up immediately after the very first shots.

Cover of the "Front and Rear" series

This idea permeates all the booklets of this series. They are anthologies of materials and correspondence gleaned from the pages of the central, Red Army and front-line newspapers ever since the first days of the war. These facts and documents give a vivid picture of the strength and enthusiasm with which since the first gory and terrible days of the war the people has risen to a man, defending the mother country to the uttermost drop of blood.

Red Army men charging with tilted bayonets, heavy tanks rushing forward at full speed, airplanes speeding towards the enemy lines, are pictured on the upper half of the covers of these modest grey booklets, while the lower half features a munition factory where workers stand at drill- and turning-lathes producing munitions for the army, forging weapons, stopping neither for rest nor sleep.

In accordance with the frontispiece each booklet is divided into two parts: front and rear.

Let us take a look at the first part: the front.

Seven days have passed since the outbreak of war. The Germans have occupied a little village near the frontier, and from this vantage-ground they are firing at our detachment, thus preventing its progress. Suddenly our men notice a man crawling under fire in our direction. As he approaches, it becomes apparent that he is a cripple with a wooden leg. The men admire his pluck. His escape seems to be all but miraculous. How great then is their amazement when the villager with the wooden leg pants out: "I tried to reach you to tell you something... Those brutes have mounted a machine-gun in that grey shanty yonder... That's where they fire

from. It's that cursed machine-gun that stops your advance. . ." And he heaves a sigh of relief: "Gep, ain't I glad I was able to get to you in time, I was in a funk thinking I'd be too late. . ."

Since the very first days of the war, the Soviet peasantry displayed calm and steadfast courage.

And what was the morale of Hitler's army of murderers and hirelings even at the time when, drunk with the Führer's promise of an easy victory, they did not yet realize the ominous turn which the insane military adventure of their crazy leaders would take?

Another correspondent writing on the same seventh day since the outbreak of war gives us a very pointed answer to this query. The enemy was trying to encircle one of our machine-gun companies. However, the attempt failed. The fascists were hurling more and more fresh troops into the fray, and their artillery fire grew in intensity. Fighting slowed down when evening came, but started anew with the dawn. This time our heavy guns took the initiative and our infantry advanced to attack. The Germans turned and ran shedding their boots in their flight. One of their soldiers taken prisoner said simply: "But I'm a Czech. I don't want any war."

The feats of Soviet fliers amazed the world. The fearlessness of the Soviet falcons, their determination to destroy the fascists at any price inspired them to introduce a new method of air combat—ramming the enemy planes. This is a mode of fighting suited only for men who scorn death. Pyotr Kharitonov, Hero of the Soviet Union, describes in the fourth instalment of the series how he rammed a German plane on June 28th. It was the first instance of the kind in the present war. A German Junkers-88 emerged from the clouds. Kharitonov pursued him, but having come up with him our flier discovered that he had used up his last cartridge belt. "'Must I really let the enemy slip away scotfree?' thought I bitterly," he tells us. "The distance between us was hardly thirty—fifty metres, and it was decreasing with every minute. And then it flashed on me: 'The propeller! Ram him!'" The rest happened quicker than thought: the fascist bomber crashed to the ground, and Hero of the Soviet Union Pyotr Kharitonov landed safely.

The Soviet fliers are brilliantly proving their air supremacy. They strike down enemy planes, ramming them with propeller or with wings. They land their own planes even if they are on fire and their engines disabled. Even if their battered machines have lost their chassis, they succeed in alighting safely on the field of some collective farm. Their skill is unparalleled.

The sketch entitled *Pilot Lobozov's Third Order* describes how this airman earned his third decoration bombing the famous Chernovodsky bridge. When taking off to fulfil this most difficult task, Lobozov said: "I've thought it all out and calculated everything. The moment I see that my bombs are falling short of the bridge or else too far out, I'll dive down on the bridge. The task shall be fulfilled even if it costs me my life. I won't return unless victorious." He kept his word. Neither the hurricane fire of enemy anti-aircraft guns nor a very hailstorm from German machine-guns could stop him. He reached the bridge unscathed and dropped the entire load of bombs on the target. His pluck was rewarded, for he could observe heavy bombs explode on the roadway of the bridge. He watched immense masses of soil and stones sent flying up in the air and the headlong crashing down of the huge girders of the bridge. For this valourous exploit he was decorated for the third time with the Order of the Red Banner.

The Soviet Union never made a secret of the fact that in the first months of the war, when the country lost much territory and the list of casualties was growing by leaps and bounds, the forces on the front were insufficient and especially a shortage of tanks was sorely felt. Yet this lack was often made good by the Red Army men's staunch readiness to fight and their will to conquer.

One of the booklets of the series describes the desperate resistance which one of our batteries put up against an onslaught of nazi tanks. The tractor-driver, Red Army man Fedyunin, was hard put to it to cart up on his "Komsomoletz" tractor a sufficient supply of munitions to the front-line. The Germans attacked again and again, using fresh tanks every time. Enemy artillery and aviation had also joined the fray. Most of the Soviet gun-crews were disabled and some guns shattered. German infantry was rushing at the battery, when Fedyunin decided to lend a helping hand. This Soviet patriot kept a cool head even when faced with heavy odds and superior technique. He swiftly unhitched the trailer loaded with shells and, leaving it behind near the guns, boldly attacked the advancing German infantry with his tractor. The Germans were not prepared for such daring and ingenuity. Their astonishment gave way to fear. But Fedyunin drove his tractor straight at the enemy ranks and began crushing the Germans under with its caterpillars. Such audacity was more than the fascists had bargained for, and both officers and men turned to fly. Fedyunin had one single thought: down with the enemy who attempts to encircle his battery, his tractor! Now he went whirling round like a top squashing the flabbergasted enemy, and now

again, his tractor snorting and panting, he rushed straight at the fleeing Germans. Just then an avalanche of fascist tanks turned the corner of the wood and came tearing down on him. But by that time Soviet reinforcements had arrived, and the new battery opened fire upon the advancing tanks. The attack of Fedyunin's tractor had so far nonplussed the Germans that they lost time and allowed us to secure our position. The daring tractor-driver was wounded, blood was pouring down his face, but he never let go his grip on the steering wheel till the enemy was driven off.

The sacred hatred against the invader works wonders, lends superhuman strength. There is the story of the wounded Red Army man Bolshakov. It is entitled *Sacred Hatred*. The authors are the brothers Tur. One morning Bolshakov had silently and quietly disappeared from the ward of the field hospital. That same morning our men in the foremost firing-line remarked a figure swathed in bandages. It crawled forward, took aim and started firing in a most business-like way. "I couldn't stay in the hospital. My sheets were simply scorching me. . . I am absolutely furious today," was the explanation the man gave of his action. This fury is one of the deepest and most ingrained features of the war for the fatherland.

An army a million men strong can certainly rush to battle and succeed, but the success will be shortlived if the hearts of the men stay cold. It's the fiery fighting spirit of an army that conquers in the end, and just this spirit had forced the wounded Red Army man to abandon his cot in the hospital.

Warrant Officer Lozovoy was badly wounded during an encounter. When he recovered consciousness, two Finns had taken hold of his arms and legs and were dragging him to their lines. Lozovoy felt most resentful at such treatment. "Do you take me for a corpse to drag me into captivity like a bag of flour? Well, no, my good fellows, I am quite alive and kicking, and you are going to discover it at once." His teeth closed in viciously on the arm of the nearest soldier. The Finn yelled with pain and dropped him. Lozovoy immediately tore the amazed man's revolver out of its bolster and shot him down with his own weapon. The second man turned and ran for his life. Severely wounded though he was, the warrant officer succeeded in crawling over to our lines.

Fighting spirit finds its expression not only in valour and daring. Readiness to stand all and any hardships and adversity and the now famous grit and hardiness of the Russian soldier are also part and parcel of it. These traits are portrayed faithfully in the little grey booklets of the series. Here is an example. A company commanded by Lieutenant Pervushin was in the thick of the fray for fully three days, and throughout these three days there was neither food nor sleep for anybody. Not that it had been impossible to bring the food under fire or to find five minutes time to consume it. Four times the travelling kitchen had approached the trenches where the men were lying, and the warrant officer had shouted imploringly between two machine-gun volleys: "Come on, boys, the soup is getting stonecold!" "Aw, cheese it, leave us alone, can't you? Don't you see we're busy?" the men replied in annoyance, deftly loading their guns for the next salvo.

J. Stalin, the People's Commissar of Defence, said in his Order of the Day on May 1st, 1942, that the front and the rear in our country form one united military camp whose single wholehearted aim is the complete destruction of the fascist occupants. To attain this goal the Soviet people in the rear supply the front with ever growing quantities of rifles and machine-guns, mine-throwers and cannons, tanks and airplanes, food-stuffs and munitions.

The series *Front and Rear* shows how the Soviet workers in the rear display exactly the same activity, fighting spirit and fiery energy as the men at the front. This brings us to the second part: the rear.

The facts and documents we are reviewing below explain how our entire economic structure was put at shortest notice into the service of the war. The whole Soviet Union became one solid indivisible army. It was not a gradual process, but happened at once with the first shots fired on our frontier. A labour front demanding the straining of every nerve immediately formed even in the distant areas. The rear also had its own front-line, the munition industry. Now, when our heroic Red Army men are locked in a life-or-death struggle with the fascist blackguards, every worker is helping the Red Army and increasing its strength by intensive labour.

Victories at the front are achieved in the rear. This is quite obvious to every worker, to every engineer and mechanic, to every artisan and employee.

The continuous air-raids on Moscow which the fascist bandits perpetrated regularly in July and August 1941, did not succeed in interrupting the output of the war industry even for a second. The plants worked as usual; every worker felt his labour to be a particle of the coming victory.

There is a sketch in the series describing the enthusiasm displayed at one of the large works. Even those who make the smallest detail are all the time conscious that they

help in constructing a machine which is going to carry death into the enemy ranks. This is how Kalabayev, one of the workers, puts it:

"Every stroke of our hammer is a blow at the fascist savages."

But to produce armament and munitions is only half of the task. The other half is to convey them to the front, and that is where the Soviet railwaymen have proved themselves worthy of the name "brothers to the Red Army."

In the very first days of the war, engine-driver Kozerny achieved a rather unusual feat in this line.

The train was climbing up a steep slope. The driver peered forward tensely. All at once his ear caught the hum of a propeller. The rattling of a machine-gun started almost immediately. The German pirate trained his machine-gun on the engine and dived down. Two bullets ricocheted and wounded Kozerny in the neck and the nose. He reeled and fell, but in a few seconds, mastering his pain, staggered to his feet and looked out of the window. Water was flowing from the shot-riddled tender. The tank was emptying swiftly. It was obviously necessary to hurry to the station. To abandon the train on the track would mean bottling up the entire traffic of the section. Gathering together all his waning strength, the driver gripped the controls and skilfully ran the train to its destination, economizing the steam to the utmost. Severely wounded though he was, the hero brought the train with its freight of munitions safely to the station.

Engine-drivers at present often have to be very cunning so as to spoil the enemy's game by clever stratagem. Once, as Mushenkov, engine-driver of a railway line at the front, was steering a heavy munition train, he noticed a group of German planes in the sky. One of them broke away and dived straight at the train. But the plucky driver did not lose his head. He guessed the fascist pilot's intention and promptly stepped on the brakes, stopping the train. His calculation was quite correct: the bomb dropped by the German fell far ahead of the train. The flier took a turn and came on again, planing to meet the train. Mushenkov instantly put on full speed, and the train darted forward with such velocity that the next bomb fell far behind the last cars. He continued manoeuvring, slowing down suddenly or just speeding up, bounding forward frantically or stopping altogether, all the time foiling the German's attempts, till he succeeded in bringing his train out of danger.

The war broke out during harvest time. The news of the brazen act of aggression produced an enormous increase of labour enthusiasm throughout the Soviet country.

The collective farms and the State farms countered by pre-time fulfilment of all State contracts. Large numbers of college and high-school students went to the collective farms as harvest hands to replace the men who had joined up. Even children proved to be excellent helpers.

This series publishes a story about fifteen-year-old Petya. The village blacksmith had volunteered for the front. The flame in the furnace of the forge had gone out, and there was nobody to shoe the horses and repair the agricultural implements. The chairman of the collective farm, unable to find another smith, was at his wits' end. On entering his office one morning he found a young boy awaiting him.

"Do you need a blacksmith?" asked the lad.

"Very much so," answered the chairman, "if you know one, send him here directly. A relative of yours, is he?"

"No," replied the boy with dignity, "it's me."

The chairman glanced at him suspiciously. He was such a small kid! Petya was hurt. Out of a basket on his arm he extracted a small lorry, a miniature copy of the one belonging to the collective farm. Small ploughs and harrows followed suit.

"I've made them all myself," he declared.

The chairman decided to give Petya a test. The youthful blacksmith proved to be a perfect master of his craft.

Yet the boy lacked professional training, and a few days later he injured his foot badly with the heavy hammer. The men whose implements he was just mending suggested that he should stop work and take a rest, but Petya declined:

"Worse things happen at the front," he said. "This is no time for rest. I'm going to work."

Just like all Soviet people at the front and in the rear, he stuck to his post and was filled with the same mighty impulse and fighting spirit which impells Soviet men, women and children to achieve heroic deeds. Sometimes these feats make them famous throughout the country, and sometimes they call forth neither remark nor renown, yet all the same they are just as valuable, just as necessary.

The front and the rear are united in labour and strife. It is in the factory shops and on the collective-farm fields that the defeat of the enemy begins. The unity of strife and labour, the unity of the front and the rear are a pledge of the approaching final and decisive rout of the odious enemy. The facts and documents so carefully collected since the very first days of the sacred war for the fatherland and published in these modest grey booklets are a stirring and vivid reflection of this unity.

A. ALEXANDROVA

CURRENT PUBLICATIONS

THE NAVY NEWSPAPER

We want to tell you about the *Red Navy Man of the Black Sea*, a paper that is fairly typical of those issued by the services in our country. It has been Sevastopol's daily paper since the very beginning of the war.

As might be expected, war themes provided the bulk of the material in the paper from the very start. The issue of June 23rd was already devoted to Sevastopol's anti-aircraft batteries and their glorious repulse of the fascist air-raid.

The pilots of the Black Sea Fleet air-arm lost no time in replying to the attack of the German and Rumanian bandits, and bombed Rumanian oil-fields, refineries and other war industries. The heroic deeds of the Black Sea pilots and the gallantry they displayed in the struggle with the enemy have unfailingly found their way to the columns of the navy newspaper. When, at the beginning of the war, ships of the Black Sea Navy bombarded Constanza, the paper devoted a whole page to the description of the attack under the heading: "It Happened at Constanza." The newspaper showed the seamen's enthusiasm and fighting spirit during the cannonade launched against the coast. When the first oil-tanks took fire and clouds of black smoke rose over the town, they said: "That's for the raids you bandits made on Sevastopol, Kiev, Minsk and Smolensk! That's for shooting peaceful citizens!" and sent shell after shell towards Constanza.

While the battle was at its height, the boiler-pipe burst on one of the ships and the pressure dropped at once. It was necessary to mend it instantly, the burst pipe needed patching up, but how was it to be done at that terrific temperature? Yet done it had to be at any cost, for the ship was close to hostile shores, a battle with Rumanian and German batteries and aircraft was in progress, and a boiler out of order meant, on a comparatively small ship like this, a very marked slowing-down, making the vessel an easier target for the enemy.

"An asbestos suit," the paper tells us, "was brought down from the upper deck, and the boiler-mechanic Grebennikov put it on. Some of the others helped him into it, and when he was ready the doctor covered his face with vaseline and bandaged his head leaving only a narrow slit for the eyes.

"The water was drained out, and now Grebennikov was to step into the red-hot boiler and stop up the burst pipe. Yanovsky got the implements ready. Grebennikov grasped them and climbed into the billowing heat of the steam-collector. He groped for the opening in the pipe, and, thrusting in the patch, made it firm with blows of his hammer. He would hold his breath for a spell so as not to inhale the red-hot air, then poke his head out to ge a whiff of fresh air, and dive back again. He crawled on his stomach into the water-collector; one of the seamen, Tarassov, turned the hose on him, and the water, heating up, streamed over the asbestos suit and the bandaged head. The collector filled with steam from the water. Grebennikov knew that if he once weakened no one would be able to drag him out. He had to be quick. In seven minutes the patch was fixed. The gauze around his head dried immediately, and whenever he happened to brush the sides of the boiler, he could hear his hair frizzling and feel the hot steam scorching his face. But the boiler was put in order, and the vessel was enabled to go full steam ahead."

In the issue of August 1st, the paper published an interesting article headed: "Shine brighter, still brighter, Star of Gastello!"

"Lieutenant Pavlov," it said, "received instructions to suppress the enemy's murderous fire with the guns of his cutter. The sea churned and seethed around the brave sailors; Pavlov was wounded, but he kept the vessel headed straight for its goal, sending death and destruction to the enemy. Pavlov died, but the twisted, shattered guns of the enemy were silenced.

Shine brighter, still brighter, Star of Gastello!

A furious battle was being waged against numerically superior fascist forces. A dive-bomber made a bee-line for the cutter. A volley,—and the fascists were forced to take a cold plunge; but there were more of them to come. Volokushin was bringing up the shells, and everyone of them reached its target. Then the supply of shells slowed down, and the gun-commander, Antipov, turned to see the reason. Volokushin had been hit. He was bleeding. But, making a final desperate effort, he struggled on with the shell to the gun. Antipov seized it and sent it over to the enemy. . .

Sailors preparing their own newspaper

Then he turned around again. Volokushin was struggling on his knees beside the gun, with a shell in his failing grasp. He handed the last shell to the commander and died.

Brilliantly, dazzlingly, burns the star of Gastello in the dark war skies!"

With striking instances of gallantry such as these the paper has summoned its readers to fight as Gastello fought, and if the need should arise to die as Gastello, as Lieutenant Pavlov, as Red Navy man Volokushin died.

When the Germans besieged Sevastopol, the editorial office, the printing-shop and the whole staff were in a zone that was not only bombed, but came under artillery-fire as well. Apparently, the enemy knew the position of the printing-shop and made more than one attempt to bomb it. The bombs missed it as a rule, and only two shells out of the scores the long-range guns sent over hit the building; however, neither people nor machinery suffered.

The building of the editorial office was burnt down in June, 1942, when the fascists dropped more than thirty thousand incendiary bombs on Sevastopol.

When the front came still nearer to Sevastopol, some of the seamen had to land from their men o'war and fight in mountains and plains. This was something quite new for men accustomed to fighting on board a ship, attending to complicated machinery. Here things were simpler, they decided: you just went out with your rifle or your machine-gun and shot as many Germans as you could. Then the seamen discovered that land warfare was a difficult art, and that if you hadn't mastered it, the enemy would in all probability kill you before you could kill him. The paper published a series of articles under the heading: "Remember, soldier!" describing the methods of fighting on land, explaining the general principles of land-tactics, warning the seamen always to keep the sapper's spade handy. This was an implement the navy was inclined to despise, regarding it as rather beneath the dignity of a seaman to dig himself in, or resort to camouflage; he ought to march to the attack at his full height, with a grenade in his hand, in the best pre-war style of the films they had seen, showing the great epoch of the Civil War of 1918—1921. But the Civil War was fought in conditions very different from our own day, and with an enemy army by no means so well equipped with automatic fire-arms. In modern warfare there can be no question of going into action at your full height of ignoring camouflage, or of not digging yourself in, and the navy newspaper makes use of every opportunity to point out the landsman's methods to the seaman. It shows how to fight against enemy tanks, points out the most vulnerable places in the tank, how incendiary fire should be directed on it, what mark to choose for machine-gun fire, artillery, incendiary, bottles and anti-tank grenades.

Essential for the stimulation and training of the fighting spirit is hatred of the foe. To encourage this feeling means to increase men's fighting spirit, their desire and eagerness to destroy the perfidious and treacherous enemy who has invaded our shores.

The newspaper exposes the ghastly and underhand intentions of this enemy, records the grim chronicle of the fascists' treatment of war-prisoners and the peaceful population of villages and towns temporarily occupied by their troops.

During the fighting at Sevastopol a quantity of correspondence and diaries belonging to officers and soldiers fell into the hands of our men. The fascists are fond of committing their thoughts to paper in letters and diaries, and it sometimes happens that with a sort of cynical effrontery they blab out things that it is clearly not to the interest of Goebbels' department to make known. Translations of these letters are regularly published in

Bringing out their newspaper at the front

this paper and give a more vivid picture than any description could of the true nature of those who came to invade our land, and of the fell purposes they had in view when they attempted to enslave the Slavs and the peoples of the democratic countries.

Stressing the importance of the Russian people's patriotic war, as a war of liberation against German fascism, the *Red Navy Man of the Black Sea* points out that in defending their country, their wives and daughters from disgrace, from the unbriddled violence of the enemy officers and soldiers, the men of the Red Army and Navy are at the same time defending the women and children of Great Britain, France, Poland and other European countries. The newspaper also devoted articles to the growing bonds of friendship between the great peoples of the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States.

The war correspondents of the paper obtained a great many documents and interesting photographs showing the atrocities perpetrated by the fascists in Old Crimea, Eupatoria and other Crimean towns. One picture showed an anti-tank trench heaped with dead people who had been shot by the fascists. A large photograph reproduced was that of a dead mother with two children; it could be clearly seen that death had struck down the woman and her two babies at almost the same moment. The youngest lies on the mother's breast, pressed in the last convulsive clasp of the dying woman's arm, and the traces of the fascists' bullets can be seen on its little face. The other child, about two- or three-years-old, lies beside the mother, with his little chestnut head resting against her body. The paper reproduced a close-up of this picture, with a stirring description under the general heading: "We'll never forget it, never forgive it!"

It made a very strong impression on the men and commanders of the Fleet, and they have not forgotten or forgiven the hitlerite bandits their atrocities.

The story of the defence of Sevastopol may be followed fairly completely in the pages of the newspaper.

The anti-aircraft battery under Lieutenant Vorobyov was situated on a height commanding a view over the whole neighbourhood. If the fascists had succeeded in taking it, they would have gained a tremendous advantage on the outskirts of the town itself. Knowing this, they determined to crush the battery and occupy the height at all costs. It was in the hands of forty-two Red Navy mariners and their commander. A full German infantry-battalion of about a thousand men, supported by five tanks, was arrayed against them, yet the eighteen frenzied attacks the Germans launched yielded no result, and they were compelled to fall back. In that one-day battle against the anti-aircraft battery the enemy lost three hundred men. The slopes of the hill were strewn with dead Germans. When the author of this article arrived next day at the scene of the battle, Sergeant Shkoda pointed to the hundreds of corpses paving the approaches to the battery and observed with great satisfaction:

"There are none of our chaps lying here, Comrade Commissar, they're all Fritzes, every corpse of them. We laid down three hundred at one go yesterday, and they must have at least twice as many wounded."

Of the five enemy tanks that had attacked together with the battalion, three remained on the spot, miserable heaps of twisted, smoke-grimed metal.

Thus ended the duel between the Soviet battery of Red Navy seamen and the fascist battalion. The Soviet battery, which remained an unassailable stronghold, lost in that battle eight men killed, thirteen wounded; but the fascist battalion had ceased to exist, melted away in the continuous attacks on the height.

History, it appears, repeats itself down to even the smallest details. In Sevastopol there was a famous picture: *Panorama of the Defence of Sevastopol*, painted by Professor Roubeau. This panorama was exploded by the Germans during their third attack on Sevastopol. It was a powerful and remarkable presentation of the storming of Malakhov Kurgan by the French in 1856. Among the defenders there was the girl

known as Dasha of Sevastopol, a tall, sturdy figure, with an expression of stubborn determination on her simple, snub-nosed, open face. This was that famous Dasha who was the first nurse in the Sevastopol campaign. She used to bind up the wounds of the defenders of Malakhov Kurgan, travel up and down getting food for them, wash their clothes and look after the sick. In this her old mother, who was living at the time in a little house in the Korabelnaya suburb, helped her.

In besieged Sevastopol there was again a battery of seamen on Malakhov Kurgan, it was firing as of old at the foe. The Germans kept it under fire from their long-range guns, bombed it from the air, endeavouring to crush the battery, but it continued firing at their troops for eight months and remained invincible to the very last days of the siege, when it was exploded by Soviet seamen leaving the town. And a young girl with the same simple, snub-nosed, serious face as Dasha of Sevastopol, Frossia Radichkina, was working there, bandaging, binding up and dressing the men's wounds, doing duty at the telephone, washing clothes; at crucial moments she even took the place of a gunner who had been put out of action. Frossia, too, had an old mother who helped her as Dasha's mother did and who also lived in a little house in the Korabelnaya suburb.

The *Red Navy Man of the Black Sea* devoted a whole column to the glorious exploits of the defenders of Malakhov Kurgan under the heading: "A New Page in the History of Malakhov Kurgan."

The printed word has been widely applied as an instrument of war not only in newspaper form. The newspaper's editorial office has assisted the Political Department of the Navy to publish scores of pamphlets, leaflets and posters, both for the men of the Black Sea Fleet and for propaganda purposes among the enemy troops. The newspaper office translated and printed in German about a hundred thousand copies of Stalin's speech at the Plenum of the Moscow Soviet on November 6th. After that scores of German war prisoners were found to be in possession of the little red books published by the paper. This translation of Stalin's speech into German had produced a tremendous effect: the soldiers read it when they managed to escape the eye of their officers, learned from this historic document the true state of affairs, discovered what had been carefully kept from them by their officers. When questioned, a German soldier named Rudolf Zotzman declared that during a reading of Stalin's speech exclamations of "Quite right! That's only fair and just! Very good!" were heard from the listeners.

No wonder, then, that the German command dread the Soviet leaflets. In the *Instructions for Fighting the Enemy Propaganda* which have been distributed among German officers and the propaganda companies[1], the German command states that Soviet propaganda "deprives the German soldier of his faith in the ultimate victory and paralyzes his fighting spirit."

The success that Soviet propaganda meets with among the German soldiers is due to the truthfulness of the Soviet word, founded as it is upon definite and convincing facts that disclose the actual state of affairs to the German soldier.

The Germans have their leaflets, too. But they only evoke mirth among our men, written as they are in the vein favoured by the Black-Hundred pogrom instigators of the 1906—1907 period. Here the most brutal anti-semitism is mingled with demagogic agitation, barefaced lies and patent fraud. One of the Red Navy men of the battery expressed the general opinion in a reply published in the wall-newspaper:

Goebbels really knows the trick
Of leaflets with low-down intentions,
But even asses laugh till sick
At the Liar Chief's inventions.

From time to time the *Red Navy Man of the Black Sea* was published for the population of the districts temporarily occupied by the Germans. It was circulated by planes and through the partisans. Later the partisans told of the eagerness with which the people read the news from the front, learned of the way the Red Army and Navy were repelling the fascists with ever increasing strength.

Some numbers came out with a section devoted to humour and satire. It included verses, feuilletons, epigrams, jokes and other humorous material. It ridiculed the fascist beasts,, the lies and absurdities in their propaganda, and exposed the lauded "invincibility" of the fascist troops. In the satire-and-humour section the paper published a continuation or sequel to Jaroslav Hašek's *Good Soldier Schweik*. The familiar figure came to life again on the pages of the navy newspaper, and the feature became extremely popular with the public: the idea of bringing Schweik through the furnace of the patriotic war appealed to them. It was Lieutenant-Captain Bakovikov who wrote of the exploits of Schweik this time, ridiculing with wit and humour fascist stupidity and hitlerite delirium, and showing the enemy's instinctive dread of the might of the Red Army. The men always looked forward eagerly to the next instalment of the *Good Soldier Schweik*. And when sometimes

[1] "Propaganda companies" are now regular military units in the German army.

Schweik absented himself from the newspaper columns for a long time, the highly-indignant readers rang up the office to ask: "What's happening to Schweik all this time? What's he doing out at the front just now? And what is his fate to be?" So Schweik made his appearance once more in the Fleet newspaper, evoking fresh outbursts of laughter. And laughter is by no means to be despised at the front, where in these days of trial, in circumstances that place them under a great strain, men seek relief and recreation in humour and laughter. They turned to the pages of the paper, where the humour section served to increase their hatred of the loathsome enemy and encouraged its readers to fight on, to fight harder than ever.

The paper was received by most of the units on active service in the morning. The commanders saw to it that it reached the regiments as soon as possible; early in the morning they dispatched motor-cyclists to the printing-shop to get the paper hot off the press and smelling of printing ink, and then ride out to the trenches, dug-outs and strongholds to distribute it.

The staff of the paper, in its turn, made every effort to ensure uninterrupted publication,—no easy matter these days in conditions of siege, under continuous enemy fire. Sometimes electricity was out off. Sometimes the staff had to set the type of hand and print by hand. This naturally reduced the volume of circulation, but the paper reached the front on time. The men who read the morning's paper did not always know the trouble it had cost to print it. Sometimes the editorial and the printing-shop staffs divided into three shifts to help with the heavy machinery and get the paper out sooner.

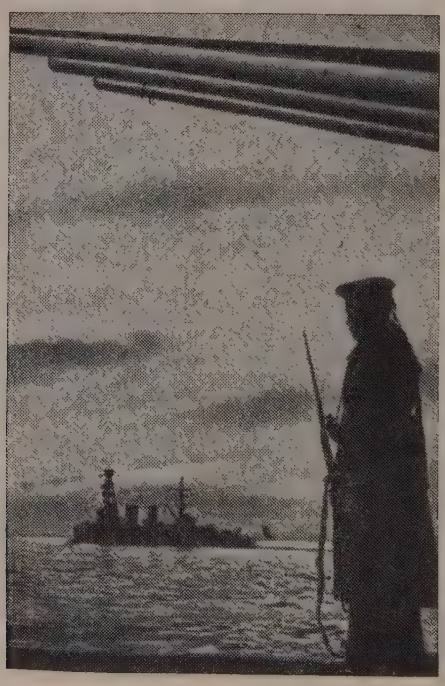
The news received by radio was taken down in shorthand, and also all important documents, decrees, speeches by the members of the Government, which are always transmitted in special broadcasts for regional newspapers.

Repeated attempts were made by the fascist radio-stations to interfere with the transmissions, but the staff contrived to change to another wave, another method at the receiving-station, and succeeded in getting all the telegrams transmitted by TASS.

The *Red Navy Man of the Black Sea* has taught its readers how to fight the enemy, it has urged them on to victory. Organizing the men of the Red Navy to new exploits, it has advocated the acquiring of fighting experience. The paper has brought and is bringing the truth to the men of the Red Navy, inspiring and encouraging them to fresh endeavour. Herein lies this navy newspaper's strength and significance.

The editorial staff of the paper finished its work and left the town together with the Red Army units.

P. MUSSYAKOV,
Brigade Commissar



A Black Sea Fleet cruiser

"NEW HORIZONS"

The first two issues of the Polish magazine *Nove Vidnokrengi (New Horizons)* have appeared this year. The magazine is edited by the Polish authoress Wanda Wasilewska.

The title of the magazine, *New Horizons*, gives the keynote to its contents. Worn out and tormented by the German-fascist invaders, the Poles are yearning for liberation. Their country has been drenched in blood. Hitlerism, the savage foe of the Slav nations, has condemned the Poles to medieval slavery. Hundreds of thousand of Poland's sons and daughters have been slain, millions of Poles have been forcibly deported to Germany, where, branded with the letter "P" (Pole), they are driven under the lash to intolerable slave labour and live under conditions of penal servitude. Polish national culture has been outraged and defiled by the fascist vandals. The Prussian drill-sergeant disposes of Polish lives, and the Hitlerites, the watch-dogs of the German bankers and plutocrats, greedily suck the blood of the Polish nation.

Where to find the road to salvation? That is the main question which now faces the Polish people, and the answer is furnished in the editorial, "The Premises of Victory," in the first issue of the magazine.

Salvation lies in an active armed struggle against the German imperialists, shoulder to shoulder with the other freedom-loving nations of Europe and America and shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army of the Soviet Union. There is no other way of salvation. Only as the result of a vigorous armed struggle against the German invaders will new horizons of a happy, free and independent life open before the Polish nation.

"Is it conceivable that the Poles will not be among those who are advancing along the historical road, the road along which the German army will be retreating?" the editorial asks. And it answers:

"The liberation of Poland will be not only the result of the Red Army's victories, but also of the efforts of the Poles themselves."

The editorial sharply criticizes the shady politicians of various hues among the Polish émigrés:

"Poland is living in the hell of German occupation. Yet among the émigrés, in addition to sensible and genuine patriots, there are not a few shady politicians who are striving for cheap patriotic laurels with which to screen their own guilt towards Poland."

There are others, the editorial declares, who prefer empty and premature disputes with the Soviet Union over future frontiers to an active struggle of the Polish people against Germany. The mortal enemies of the Poles, it says, are the Hitlerites, and the liberation and resurrection of Poland is unthinkable without a victory for the Soviet Union and for the entire democratic camp.

"Building their hopes on this alliance, and confident of victory, the Poles are harnessing all their forces for the decisive battles of 1942."

A fitting reply to the politicians and intriguers among the Polish émigrés is also contained in an article by J. Lampe, "Szlachta Pride under the Sign of the Swastika." The author polemizes with the Polish publicist Mackiewicz and denounces him as an old-time supporter and advocate of an alliance between Poland and Hitler Germany. To this day, Lampe says, Mackiewicz is trying to embroil Poland with the Soviet Union, not even pausing before lies and slander in his efforts to do so. The article ends with the following conclusion: "Is it not time to rid ourselves of this ideological and political rubbish? Yes, and without the slightest compunction! For it is not Mackiewicz who is paying for the damage done, just as it is not Beck who is paying for Beck's policy, but the Polish people. And what a frightful price!"

Worthy of note in the first issue is an interview with the eminent Lwow biologist, J. Parnas, Stalin-prize winner. Professor Parnas acquaints the reader with the splendid conditions for work with which the Soviet government furnished him in Lwow and then in Ufa. The Lwow biologist expresses his high appreciation of the progress of science, and of physiology in particular, in the Soviet Union. He says that he is now working on the perfection of a fluid to replace the "physiological solution" which is now injected into persons suffering from severe loss of blood.

The issue contains a number of other interesting articles. There is Wanda Wasilewska's "A Book Soaked in Blood," and

also her "Poles in Enemy Uniform." Jan Szczirek (member of the Polish National Council in London) wrote an article on the Polish-Soviet agreement, in which he says that "with regard to Poland's independence, it should be clear to the Polish people that the policy of the U.S.S.R. has nothing in common with the policy of former tsarist Russia."

Highly interesting is a fragment from a tragedy in verse by the early twentieth century Polish poet Lucian Rydel. Although the time of action is the tenth century, when the Germans were carrying on their raids against the Slav tribes, nevertheless the tragedy has a peculiar modernity in the light of the present invasions of the nazi barbarians.

Other items in this issue are: a report on the Second All-Slav convention in Moscow and chronicles from the Soviet Union, from Poland and news and views on international events.

The second issue of the magazine, in place of the customary editorial, begins with a series of brief, pungent and profound comments, united by a common theme and by a common title: "Forecasts and Prospects." The first of these articles, "Historical Documents and Hysterical Documents," draws a convincing contrast between the confidence in victory prevailing in the camp of the anti-Hitler coalition and the hysteria and hopelessness in the camp of the axis powers.

The second brief article, "Sane Outlook," argues that in the present world war the Soviet-German front is the decisive front. It is decisive both for Europe and for the world in general. The argument is backed by quotations from the utterances of various statesmen.

The third comment, "The Coming Months," is an appreciation of the public utterances of General Sikorski. It quotes his statement to the effect that this year the war would enter into its decisive phase and that hence the allies must surmount every difficulty and open a second front in Europe at all costs.

Interesting also are the last two articles, "Solidarity of the Allies" and "Castles on Ice."

Worthy of note is Wacław Bielecki's article "The Third Spring in the Polish Countryside," which convincingly shows how the hitlerite bandits are systematically ruining the Polish peasantry, and the methods by which they are draining devastated Poland of her last resources.

Other articles of distinct interest in this issue are: "A Policy of its Kind," by Przemyslav Bzeski; "A Letter to Warsaw," by E. Szemplinska; "News from Silesia," by P. Jasinski; "What Happened in a Ukrainian Cabin," by Wanda Wasilewska (see our 1 — 2 issue of 1942), "Agrarian Reform Inside Out," by O. Jawiecki; "The Polish Theatre in War-time," by Janina Broniewska.

This issue also contains a fragment from Adam Mickiewicz's "Grażyna," dealing with the times of crusades, and another from Senkiewicz's "The Crusaders." "To Our Enslaved Brothers," a poem by Adam Ważyk, is a call for vengeance.

Both issues are illustrated by photographs and drawings.

In *New Horizons* we hear the voice of honest Polish patriots. Here the Polish reader will find answers to the questions which are troubling him now, in these days of sore trial for his country, groaning under the German-fascist yoke. From the first page to the last, the magazine breathes firm confidence in the early victory of the anti-Hitler coalition of the freedom-loving nations.

V. KRUZHKOV

ARTS

"LONG, LONG AGO"

Long, Long Ago, a play by A. Gladkov, presented by the Lensoviet Moscow Dramatic Theatre, is enjoying an enormous success. The spacious hall of the theatre is constantly filled with spectators. Theatre-goers have become fond of this lively, patriotic play.

The curtain rises on a fair-sized drawing-room in the home of a landowner. Young girls are getting ready for a masquerade. The heroine of the play, Shura Azarova, is among them; she is a fair-haired, eighteen-year-old tomboy, with saucy, boyish manners and always ready for a lark. She chooses the costume of a cornet of the hussars. Quite unexpectedly, owing to this masked ball, Shura's life takes quite a serious turn.

Hussar Rjevsky arrives at the Azarov's. He is an idler, leads a gay, dissipated life, but is a kindly chap and an excellent soldier. He is exactly this type of hussar that Denis Davydov praises in his poems. Rjevsky comes to the Azarov's with the intention of marrying Shura, although he has never seen her before. The reader guesses, of course, that Rjevsky, meeting Shura in a military uniform, takes her for a real cornet. Owing to this misunderstanding, several amusing vaudeville situations arise. Shura decides to have a good laugh at the expense of this unexpected suitor. The joke of the masquerade continues and nothing forebodes the serious consequences it will have. The amusing misunderstanding will soon be cleared up, the costumes will be taken off, and the naive comedy must end in a successful marriage between Rjevsky and the fair-haired maiden,—that is what usually happens in old vaudevilles.

But just as this prolonged joke is about to reach its climax, the news arrives that Napoleon's army has crossed the Russian border. Rjevsky leaves for his regiment. Shura, accompanied by a faithful servant, follows him and joins the army.

O. Zvereva as Shura Azarova

D. Orlov as Kutuzov

Kutuzov pins an order for valour onto Shura's uniform

The menacing events of 1812 burst in and change the course of the simple vaudeville episodes. It is with courage and cheerfulness that Shura begins this new military life, with its campaigns, camp-life, reconnoissances and encounters during frosty Russian nights. This carefree, thoughtless young girl becomes a heroine of the patriotic war. The time comes when Kutuzov himself, quite moved, embraces Shura, gives her a fatherly kiss on the forehead and pins an order for valour onto her uniform.

The important point of Gladkov's play is that he has combined a serious heroic theme of courage and love for one's country together with a light comedy intrigue. The former theme is a very familiar one to the theatre-goers of today.

The scene with Kutuzov, the Russian general devoted to his people, occupies the central part of the play. The role as interpreted by the Honoured Artist D. Orlov arrests attention.

The first appearance of Orlov on the stage is a surprise, it is so unexpected. This old man in a general's cloak, a flat cap with a face hardly touched by make-up, does not resemble the portrait of Kutuzov. But as this scene develops, the public is more and more drawn to just this very character. The artist creates a real national Kutuzov. He is simple and human to the utmost in his words and actions. The sound and intonation of his speech is that of a simple Russian man. Orlov's interpretation of this role is full of inner drama and hidden pathos.

O. Zvereva in the role of Shura is an excellent and brilliant comedienne, but except the scene with Kutuzov she accentuates perhaps a little too much the sauciness of the heroine.

The roles of Kutuzov and of Shura are the principal ones in the play. The remaining characters are secondary and have not been very much developed by the playwright, they are interpreted as ensemble roles.

The theatre has produced this comedy with much talent, clever mastery and artistic tact. The regisseur, Honoured Artist N. Gorchakov, has contributed a great deal of ingenuity and invention to the performance. He succeeded in bringing out the real dramatic side of the play, which is so near to us,—contemporaries of the second great patriotic war.

B. ALPERS

NOTES BY A BALLET DANCER

It was in October, 1941, when our country was experiencing great hardships, that our company of artists was first formed. A dark, heavy cloud hung over Moscow, and every Soviet citizen, as best he could, was trying to contribute his share to the common effort to drive away the insolent foe from the vicinity of the capital.

Then we too asked to be sent to the front. With our performances we wanted to inspire our men and to show them that at a moment of such great adversity we artists were fighting together with them, with our own special weapon,—that of art.

Our brigade is energetic, active and high-spirited. We laugh much, we joke, we sing, and in the sorest straits we never lose our cheerfulness.

Now, I must own up to it quite frankly that in the beginning, when we first got to the foremost line of the front, some of us did feel afraid. Many curious things happened to us which later on made us laugh when remembering them, but on the whole I may say that now we are quite experienced.

Here is the list of our brigade members: prize-winner of the All-Union competition of experts in artistic reading Sergei Balashov; ballet soloist of the Bolshoy Theatre Nonna Kuznetsova; Konstantin Mazaev, juggler; Nina and Vladimir Kuznetsov, manipulators; Valentin Novik, accordion-player; Semyonova-Roshet, lyric singer; Mikola Glek, Ukrainian humourist and satirist; the brothers Komarov, dancers.

We have our own caravan,—a three-ton lorry with plywood lining. We equipped it ourselves; we put a stove in it that warmed us during the 100—150 kilometer drives through bitter frosts; we had electrical equipment installed, and a special signal light for the chauffeur. We decorated the walls with pictures of our leaders. And so in our "snug little house," where all the new items of our programs were conceived and created, we travelled all over the Western front.

Covering more than fourteen thousand kilometres during its seven months' work, our company gave four hundred and eighty-seven concerts, and out of these two hundred and sixty-eight in the very front-line.

We worked in quite a variety of surroundings: in sheds, barns, huts, clubs, mud-huts, blindages, open lorries, in the streets and sometimes simply out in the snow.

We experienced lots of unforgettable moments, and we came across many remarkable people.

After a concert, especially if it takes place in a mud-hut, we are always surrounded by the Red Army men. They speak about various exploits, but always exploits achieved by their comrades, never anything about themselves. This modesty moves and excites one very much. You feel the keenest joy at the thought that you are

Nonna Kuznetsova performing on an improvised stage at front

here together with them, and that you contribute your small share to the common cause of smashing the Hitlerites.

I remember a picture that for many a year will be kept in my memory. It was in Medyn, just the day after that town had been freed from the German occupants. I may well say that with our own eyes we saw what these fascists, these beasts in the shape of human beings, really are.

We arrived at night; in the morning we went to give a concert, and we had to pass through the town which was all but converted into a desert. Nothing remained of the once picturesque, beautiful little town, only charred chimney pots sticking up in the air and dilapidated houses. The fascist vermin had destroyed everything they had had time to blow up or burn. We came across the most dreadful sight—a mountain of corpses, 600 or 700 people: Red Army men, women, old people, children. They had all been penned in one house by the Germans and burnt alive.

We stopped in dismay: half burnt, charred bodies, some of them by their poses expressing pain, despair, horror, others—the greatest quietude. We clenched our teeth and felt tears welling up in our eyes, tears of irreconcilable hatred for the murderers and acute pain for those who had perished. On the very spot we gave a solemn oath to devote all our strength to fighting till the enemy was completely annihilated.

During our performances in mud-huts and blindages we sometimes had to change our costumes before the very eyes, so to say, of the surprised spectators, with nothing but our overcoats forming a screen.

Fliers and tankists would come to the concerts straight from the battle-field, some of them with their faces all greasy, others with torn sleeves and helmets, some with bandaged arms or head, but everyone of them with shining eyes and bright smiles.

Here is a performance in a blindage: the distance from the front is 800 metres; we drive there in light cars, all the time under enemy fire. We slip into the blindage. When reciting one can sit on the ground (you don't need much space), but as to dancing—this is far more difficult. We have to dance on platforms made of small round logs one square metre wide. The ceiling is just on top of your head, you cannot even make a skip, so there you are trying to create something on the spur of the moment, to invent new movements, but you are all aglow with one desire—to give our heroes a moment of relaxation, to breathe into them still greater energy for new victories.

Once we gave a concert in a just organized evacuation hospital where the medical personnel was scanty, most of them not yet having had time to arrive. And so we—the women in our brigade—set to work: we rolled up our sleeves, washed the dishes and plates, fed the wounded, helped to dress their wounds, and then started our concert with a warm, contented feeling in our hearts.

I well remember a concert we gave for the gunners. It was on a frosty, snowy day. The artillery unit was stationed in a thick wood and stretched over quite a long distance. News of our arrival quickly spread all through the unit. On their own initiative the men erected a very good platform in the open air by joining two lorries together. To avoid draughts they sheltered them from three sides with branches, writing the following words with charcoal on a white sheet: "Greetings from the Front to Our Dear Guests—the Artists." This was very moving. Boxes of shells served to build up a staircase leading to the "stage." We changed our costumes in a mud-hut.

And when we were ready to leave and the "stage" had again become two lorries, one of the commanders of the unit gave the command: "At the enemy's forces, in the name of the workers of art,—fire!" Never shall I forget the joy and cordiality with which the Red Army men welcomed us at the front. We all felt that we belonged to one great, closely-knit family.

I've got a letter from one of the units:

"Do you remember, when sitting in our mud hut in the forest, we promised to write to you about all our successes? Well, they are quite numerous, that I must admit, and all those you know are safe and sound and send you their heartiest greetings. Making your acquaintance was highly appreciated by us, because it took place out here, in this fighting atmosphere; you are a true daughter of our socialistic country: not sparing your strength, in this wild forest on the front-line where the nazi shells and the thunder of our great guns are incessantly heard, you brought your art to our fighters and commanders. We shall smash the accursed foe, and then we shall see you again, but this time on a real stage (no such a crudely made one as ours was) and in a good theatre. We hope to accomplish this soon.

Meanwhile our best wishes to you. We expect you to come out here again.

Our cordial greetings to all your comrades in the brigade.

Cherepok and others."

With what feeling of deep moral satisfaction, with what happiness we, artists, realize that we are thus in a way helping our heroic men to carry out Stalin's order to crush the enemy completely!

NONNA KUZNETSOVA,
Soloist of the Moscow Bolshoy Theatre

NEWS AND VIEWS

U.S.S.R.

The heroic youth of the Soviet Union gathered together in Moscow at the Second Soviet Anti-fascist Youth Meeting.

Hero of the Soviet Union, pilot Georg. Kotzeba arrived at the meeting straight from the front. He spoke of the indomitable spirit of the Red Army, and his actions were as good as his words: the young flier has 6 German tanks, 134 lorries, 6 heavy guns, 140 waggons with equipment and more than 1,500 Hitlerites to his credit. "I shall continue to increase these numbers from day to day," said the fearless flier, and his words were greeted with applause.

The Soviet partisans operating so successfully behind the German lines are largely youths.

Soviet youth does not only fight. It works tirelessly on the home front, furthering the war effort of the nation. The young workers produce many squadrons of planes, many tanks, many guns over and above plan. Soviet youth has raised more than 450 million roubles for building tanks and aircraft.

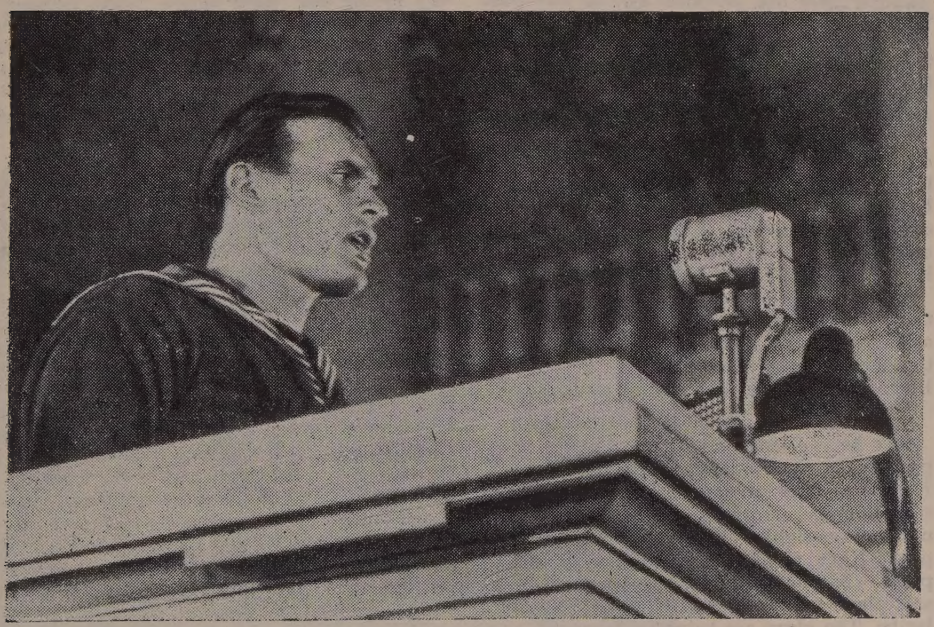
Representatives of Yugoslavian, Czechoslovakian and Esthonian youth spoke at the meeting.

The participants of the meeting adopted an appeal to the youth of the world calling upon them to take an active part in the struggle against fascism.

* * *

The restoration of the Tolstoy museum has been carried out under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. Tolstoy's bedroom, library, his wife's room, which had been badly damaged by the Germans, have been repaired and have now regained their former appearance. Exhibits have been received from other Tolstoy museums to replace those stolen or burned by the Germans.

Scientists, academicians, writers, local inhabitants, collective farmers and Red Army men gathered to witness the re-opening of the museum at Yasnaya Polyana. Sophia Andreyevna Tolstaya, Tolstoy's granddaughter, and N. Gussev, the writer's private secretary, were among those present. From the terrace of the big house, on which Tolstoy loved to sit, speeches were



N. Kushenko, a seaman of the Black Sea Fleet, taking the floor at the Anti-fascist Youth Meeting

An exhibition of Soviet books written during the war has recently been opened at the Moscow Writers' Club. Here are some of the exhibits

delivered. The re-opening was the occasion for a real celebration.

The love of the Russian people for Leo Tolstoy, the care which they bestow on everything connected with his name, was expressed in the speeches of academicians E. Yaroslavsky and M. Mitin, the curators of the museum, and the commanders who took part in battles near Yasnaya Polyana.

Most impressive is the new section of the museum "Fascist Vandalism in Yasnaya Polyana." Photographs of the barbaric destruction caused by the Germans are exhibited here. Visitors may see the charred remains of a bookcase which Tolstoy made with his own hands, a portrait of the writer which was torn to pieces, the inscription made on the frame of a painting by the German soldier Thorn Siebert on November 1st, 1941: "German soldiers preserve the treasures of culture." The frame is empty,—the painting has been stolen by the Germans.

* * *

At a concert on the 102nd anniversary of Tchaikovsky's birth the orchestra of the All-Union Radio Committee directed by A. Kovaliov performed the composer's cantata *Moscow* written in 1883. The words of the composition are by the poet A. Maykov (1821—1897).

Tchaikovsky's patriotic work dedicated to the strength and glory of the Russian arms sounds very modern at a time when the Soviet people are waging a war of liberation against the hitlerite invaders.

* * *

The Ivan Franko Ukrainian Theatre is at present in Semipalatinsk, in the Kazakh Republic. The theatre is enjoying great success there. Works of the modern Ukrainian playwrights Korneichuk and Karpenko-Kary rival the Ukrainian classical plays *(Natalka-Poltavka, Nazar Stodolya)*, and plays by Gorky and Goldoni, in popularity. The plays are being performed in the Ukrainian language.

The theatre has organized theatrical groups for the front. "Today our stage is two lorries placed together with their sides let down," says People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. Gnat Yura, the director of the theatre. These concert parties constantly give performances at the front-lines, sharing with the Red Army men all the hazards of war. Once a battery was heavily shelled by the Germans immediately after the actors arrived there. The shells were exploding close by. The commander gave the order to silence the enemy firing points.

"They mustn't hinder the acting," he added with a smile.

The Soviet guns responded with a terrific salvo, and in a few minutes the enemy battery was put out of action. The firing died down, a stage was hastily constructed and the concert began.

In June of the present year the actors of the Ivan Franko Theatre came to Moscow together with other outstanding Ukrainian actors to take part in a series of concerts devoted to Ukrainian art in the Tchaikovsky Hall.

* * *

Since the outbreak of the war, the Ukrainian playwright and Stalin-prize winner Korneichuk has written *Partisans in the Steppes of the Ukraine*. A short while ago the Moscow Maly Theatre produced the play at Chelyabinsk.

The play describes how German-fascist troops approach a peaceful Ukrainian village. The collective farmers adopt a unanimous decision to leave nothing to the Germans. Having destroyed the fruit of their labours, they join partisan detachments. The enlistment in the partisan detachment is one of the most exciting scenes in the play. The old men Taras and Ostap, the young girls Palashka and Paraska, and the boy Sashka,—all demand to be allowed to join the detachment, all wanting to fight against the enemy. The partisans work out a daring and ingenious plan for capturing a German staff and blowing up an enemy ammunition dump. The collective farmer Galushka goes to

the staff dressed as a German colonel, and successfully fulfils his dangerous assignment. The joy of the partisans is overshadowed however by the death of the girls Palashka and Paraska. The sorrow stricken partisans bury them and go on: "forward for liberty, for honour, for the fatherland. . ."

The play has been produced by Stalin-prize winner I. Sudakov.

* * *

On June 1st the distinguished Russian painter M. Nesterov celebrated his eightieth birthday. Nesterov is the living thread that links modern Soviet art with Russian art of the preceding epoch. He exhibited his first painting in Moscow in 1879. The famous Perov was his teacher, Kramskoy gave him advice, Surikov, Vasnetzov, Vrubel and Serov were his colleagues.

Nesterov's series of paintings on themes of ancient Russian history enjoy wide fame. He has portrayed Alexander Nevsky preparing for battle with the Teuton knights, Dmitry Donskoy going to wage war on the Tartar hordes, Kuzma Minin raising the popular levy. The heroic past of the Russian people has been recreated in these paintings.

The eighty-year-old artist celebrates his anniversary in the full bloom of his artistic powers. An important period of Nesterov's work is connected with the Revolution. His interest in man, in the direct and splendid truth about man has found expression in a cycle of magnificent portraits which place him on a level with the classical Russian masters.

Nesterov received the Stalin prize for his portrait of the great Russian scientist I. Pavlov. Equally fine is the portrait of the surgeon Professor S. Yudin.

In the autumn of 1941, when the German hordes were pressing forward towards Moscow, Nesterov was hard at work. The painter wrote at that time: "New heroes have appeared, and their name is legion; the whole of our great land, personified in the word Moscow, is waging battle. It is preparing the enemy's grave. . . The spirit of Moscow is the spirit of the whole of our people. No one must forget that. . . I see not only dreadful events but glory and victory ahead."

On the occasion of his eightieth birthday the Soviet Government has decorated Nesterov with the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, and bestowed upon him the title of Honoured Worker of Arts.

* * *

The lacquer artists of the Fedoskino studios have continued their work uninterrupted by the war.

The Fedoskino school goes as far back as the XVIIIth century. An original style in the treatment of a definite range of subjects has characterized the work of the Fedoskino masters, among them a Russian troika, scenes of Moscow, portraits of Russian writers and outstanding military captains of 1812.

The works of the Fedoskino studios, as well as those of the folk masters of the Palekh and Mstera studios, are very popular throughout the Soviet Union. They created a sensation at the Paris and New York International Exhibitions.

The Fedoskino studios have now centred their attention on subjects based on events

Portrait of Professor S. Yudin
By M. Nesterov

Soviet stamps

of the Great Patriotic War. V. Borodin, one of the oldest masters of the studios, who lost his right hand during the war with Germany in 1914 and learned to work with his left hand, recently finished a miniature—*Valiant Scouts*. Among other new works are *A Soviet Parachutist Landing, The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol, Throwing Hand-grenades*.

This year an exhibition is planned in Moscow of the best works of the masters of the Fedoskino, Palekh and Mstera studios.

* * *

The Moscow "Goznak" factory [1], founded in 1818, is preparing an issue of new postage stamps showing war themes.

The stamps represent miniature coloured posters. They are extremely hard to make. The artist who does the original has to make an etching 34 by 23 millimeter in size. Such a drawing is ten thousand times smaller than an ordinary painting. It must be very expressive, clearly defined and sharply drawn, otherwise the etching becomes blurred in printing.

The "Goznak" factory has issued more than one thousand different postage stamps during the past twenty four years.

The originals drawn by artists are transferred on to small copper plates. These plates are extremely valuable and are carefully guarded from even the slightest damage. Hundreds of small blocks necessary for the printing of postage stamps are then prepared. The artist has to toil at least three weeks over each stamp. Using a magnifying glass and a steel chisel, he patiently cuts lines of cobweb thinness to form the final engraving.

It is proposed to issue eight series of postage stamps dedicated to the Patriotic War.

[1] The factory producing currency.

Soviet stamps

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