Workers of all countries, unite!

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MISCONCEPTIONS AND THE TRUTH

It is impossible to live in a world of misconceptions. For error man is forced to pay dearly. Before the present war was unleashed on the world, many people entertained illusions about the nature of Hitlerism. Hitler himself has seen to it that people should learn about it the whole truth. This truth is monstrous, and there is not a people who have learned it but have paid for their grievous knowledge with tears of blood. If at present, while the outcome of the war and the fate of the inhabitants of our planet are being decided on the battle-field, humanity may say that it has already won for itself, for its life and progress in the future, something permanent and valuable, that conquest is truth. It has been bought with blood and won through the frightful ordeal of war.

War tears away all masks. It pitilessly lays bare the nature and qualities of the combattants. It tries out all bonds and relationships, puts to the test all merits and demerits, governments, regimes, and economic systems and political views, all the ethical ideals and moral qualities of each people. Time is testing us out by means of war, as an engineer tests the strength of a material, as a physicist tests the properties of an atom or a crystal: for strength, resistance, resilience, coalescence. It is possible that we are at present going through the severest and most serious test that has ever fallen to the lot of humanity.

Quentin Reynolds in his book *Only Stars Are Neutral* admits that the longer he lived in Russia the more conscious he became of how far astray people in America and England were in their ideas about the Soviet Union.

It seems to me the war has led to the discovery of the U.S.S.R. America, discovered 450 years ago, is now itself discovering a new country, a new world. America and England are discovering in their ally much things that they did not know and never even suspected.

This discovery of the U.S.S.R., this knowledge gained in the process of the common struggle with the hitlerite forces of evil, comes at a moment when the Soviet people reviews the results of twenty-five years of the existence of Soviet power. The war is revealing what the Soviet people have been able to create within the course of a quarter of a century.

One of the German papers has written that war is a "disruptive agency." Many States have felt for themselves, and been unable to withstand, the disruptive action of hitlerite war. Soviet country has withstood the terrific blow dealt by Germany in a direct military clash, and has with-

stood it now alone for almost a year and a half. The Turkish political observer Yalchin wrote recently: "The bolshevik regime in Russia proved stronger than German tanks, cannons and aeroplanes. The Soviet troops retreated before the enemy, but the internal regime never yielded an inch, and never ceased for an instant to throw new, fresh forces against the enemy. Had the Soviet social order not been so strong, the Germans would long ago have conquered on the Eastern front." But the Soviet order has proved so strong, so stable, that the hitlerite war machine is being smashed against it as against an invulnerable stronghold; so stable and so firm that the Soviet people by their resistance have given the forces of the anti-hitlerite coalition time and opportunity to consolidate themselves and prepare to deal a crushing blow against the hitlerite might.

Resolutely pursuing the policy of the socialist industrialization of the country and the consistent introduction of a planned economy (the far-sightedness of which, in particular of the geographical distribution of new industrial bases in the eastern regions of the U.S.S.R., can be appreciated only now), the Soviet Government succeeded as early as in 1937 in bringing U.S.S.R. to a stage when, having outstripped a number of old industrial countries, it came out first in Europe and second in the world in industrial production. During the first five-year plan, 64.6 milliard rubles were put into capital construction, during the second five-year plan 114.7 milliard, and during the third 192 milliard. During the first five-year plan, about 1,500 new factories, plants, electric stations and extractive enterprises were set up, and during the third about 2,900 enterprises were added to State industry. The age-old backwardness of Russia was a thing of the past. In spring of 1941, work was already begun on the draughting of a general economic plan for fifteen years which aimed at the solution of the problem of overtaking and outstripping the leading capitalist countries in the production of means of production and of articles of general consumption per capita of population.

The war temporarily put an end to this gigantic construction work. However, not entirely. Perhaps, one of the most striking features of Soviet economics consists in the fact that, amid all the incredible strain of the war being waged on the very territory of the U.S.S.R., in spite of the abandonment of a number of districts of great importance from the economic point of view, U.S.S.R. can not only replace the loss of part of the enterprises destroyed by the war, but in certain respects strengthen her economic might and increase its reserves.

Agriculture too has undergone no less decisive changes. Before the Revolution the agrarian part of the population presented the following picture: there were in the country 65% of poor peasants, 30% of peasant households having no horse (no draught power), 34% being without agricultural implements, and 15% even owning no cultivable land. This fearful picture of poverty and inequality was wiped out by the Soviet Government thanks to the collective farm system. The division into poor peasants, middle peasants and kulaks ceased to exist: the conditions in the village which allowed some to grow rich at the expense of others were destroyed. The peasants pool their labour in collective farms which give them all the advantages of large-scale, technically powerful commodity production of agricultural goods. Before the Revolution 214.7 million hectares of land were given up to peasant farming. In all, in tsarist Russia there were 367.2 million hectares of cultivated land. On the 1st of May, 1937, the Soviet peasantry were in possession of 370.8 million hectares of land. In the State farms (sovkhozes) there were 51.1 million hectares. Thus by 1937 the area of land under cultivation had grown to

421.9 million hectares. On these lands about 500 thousand tractors and over 150 thousand combines were working. The burden of agricultural labour had been largely shifted onto the machines (ploughing was mechanized by more than 71%; sowing by 56.7%; harvesting by 48.4%). In sum, by 1940 Soviet agriculture had doubled its productivity as compared with 1913.

The socialist reconstruction of industry and agriculture has turned the land of the Soviets into a great industrial and collective-farm power, and given it a leading position among the nations. The peoples now see its might displayed in the course and trials of war; for it is clear that the strength and defensive capacity of the Soviet State, the Red Army's power of resistance, rest as a whole on these economic foundations. The Soviet Union has overcome centuries-old backwardness of the country in the spheres of economic and technical development, in twenty-five years passing at one bound into the ranks of the most advanced and highly developed countries of the world.

One year ago Hitler, in a speech delivered after his defeat at Moscow, was forced to admit that in his military calculations he had underrated the might of the Red Army.

However, while making this admission, Hitler clearly minimized his mistake. His admission did not go very far. Hitler might well with a wry face confess to a military mistake; when all is said and done, he is only a corporal who imagines himself a commander-in-chief. But behind this *military* mistake he tried to hide an obviously *political* error. For the blow aimed at the U.S.S.R. (as at other countries that became the victims of German aggression), calculated on the release of centrifugal forces within the country. Hitler proclaimed as the highest principle of his strategy the rule: never to strike a blow until the enemy was morally crushed, terrified, psychologically prepared for his defeat and capitulation. The mythe about the "invincibility" of the German army, the swift and easy victories of the hitlerite troops in Western Europe, were to serve the purpose of a psychological attack before the actual attack on the Soviet Union. Hitler proceeded from the belief that the Soviet order could be overthrown by the simultaneous action of the German armed forces from without, and centrifugal forces from within: the hitlerite tanks would crack open the Soviet State, and the centrifugal forces would split it into fragme nt But herein lay Hitler's basic and fatal error. He came up against something he little expected: the might of the military resistance of the Soviet people, a might which rests not on economic strength alone, but is founded first and foremost on the political unity, moral integrity and monolithic strength of the Soviet people. Hitler, as the world press has time and again emphasized, found no Quislings in the U.S.S.R., not a single protagonist of capitulation or defeatism, no "fifth column." Hitler came up against such singleness of purpose, such close-knit unity in the Soviet camp, as have frustrated, and will continue to frustrate, all the political and military-strategical designs of the plundering German imperialists.

Thus the stability of the Soviet order has been put to the test as regards its internal political organization. Wherein lies the strength of this organization?

The U.S.S.R. is a State composed of many nationalities. Over a hundred nations, national groups and peoples inhabit the territory of the U.S.S.R. If the bond between the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and their national governmental organizations had been mechanical, formal, to any degree coercive, compulsory, then in actual fact the U.S.S.R., after the first military reverses, might have fallen apart into its component elements. The Austrian Hitler well knew the fate that befell the patch-work State of Austria-Hungary, and expected a similar fate for the Soviet Union.

The experience of the present war has once more shown humanity the great importance of the national question; the acuteness of the world problems that have arisen in connection with it, cannot now be minimized.

But in the Soviet Union the national question has long ago been settled on the basis of the new bolshevik principles elaborated by Lenin and Stalin. It is decided immutably and for ever, by the justest and only correct principle, which offers to all the peoples of the Soviet Union the widest opportunities for State, economic and cultural development within the framework of the united Soviet State. In the U.S.S.R. a friendship of the peoples has been created, the nature of which is fundamentally different from that to be found in other States. Lenin wrote about the principles of this friendship: "We want a *voluntary* union of nations, such a union as would admit of no coercion of one nation by another, such a union as would be based on the fullest trust, on a clear consciousness of fraternal unity, on completely voluntary consent."

Precisely in this manner the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formed and has grown strong. An indissoluble community of interests has been consistently and steadily built up, mutual assistance has been given, and a confidence based on practical experience has developed among the Soviet peoples.

Immediately after it was established, the Soviet Government proclaimed the equal rights of peoples. This equality was not limited to the political sphere alone. In the course of twenty-five years the Soviet governmental system has been built up in such a way as fully to safeguard the vital interests of all nationalities. Among them there are peoples of various levels of economic and cultural development. This being so, the Soviet Government made it its aim to create the material foundations for the realization of actual equality, that is, of the economic and cultural equality of the peoples. A decisive factor in fostering the mutual trust and friendship of the peoples has been the assistance given to backward peoples in their economic and cultural development, the Soviet Government encouraging the most rapid rates of economic and cultural expansion in the republics and provinces inhabited by national minorities. Thus, in the years of the two first five-year plans the volume of industrial output in Byelorussia increased 8.5 times, in Georgia 12.5 times, in Kirghizia 14 times, and in Tadjikistan 26 times. As a result of these consistent efforts, the old-time backward agrarian hinterland of tsarist Russia was transformed into flourishing Soviet republics with large-scale socialist agriculture. On these foundations the fraternal collaboration between the peoples within the system of one united State grew ever firmer, and a friendship developed than which the world can show nothing more stable.

Herein lies the explanation of the fact that the trials of war could not shake the inner unity of the Soviet peoples. "More than that—they transformed the family of Soviet peoples into a united and inviolable camp self-sacrificingly supporting their Red Army and Red Fleet." (Stalin.)

In their struggle with the hitlerite invaders, the sons of all the peoples of the U.S.S.R. are defending the great achievements of the Soviet Revolution. In this regard the following figures are of interest, giving the data up to the 5th of October, 1942, concerning awards for distinguished conduct on the battle-field: among 185,113 who received awards there were 128,732 Russians, 33,191 Ukrainians, 5,411 Byelorussians, 302 Azerbaidjanians, 976 Georgians and others; in all, representatives of 69 nationalities. From this the reader can judge that there is not a people in the U.S.S.R. who are not taking part with self-sacrificing devotion in the struggle against hitlerite Germany,

and sending their sons, their heroes, to battle.

The Soviet order has given scope to the creative powers of the peoples of Russia. The Soviet Union owes its progress to the broad and consistent democracy on which the whole Soviet State is being built.

Now, after a lapse of twenty-five years, after trials many and various, including the ordeal of war, we can say that Lenin, in sanctioning the Soviets as the most democratic form of rule of the working people, was right in declaring: "We have the wherewithal both in natural wealth, and in reserves of manpower, and in the splendid scope that the great revolution has given to the people's creative capacities, to build up a really powerful and wealthy Russia."

Soviet democracy, the rapid rise of the country and the growth of the might of the Soviet State is closely bound up with the development of popular culture, with the education of the people as a whole. Socialist Soviet culture is developing as national in form and socialist in content. The Soviet Government made it possible for all the peoples to master the great cultural heritage which has been accumulated over centuries, and to carry it still further; made it possible for all to have, in their own language, schooling, newspapers, books, theatres, college and university education, literature and science.

In 1914 the total number of schoolchildren and students in tsarist Russia was 8,137,000. In the 1936-37 academic year the number of those attending school or some other educational institution reached the figure of 38,335,000. The number of educational institutions in the U.S.S.R. has increased 7.7 times. In 1914 there were 91 institutes and universities in Russia; by 1936 their number in the U.S.S.R. has grown to 700.

In 1939 there were in the U.S.S.R. 111,000 clubs, 86,266 popular libraries, on whose shelves were more than 166 million books. The person of English culture will probably be interested to know that during twenty years before the Revolution the following English classics were published in Russia: Byron in 178,000 copies; Shakespeare 611,000 copies; Dickens 850,000 copies. While during twenty-four years of the post-revolutionary period (1917—1940) 488,000 copies of Byron were printed in the U.S.S.R. (translated into six languages), of Shakespeare 1,209,000 copies (in 17 languages), of Dickens 2,086,000 copies (in 14 languages).

In grim days of trial the Soviet people have always turned with especial love to the well-springs of their national culture, to the wealth of their literature and language. And now, in these days of war, Soviet culture has taken its place in the forefront of the fray. The war for the Fatherland has called forth a new wave of creative activity in all branches of Soviet culture. From the very first days of the war writers, artists and scientists have taken an active part in the common cause of the defence of their country. Many writers, actors and artists left immediately for the front and began to work for Red Army papers and in front-line theatre groups.

No hardships of wartime, no blackouts or air-raid alarms can stop the hundreds of theatres from hospitably throwing wide their doors every evening as of yore. Many of the metropolitan theatres are appearing in provincial towns gladdening thousands of new spectators with their art. "I want the pen to rival the bayonet," wrote Mayakovsky, and his dream has come true.

Amid the stern wartime conditions of 1942 there took place the awarding of Stalin prizes to the best productions of literature and art, the best scientific work realizing the slogan: "Science to the aid of the front."

All the ranks of Soviet culture, true to the testament of the great humanist Maxim Gorky who proclaimed: "If the enemy does not surrender, he must be destroyed," have met the 25th anniversary of October as full

and competent participants in the great cause of the defence of the fatherland.

In the colossal struggle on the battle-fields a gigantic trial of strength is in progress, of armed strength, of economic strength, of moral strength. The might of the Soviet State has been thrown into the struggle in the name of the freedom, independence and progress of the whole of mankind. They are taking part in the accomplishment of historical tasks, which Joseph Stalin outlined as the programme of the whole Anglo-Soviet-American coalition. These tasks are: "The destruction of race exclusiveness; the equal rights of nations and the integrity of their territory; the liberation of the enslaved nations and the reestablishment of their sovereign rights; the right of every nation to settle its affairs according to its own wishes; economic assistance to nations that have fallen victims to aggression, and aid in the attaining of their material well-being; the reestablishment of democratic rights, and the destruction of the hitlerite regime."

In this formulation of the programme of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition we find reflected that political ideal for the achievement of which the Soviet people suffer the miseries of war, sacrifice their blood, spare no effort in fulfilling their great mission of liberation with all honour and high desert. This mission the Soviet people took upon themselves twenty-five years ago, and there is no power which can make them waver in its fulfilment.

Failure to understand the real character and hence the strength of the Soviet State has led our enemies into an error of judgement that will mean their own doom and the salvation of mankind. Subjected to the test of war, the Soviet order has proved the most stable social order, whose unity, singleness of purpose and energy may be envied by any State. The war has revealed for millions of people all over the world *the truth about the U.S.S.R.* It has demonstrated the great achievements of the socialist power in action. On the battle-fields a new friendship, sealed with blood, is growing up between the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and the peoples of all the freedom-loving countries, a friendship which alone can become the foundation and guarantee of future peace.

Prejudices and preconceptions that for many years have poisoned the minds of people observing from afar and with a certain distrust the development of the Soviet Union, are being consumed in the flames of war like so much rubbish. At the price of blood and tears the peoples have won for themselves the right to mutual understanding.

ILYA BACHELIS

VICTIMS OF FASCIST BUTCHERY

A RED ARMY MAN TELLS

Red Army man Alexander Azin came to the fighters and commanders of a detachment on the Leningrad front. He came to tell them what he had seen and gone through when the nazis held him prisoner. Azin walked with a limp leaning heavily on his stick. He ascended a little and then he spoke:

"A handful of us Red Army men were cut off from our unit by the Hitlerites. The Germans caught me while I was threading my way through the wood. Three nazi bandits headed by their officer bounced upon me, pinioned me, bound my legs and pulled a sack over my head. They felled me to the ground, and dragged me by the leg into the dense part of the forest. Once there, they took the sack off, and the German officer ordered me to tell him everything I knew about the partisans, their whereabouts, and how many men strong they were, and the names of their leaders. I refused.

The nazi butchers fell on me, kicking me with their boots, hammering me with their rifle and pistol butts. They beat me on whatever came handy my stomach, chest or my head. My mouth and ears bled.

'You'll speak now!' the officer snarled, white with rage.

I didn't speak. The officer had me tied to a tree by my arms and legs. The soldiers brought a can of kerosene from the motor-cycle, drenched me with the stuff and lit it.

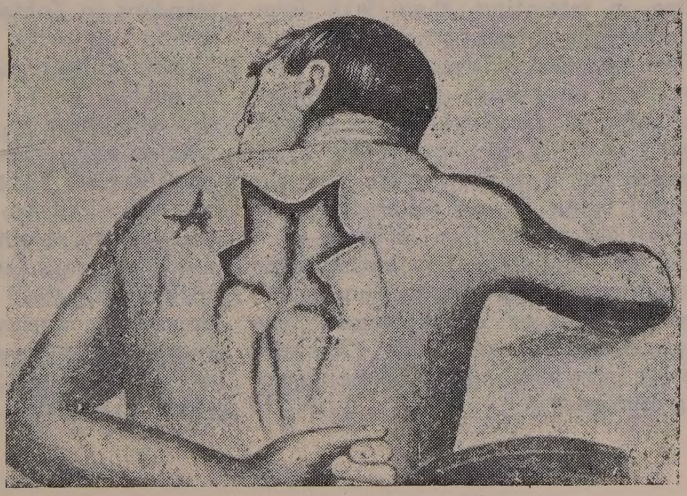
My shirt and hair were aflame. I was to die there at the fascist stake. Well, I wouldn't speak. The Hitlerites put out the flames, produced knives and started stabbing at me. They gave me seventeen knife thrusts and cut eight strips of skin off my chest. Here I swooned dead away. The fascists poured water over me and proceeded with the torture.

'Will you speak now?' asked the officer.

And I did speak then, though my very breath was failing me. I said:

'You damned scoundrels! Never shall you make a Russian bend his knee to you. I'll die for my country, for my people. You'll just peg out, like so many dogs, on alien soil!'

They stopped me by dropping a log on my chest, then lifted it and



Red Army man on whose back the fascist barbarians cut out a five-pointed star

dropped it on my leg. One of the soldiers set to the work of sawing the leg with his knife."

Azin showed his left leg which even now he can but drag heavily: "This leg."

He spoke with difficulty, great beads of perspiration were streaming down his emaciated face. He took off his cap, and the men saw the traces of horrible burns on his head. Their fists clenched with wrath, their eyes dimmed with tears.

"Our tankmen saved me," Azin went on. "Six months I was in a hospital, but I'm still an invalid. I'm but thirty, I used to be a strong hardy man, like any of you. The Germans made a cripple of me, but what they couldn't mangle in me is my will-power, my unshaken confidence in our victory. I have promised myself to take vengeance on the villains for the blood they've spilled, the blood of thousands of Soviet people whom the Germans have tortured to death, and for mine too."

Azin held out his right hand, his left resting for support on the shoulder of a man beside him:

"Comrades! I can't speak loud: the Germans have taken away my hearty voice. Can you hear me?"

"We can, comrade, speak on."

"Swear that you will take vengeance on the villains for the blood of Russian people!"

The words rolled along the rows of men:

"We will!"

Corporal Nicholas Kaliukh, who took the floor after Azin, said:

"I swear that I'll fight unwaveringly and will not leave the line if wounded."

"I swear," spoke Red Army man Peter Fedyukevich, "to fight the fascist scoundrels to the last. There's no fear in my heart, nor any mercy to the foe, nothing but wrath and bitter hate."

Red Army man Palchikov cried out:

"For our victory, for the extermination of the fascist reptiles, onwards to fight the enemy!"

He was answered by thunderous "hurrah," three times repeated, of the Red Army men.

S. NEGINSKY

HITLER'S WOLFPACK LAW

On the walls of the still smouldering edifice of the Zubtsov town school, which the Germans used for storing hay and which they set on fire on retreating, there is a large multicoloured poster portraying a fleshy-mugged German officer bestowing an orange on a bunch of bare-footed Greek kiddies. Nearby some neat old men are reading newspapers on a garden bench with the Eiffel tower for a background, and a little farther off a fatchops of a German soldier is distributing some small paper bags (contents undefined) to peaked-faced Polish women. The legend on the poster reads: "The new order introduced by the German army in Europe."

In close proximity to this poster several smaller sheets of a somewhat different kind are pasted up, the official orders issued by the German commandant in Zubtsov. All of them wound up with the same words: "Those guilty of non-compliance shall be shot." One of the orders enjoined the population to betray every communist and active member of the local Soviet. "Those harbouring any of them shall be shot." By another people were enjoined to part with all kinds of warm clothes: "Those concealing any shall be shot." A third imposed a registration of all cattle and fowls: "Those seeking to avoid it shall be shot." The fourth was an order to register absolutely all ve-

getables, flour and other kinds of foodstuff: "Those guilty of non-compliance shall be shot."

"Shall be shot!" That was what all of those orders led to. That is the Hitlerites' way of speaking to and dealing with the population of the Soviet towns and villages they occupy. That is what it really looks like, this "new order" introduced by the German army, which is rammed down people's throats in the occupied countries by the armour-clad German cannibals.

Zubtsov is a town which was relieved after the Hitlerites had been playing fast and loose with it for nearly eleven months. All that time the inhabitants were literally starving. In the streets we can see living skeletons covered with brownish skin plodding slowly about. Others, on the contrary, have bloated for want of food; their wax-like faces remind one of people suffering from dropsy. They walk hardly shifting their feet, and a gust of wind makes them totter like people who have long been bedridden with a serious illness.

In the course of that terrible eleven months these people forgot how to smile. Their faces have a scared look. They speak in undertones, looking apprehensively about. A Red Army man gave half a loaf to a stoop-shouldered woman. She pressed the bread to her bosom and wept.

"There, there, granny!" said the man. "Don't, they shall not come back."

The woman looked up and breathed out:

"Why, I'm not a granny: I'm just twenty-eight."

Her hair was quite grey. She had not a tooth in her head: the scurvy from want of food had made them all come out. That woman, Olga Potapova, the wife of a Red Army commander, told us that for months hundreds of people in Zubtsov had had to feed exclusively on field weeds: goose-foot, clover, chopped nettles.

Thousands of inhabitants of Zubtsov and the neighbouring villages

The inhabitants of the city of Zubtsov return to their homes after the city was set free by the Red Army

were made slaves by the Germans and sent to forced-labour camps. We had an opportunity to talk with one of these sufferers, Maria Alexeieva, who used to do a foreman's work at the village of Struzhka; she was one of a group of people enslaved by the Germans and made to work at road-building. Everyone of them had to wear a sort of dog-collar with his number on it. At daybreak they were driven out to work, and were kept at it till nightfall with no respite at all. The German soldiers bastinadoed anyone who, utterly exhausted, tried for a moment to unbend his back aching with fatigue, or exchanged a word with a fellow-worker.

The Germans' rage reached its high water mark when, under the blows dealt them by Red Army troops, they were forced to retreat. In the village of Lytvino (Zubtsov district)

a German regiment was quartered. When units of Red Army approached, the officers had a number of villagers driven together in the cellar of collective farmer Nechayev's house. Then the trap-door leading into the cellar was nailed down. The building was set on fire. Twenty-two people perished in the flames.

They shrieked for help, these people who were being burnt alive. Germans, armed with rifles, patrolled around the dreadful pyre and let nobody extinguish it. Together with the adults a ten-year-old girl, Tonya Nechayeva, met her death there, and the two-year-old Tamara, daughter of collective farmer Euphrosynia Chugunova, was burnt while in her mother's arms.

The town is free now, but the combat zone is not far off. Now and again German shells whizz overhead and burst among the houses. The air seems to be one long rumble from the nearby cannonade. Well, the town *is* free, and people come out into the streets to feast their eyes on the Red Army units passing through the town.

B. POLEVOY

August, 1942.

WHAT I SAW IN VYAZMA

"After capturing our village and plundering it, the Germans sent all ablebodied men to work, we didn't even know where. They took my husband too, though he was ill. After some time I learned from the villagers that my husband was in Vyazma, and that his health was very poor. It was rumoured that invalids got released occasionally. So I made up my mind to get to Vyazma and bring my husband home.

There were many difficulties to overcome; but at last by dint of some ruses I succeeded in getting to Vyazma. There I searched for my husband for a long time until, finally, through some local people I found a storehouse where about 65 or 70 men were crowded.

There were both war prisoners and collective farmers among them. The sight was fit to make one go mad. All those men were left to their own resources, there was not a soul to look after them. There was no question of medical attendance, no one even fed them. The air in the attic they lay in was thick with the unendurable stench of excrements. The groans and ravings of the sick, and the laughter of those who had lost their reason combined into one terrible uproar. Men were dying by inches of starvation and disease.

What with the foul smell and the horrible sight, I felt quite faint. I strained my every nerve but could not make out my husband. So I started calling out his name. After I had called several times, in the left-hand corner of the attic a man raised himself up on his elbows; but it was not a man, really: rather was it a skeleton covered with skin, with his eyes sunken deep in their sockets. First he gave me an apathetic look; then his face grew animated, his eyes burnt with a feverish glow, and repeating my name he crawled towards me, looking in my direction now and again, as if afraid of my going away.

I failed to save my poor Vanya's life. Two days later he died there under my very eyes. . ."

(Told by *A. F. DORONICHEVA*, a collective farmer of the village of Orekhovtsy)

"My dear son,

The enemy has stayed at our village. Ashes and ruins—that is all they've left behind them. They burned everything, destroyed everything, the monsters. Your father is no more, the hitlerite bandits hanged him. They have robbed us of all we had, and many people they drove to Germany to slave for them. Were I to write you of all they did, not only my heart, the paper itself could not bear it. I enjoin you, sonny: take revenge for the death of your father, for our tears and sufferings, exterminate the fascist brutes, show no mercy to them!"

Sergeant Alexander Voronov carefully smoothes out the letter and reads it once more. Familiar pictures come back to his memory: the village near Orel, green cornfields beyond the roomy house. There is no home now, no father, their once happy life has been stamped out. The village had been ravaged by green-uniformed savage beasts with tommy-guns.

Voronov takes the letter to his comrades. Let them learn of his grief. Let them listen to his mother's voice. It seems to address them all, that voice: "If you don't kill the enemy, if you don't stop him, tomorrow the same lot may befall your own village and your own father. While among those driven into slavery your wife or your sister may happen to be."

The mother urges them: "Avenge us!" This is the command of the motherland herself.

There is also a call for revenge in the letter received by machine-gunner Kuznetsov on the Karelian front from his nephew who writes to him from a children's home:

"Dear uncle, our mamma is dead. Boria was killed by a fascist bomb splinter when on his way to auntie. The Germans killed Vova, too. They said he was a partisan, because he happened to be wearing riding breeches. Our village has been burnt by the Hitlerites, only eight houses are left. . . ."

"The Red Army," writes Constantine Aksenkin's sister from the village of Pishki to her brother at the front, "has saved us from the fascist captivity. Before going away, the Germans burnt down all the houses, so we have no home now. Those accursed Germans wanted your brother to bend to them, but he didn't. So the villains hanged him. When they left, they took a lot of other people's property along. What they had no time to carry away, was burnt. Take vengeance on them, Constantine, kill the Germans and the Finns!"

Red Army man Borovikov is informed by his wife: "Your sister has been tortured to death by the nazis. She

Olga Stroganova, a collective farm woman of the Borodino village, at the ruins of her home

had thirteen wounds on her body."

Lieutenant Stepanov got a letter from his wife living in Kalinin region. "Dearest Mitia," she says, "we were in captivity for months. What we had to bear, it's impossible to describe. The Germans killed your father. And when they were going to retreat, they gathered us all and opened machine-gun fire on the crowd. I also was to be shot, but sheer luck saved me: a unit of our army burst into the village. Thanks and thanks again to the Red Army! I appeal to you, Mitia, and to your comrades: strike these monsters harder, avenge the blood they've spilt!"

The regimental postman brought a letter to Alexei Yolkin, commander of a mine-thrower crew, from his wife Tamara. Straight-forward and trenchant are his mate's words:

"Fight hard, make the enemy show his heels. Is it possible that our husbands and brothers can't defend us from these ferocious beasts, the nazis?"

We shall answer this Russian woman:

Mine-thrower Yolkin is fighting the foes bravely. He has accounted for scores of Finns. Here, in the woodlands of Karelia, he defends Stalingrad, Kuban and the Caucasus. He defends his mother country.

The Red Army men take vengeance on the Germans and on their hirelings, the Finns.

N. KONOVALOV

Karelian front.

A YEAR IN GERMAN CAPTIVITY

These men have escaped from German captivity. Their tel-tale tattered rags instead of clothes, as well as their faces, haggard and peaked, and bristling with a thick growth, all bespeak fugitives who have had a long way to go.

Senior Lieutenant Dmitri Dyumin, Junior Lieutenant Peter Kamensky, Red Army men Fiodor Saltykov, Anton Petrov and Sergei Karablin escaped from nazi camps for Russian war prisoners in Germany.

Senior Lieutenant Dmitri Dyumin, who had spent about a year in a fascist camp for war prisoners situated in East Prussia, near Tilsit, told us the horrible truth of the life of Russian war prisoners:

"I was taken prisoner in August and was brought to officers' camp No. 53 in East Prussia. The camp is situated in an open field, the soil is all sand. It is hemmed in on all sides by twelve rows of barbed wire. We lived in the open air until winter set in, enduring rains, cold and frost. Late in the autumn we were permitted to erect barracks, mere cattle-sheds, sixty metres long and six metres wide. All these structures were innocent of windows, which were represented by one thin beam wide slot in the middle of each structure.

Every barrack housed 150 to 180 men. When lying down men had literally to overlap one another. There was no water for the men to wash. Dirt untold reigned in the barracks. There were no baths and there was no possibility of washing till spring. Everybody had lice on him. Typhus was raging among the war prisoners.

In December, January and February the average daily number of deaths from typhus fever was 160. But the Hitlerites paid no attention to this. To be sure, now and again the idea of "introducing hygiene" occurred to them. I recollect three policemen bursting into the barracks and noticing lice on the greycoat of the first Red Army man they saw; they did not heed his being ill. They dragged him out of the barracks, threw him down onto the snow-covered ground and, one of them standing on the man's stomach, the two others seized hold of his hands, and tugged and pulled at him, lugging him all over the

place. Then the sufferer was turned over face down, and the "operation" repeated. Then it was gone through once more, this time with the man's greycoat off. He was more dead than alive when the bloody Hitlerites left him lying on the snow.

The rascally Hitlerites starved us and made us suffer from cold. All winter long there was no allowance of fuel for the barracks, though the only stove in it was very small and it wouldn't have taken much firewood to heat it. The temperature in the barracks was sometimes as low as ten or twelve below zero (Centigrade), many of us had frost-bitten feet.

Thousands died of starvation. In the camp our daily allowance was 250 grams of "ersatz" bread-substitute whereof the chief ingredients were saw-dust and even sand. On top of this came one and a half litres of "soup," a wish-wash of a blackish hue, made of potato peel with a dash of something mysterious known only to the Hitlerites.

It often happened that there was not enough even of this mess. Then the cook would add quantities of unboiled water to it and, unruffled, go on with the dispensation of the meal.

We were not considered human there, we had even no names and were known only by our numbers and by the letters "SU" (Soviet Union) on our shirts and on the barracks.

Insults, flouting and blows, were an everyday occurrence. For calling a fellow-prisoner "comrade"—caning, twenty-five blows. For failing to salute a German officer or soldier—a hundred. If a sick man was not quick enough in running to fall into line, he was whacked all the way while crawling to the line, and beaten up again when already there. When someone succeeded in escaping from the camp, scores of war prisoners were hanged as "contemplating escape."

When spring came, they took away our boots and belts; we were given wooden clogs instead and sent to different places. I was given away to a farmer to work at a digging peat. The regime was the same there as in the camp, the only difference being that the prisoners got it in the neck rather oftener from the farmer's myrmidons. Those who had grown feeble, and so weren't quick enough at rolling off the barrows, or at some other hard work, were beaten with extra cruelty.

Commander Kushin had grown very weak in the camp and so was behindhand in his work. In the course of two days he was thrashed twice within an inch of his life.

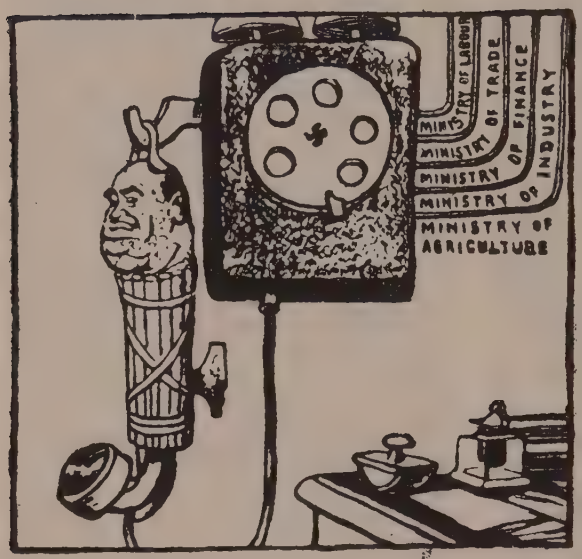
The rations, too, were the same as in the camp, but the Hitlerites called them "high-caloric." Why? Because on Wednesdays and Fridays we were given the so-called "meat broth." This means that on Wednesday the cook put a couple of bones, scraped clean of any meat, into the kettle, and on Friday the selfsame bones were recooked, only this time they were smashed into small pieces.

On that same peat-bog we lived, in wretched wattled huts, dirty and holey.

I seized the first opportunity to break away. I passed through Lituania and Byelorussia, and what I saw everywhere were the Hitlerites' bloodthirsty ways and iniquities.

Never shall I forget the awful life in the camp, as I shall never forget the sights I saw in the countries where the Hitlerites are at large. Now I am no more in fascist captivityr I am free and back in my mothe, country. As long as I live, I'll do my very utmost to fight the fascist brutes, I'll never forgive them the hundreds and thousands of deaths of my comrades in captivity, the burnt villages and ruined cities."

Soviet Caricatures



Italy is ruled not by Mussolini, but by the German ambassador to Rome, von Mackensen, who uses Mussolini as a mouthpiece for his orders to the Italian ministers.

From a newspaper item

THE PRIVATE "TELEPHONE" OF THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO ROME

Drawn by I. Semyonov

GESTAPIDEMIC DISEASES IN THE HORTHY FAMILY

Count Karolyi, Horthy's son-in-law, has become the victim of the Gestapo, as did Istvan Horthy, Hungarian vice-regent and son of Horthy, who died a few days ago.

From a newspaper item

HORTHY:
Gosh, I believe this disease is contagious...

Drawn by Boris Yefimov

"RUSSIANS"—A PLAY BY C. SIMONOV

Constantine Simonov is a young writer. The son of an officer in the old tsarist regular army, he early lost his father, who was killed by the Germans during the first world war. Simonov never forgot this.

From boyhood Simonov felt attracted to literature. The talent of the young writer was formed and given a certain amount of finish at the Literary Institute of the Union of Soviet Writers. Simonov's first works are already distinguished by a trait common to all his generation: an ardent love for his country and its history, and a keen interest in the men of the Red Army, who have devoted their lives to the task of protecting the peaceful labour of the Soviet people. All this found its reflection in the first play of the young playwright, *A Fellow from Our Town*.

The play was a great success. Both critics and playgoers found it exceptionally good. Simonov was awarded a Stalin prize.

During the war, Simonov's talent has ripened and strengthened. His lyrical poems have become widely popular both in the rear and at the front. Especially successful was his poem *Wait for Me*, which is already familiar to readers of *International Literature* (see our No. 3-4). Simonov's newspaper articles written from the front also aroused wide interest among readers. But most successful of all has been his new play, *Russians*.

The action takes place in one of the towns of Southern Russia. The Germans have succeeded in occupying the greater part of the town. A small Soviet garrison, cut off from the main forces of the Red Army, has managed to keep in its hands one of the districts of the town separated from the enemy by the estuary. The attempts of the Germans to force this water barrier are frustrated by the Soviet troops led by the courageous, resolute Captain Safonov. The besieged Red Army men are running short of ammunition, they have little food and still less water, since an enemy shell destroyed the water-tower. Every day the ranks of the defenders dwindle. The commissar is killed, also the chief-of-staff and the chief of the special section. Safonov promotes new people to these posts. He appoints a captain of the old Russian army, Vassin, chief-of-staff; he puts the journalist Panin, the military correspondent of one of the big Moscow papers, at the head of the special section.

The struggle goes on. Safonov manages to establish contact with the command through Globa, the surgeon's assistant, who breaks his way through to the main forces of the Red Army. He receives the order to recover from the Germans a bridge that they have taken and to hold it until the arrival of the Soviet units, which are about to launch an attack. The heroic duel between this small Russian force and an enemy enormously superior in numbers forms the subject of the play.

But, to quote Hegel's well known words, by saying this we say all and nothing. As he pertinently observes, the whole content of the *Iliad* finally boils down to a history of the defence of Troy. But everything depends on how the theme is treated. Simonov reveals to us the feelings, the moral qualities, through

which the Russian people achieve victory over the German Beast.

We hear that theatrical circles in England and the U.S.A. are interested in Simonov's play. Some of our readers may possibly see it. We imagine that they will not be disappointed. In fact, Simonov's play should help those who have the opportunity of seeing it abroad to acquire a better understanding of the whole nature of this war in Russia, this war against Hitlerism, and of the reasons why the "Blitzkrieg" against the U.S.S.R. failed. Our recent guest, Erskine Caldwell, wrote in his book *The Road to Smolensk* (which he published in the U.S.A. after his return from the U.S.S.R.) that during the first days of the war the foreigners, and in particular the Americans in Moscow, took a pessimistic view and considered that the capture of Moscow by the Germans was a matter of a few weeks. All the Russians, on the other hand, Caldwell declares, were optimistic, and would not even consider the possibility of Moscow being taken by the enemy. And the Russians turned out to be right. The fascists were first stopped, then defeated before Moscow, and driven back westward. Why did the hitlerite plan of a "Blitzkrieg" fail in Russia? asks Caldwell. And he says it is simply because the Russian people were not frightened of the air-raids and the men of the Red Army were not scared of Hitler's armoured hordes.

There is much truth in what the American writer says. Simonov's play gives a full, convincing, and brilliant answer to Caldwell's question, which interests millions of people in all the freedom-loving countries of the world. Simonov shows that a whole great people, and not only its army, is ranged against the hitlerite hordes. And this people, the Russian people, possesses today no less than in the past those traits of character, thanks to which it took the lead in the historical process of the welding of the Russian State, thanks to which it came out victor over all its enemies. These traits find clear expression in the whole personality, in all the deeds of men like Alexander Nevsky, Suvorov and Kutuzov.

Once, when the enemy was invading the young Russian State, the people created the legend of Ivan Sussanin, a Russian peasant, who at the cost of his life led an enemy detachment to destruction. The great patriotic war against the German invaders has shown that the Russian people has no lack of Ivan Sussanins. Simonov's play is a play about ordinary Russian people each one of whom is ready in the name of his patriotic duty to repeat the heroic exploit of Sussanin.

I say—heroic exploit. But the people portrayed by Simonov would be inexpressibly surprised if they were told that they were heroes, that they had done something heroic. What they do seems as natural to them as breathing. Mark Twain, with characteristic sarcasm, wrote that even an oyster would be insulted if he were compared to a man who had no feeling for his country.

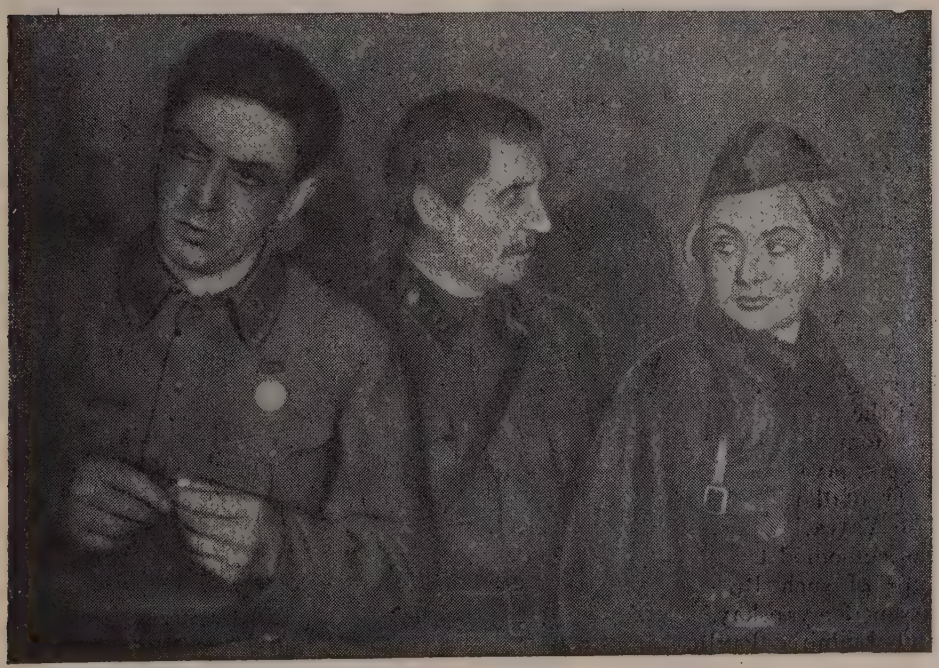
In Simonov's play we are shown a whole gallery of Russian people.

Captain Safonov fought courageously in the Far East at Khalkin-Gol. And now, in the most difficult circumstances, encircled by the Germans, he displays that staunchness of character that is the first condition of victory in any battle. Safonov's courage rests on his boundless faith in the leader of the Soviet people—Stalin. He says to his chief-of-staff Vassin: "Sometimes I don't believe this one, and sometimes I don't believe that one, but him I trust—always and everywhere. When I was listening to his speech over the radio, I was still suffering from shell shock, and the words got mixed up in my head, but what I felt he really said was this: 'Don't retreat, Safonov; not a step back! Die, but don't retreat! Fight, but don't retreat! Even if you are wounded a dozen times, don't retreat!' That's what I heard, that's what he said to me personally."

And Safonov carries out that order. He stands firm in defence, and just as firmly goes forward and conquers. Displaying "Russian resourcefulness" and military shrewdness, he captures the bridge in the German rear, and rejoins the main forces of the Red Army.

Vassin is quite a different type. He has old scores to settle with the Germans. The old captain received six wounds from the Germans in the first world war. Three St. George crosses, the highest reward for courage in the tsarist army, bear witness to his bravery. In spite of his sixty-two years, Vassin is ready to fight to the last drop of blood. Without the slightest hesitation he attacks the Germans at the head of a small detachment. The attack is only a ruse, intended to mislead the fascists and to make it impossible for them to guess Safonov's real plan. The chief-of-staff, knowing well how dangerous the operation is, inspires the men by his own example. The Germans are deceived and Safonov takes the bridge. By the time the news of this reaches him, Vassin is mortally wounded, but the old warrior still finds strength to exclaim: "For the last time in my life I want to say: Glory to the Russian arms!"

In order to be sure of deceiving the Germans, Safonov thinks out a plan of sending to the enemy camp a "transfuge," who is to bring the Germans the news that the besieged garrison has decided to break through. The "transfuge" is also to show the Germans the place where the attempt is to be made—the very sector planned for the "demonstrative" advance of Vassin and his detachment. Who is to be sent? Safonov's choice falls on Globa, the surgeon's assistant, who has only just managed with enormous difficulty to cross the front and get back to his detachment. And Globa goes and carries out his assignment with honour. There is a magnificent scene when they take leave of Globa; he goes out singing, simply, without unnecessary words. "Have you heard, or not, how Russian people go to their death?" says Safonov to Panin, and everyone of the audience feels



A scene from C. Simonov's play "Russians." P. Arzhanov as Safonov, D. Orlov as Globa and V. Serova as Valya

L. Orlova as Martha Safonova

that these words are addressed personally to him.

I should like to stress the portrayal of the Russian women in Simonov's play.

In order to make contact with the partisans operating secretly under the Germans, Safonov sends the girl-chauffeur Valya Anoshchenko, with whom, in his private heart, he is deeply in love. Three times she swims across the estuary under enemy fire and carries out her assignments. But the last time she is betrayed and the Germans capture her. The scene where Valya is cross-examined in a fascist torture-chamber is one of Simonov's great dramatic successes. It is very impressive on the stage. Thousands and thousands of Russian girls, many of whom have written about it in the papers, say to themselves: "In a moment of danger I should wish to be like Valya." In Valya the dramatist has embodied the traits of the heroic type of such Russian girls as Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, Liza Chaikina, and Ludmila Pavlichenko, who are now known to all the world.

The portrayal of Safonov's mother is extremely successful. The old Russian woman finds courage in herself not to yield to the invaders, to fight the Germans so far as her strength will allow. She turns her house into a secret meeting place where the partisans can get in touch with Safonov's scouts. She fearlessly tells the truth to the fascist officer's face when, at the command of this German savage, they kill a woman in the street who, in the throes of childbirth, has come to the doctor for help. And when the German threatens her with death and gives her just two minutes to think it over, Safonova answers without hesitation:

"If I have two minutes left, I shall use them to answer you. . . I would like to fly to your country, to land there invisibly, right there in your town of Stettin, and take your mothers by the scruff of the neck and bring them here through the air and show them from above what their sons have done. And then I'd say to them: 'Look, you bitches, what you have given birth to! What toads you have brought into the world! What vipers you brought into the world!' And if they didn't curse their sons after that, then I'd kill them on the spot along with you, along with their sons!"

Martha Safonova is as strong and majestic a figure as Volumnia, the mother of Coriolanus. She is not only herself a model of courage, fearlessness and patriotism, but she inspires strength and the will to victory in others weaker than herself. Such a one is Safonova's childhood friend Maria Haritonova. She is oppressed by a terrible grief—her husband, Doctor Haritonov, is a traitor, who has taken service with the Germans.

A hitlerite officer, with sadistic unconcern, "subtly" gives Maria Haritonova to understand that her son has been killed. He thinks out a whole "psychological scenario," incredibly doltish and cruel, so as to twist the knife deeper in the wound of the mother who has suffered a double tragedy: the death of her son

and the treachery of her husband. This is one of the strongest and most moving scenes in the play. Simonov gives a subtle portrayal of the Russian woman, and at the same time shows us the fearful image of her enemy, the enemy of all that is human in man—a German fascist.

Driven to desperation, full of an exalted thirst for revenge, Maria Haritonova poisons the hitlerite officer. She not only admits this, but names her husband as her accomplice. The audience understand her motive: if there is still a spark of patriotism in Haritonov, he will take the guilt on himself, and will at least not die like a slave. If Haritonov refuses to share the responsibility, the Germans, who will not believe him anyway, will kill him as their slave. She gives no thought to herself: she knows that death awaits her, and she dies without flinching.

Simonov's play is profoundly true to life. Its heroes are ordinary people, and their actions natural and sincere. As Caldwell said so rightly of the Soviet people, they have no "defeatist's costume" in their wardrobe. But, as the Russian proverb has it, there is no family without its little monster. And the playwright introduces into his play some of these little monsters, renegades for whom even their fascist masters have a deep contempt. Safonova, the old woman, says very aptly about one of these traitors, Vassin's nephew, Kozlovsky: "They brought him from Nikolayev. And that, I consider, is a good sign, because it means that they can't find enough scoundrels in every town. They have to move the same ones from place to place."

Haritonov, appointed mayor of the town by the Germans, is a mean, contemptible type. Sinking into the lowest depths of treachery, he renounces even his love for his son and wife; he is ready to trade away everything that is most sacred to man. He himself shows himself for what he is when he says: "Where can we hide ourselves? And what about our things? My things will always remain things even without me, but I without my things might just as well be a lump of dirt." But even Haritonov, this debased scoundrel, who reaches to depths of baseness, in the end begins to understand that to live with the Germans, to "co-operate" with them, is impossible. But this realization comes too late, he hasn't an atom of national worth left in him, and he pays for his crimes with a vile death.

The scenes where hitlerite officers appear are few, but vivid and forcible. Two types: Rosenberg, a hangman with a sadist psychology, and Werner, who at first glance seems rather a decent officer. But Simonov shows us that to find any essential difference between them is as useless as to try to make out in what way the fiend is better than the devil. And when Safonov, learning that the Germans have hanged his mother, cries out in his wrath as the curtain goes down: "I want to live, I want to live a long time. I want to live until I see the last of those who have done this dead before my eyes. The

A scene from the play "Russians." A. Kislyakov as Rosenberg and A. Bogdanova as Maria Haritonova

very last, and dead"—these words sound like an oath of the whole Soviet people.

The courage of the Russian people shown in the play is not reckless audacity or some special kind of self-sacrifice. No! The Russian scientist and writer Chernyshevsky laughed at those who saw in Russian heroism a display of some sort of blind self-sacrifice. Rakhmetov in Chernyshevsky's famous novel *What Is to Be Done?* trained himself for years to be able to endure anything whatever for the sake of the idea which inspired him. And if Simonov's heroes face tortures and death, it would be naive to explain this by some tendency to "sacrifice themselves." On the contrary, they all love life, they want to live. Safonov says: "I am ready to die, but for a purpose; to die for nothing doesn't appeal to me."

Even those who see these Russian people only on the stage, only in the characters of Simonov's heroes, will carry away the firm conviction: such a nation, such people, it is impossible to conquer. And that is the greatest merit of Simonov's play, of this dramatic poem about the Russian's supreme love of his country and his burning hatred of the enemy. Every line of *Russians* burns with the intense heat of Russia's hatred for the cursed invaders.

Hundreds of theatres are preparing to produce *Russians*. Among the hundreds of thousands of spectators who have already seen the play are Russians, and Georgians, and Tartars, and Kazakhs, in short, representatives from all parts of the multinational Soviet Union, that united brotherhood of peoples.

The first theatre to stage the play was the Moscow Lensoviet Theatre, where it was produced by Gorchakov, who is an "honoured artist." The performance was a remarkable success. The play aroused wild enthusiasm among spectators of every type. Everyone considers it his duty to see it, even if he is in Moscow on only a short visit.

Machutadse, the Georgian professor, in a letter to the editors of the *Vechernaya Moskva* thus expresses the feelings inspired in him by the performance: "I came to Moscow from sunny Georgia, and the first free evening I had I went to the Lensoviet Theatre to see Simonov's play. . . The Russian people portrayed in it are indeed the elder brothers of all the peoples of the U.S.S.R. Try as he may, the bloodthirsty Hitler will never manage to sow discord among the peoples of the Soviet Union, or to set them one against the other. Never! The Soviet people will rally still closer round their beloved Stalin, and with the help of our elder brothers and best friends, the Russians, they will destroy Hitlerism. . . This is what I thought as I watched Simonov's play, which shows us how to fight the enemy and teaches us how to be staunch, stubborn, how to win through to victory."

The theatre and the whole cast put their heart and soul into playing *Russians*. With the utmost care Gorchakov rehearsed every scene and even speech in the author's presence. And one cannot but admit that this collaboration between the playwright and the producer has fully justified itself. The producer has shown great ingenuity in staging the scenes conveying the grim resolution of Simonov's heroes. He has rendered admirably the atmosphere, the heat and stress of the front-line.

We cannot deal here in detail with all the actors. Almost all of them deserve the spectator's gratitude.

Russians has become the most popular play on the Soviet stage. One cannot but emphasize that this is only the second play written by the young playwright. We may expect from him many more works which, like *Russians*, as one of our officers who saw the play so well remarked, will serve the Soviet people and the Red Army as a weapon against the bloody nazi dogs.

TIMOFEI ROKOTOV

CONSTANTINE SIMONOV

RUSSIANS

EXCERPT

Haritonov's apartment. An old well-built house belonging to a country medical practitioner. A large dining-room, evidently serving as a drawing-room. A few doors. Two cupboards, one for china, the other,— a white one,— for medical supplies. Rosenberg and Werner are at the tea-table. Werner is sipping a glass of wine and mechanically muttering something.

ROSENBERG (*opening a travelling zipper bag and spreading out in front of him various souvenirs: photographs and papers*): Werner, are you still practising your Russian?

WERNER: Yes.

ROSENBERG: That's good. We'll be here for a long time.

WERNER: Do you think the war...?

ROSENBERG: Not the war—that won't last long. I'm thinking of what will happen after the war. A conqueror may despise the people under him, but he's got to know their language even if it means barking like a dog. In a strange land, Werner, you daren't trust a soul.

WERNER: But you trust Haritonov, don't you?

ROSENBERG: Yes, because he's a scoundrel. If the Russians come, they'll hang him; I mean, shoot him, for they don't hang people. But his wife—I don't trust her. If they come, I don't think they'll shoot her. (*Continues to arrange the photographs.*) Krause today presented me with another suitcase full of all kind of this stuff. Don't look at me like that, I love messing about with it.

WERNER: You're just a scavenger.

ROSENBERG: Nonsense. I study psychology through these papers and photographs, and I sometimes come across curious things. Here, for instance, is the identification card of Junior Lieutenant N. S. Haritonov. N. S.—do you get it? The paper's been pierced by a bullet. So its owner must have been killed. But that's not what I'm interested in. I'm interested in the initials N. S. Now, our landlord is called S. A.; see? It is hard to suppose, but let us just suppose for a moment that this *is* his son. He has a son in the army, that I *do* know. What can we conclude from this? Quite a lot, I think. In the first place, even if it is just a coincidence, we could still make an interesting psychological experiment: recognition, non-recognition, error, a mother's grief and the like. All this enters into my system of studying people's manners. Oh, yes, where was I?

WERNER: You mentioned Haritonov's wife.

HARITONOV (*opening the door*): Did you call me?

ROSENBERG: No, but since you've come in, you may as well tell us, where does your wife come from, doctor?

HARITONOV: She's from Vologda.

ROSENBERG: There you are, Werner! She's from Vologda, and we haven't captured it yet. (*To Haritonov:*) Has she any relatives?

HARITONOV (*embarrassed*): Well, yes, a few.

ROSENBERG: What do you mean by a few?

HARITONOV: Sisters.

ROSENBERG: Sisters—and you call that a few? These sisters have husbands, haven't they? And perhaps they're real Russian people, not like you, eh?

HARITONOV: I don't understand you, Herr Captain.

ROSENBERG: You understand me perfectly. Tell your wife to bring in tea in the samovar. (*Haritonov goes out.*) You see, Werner, so her sisters have husbands. Perhaps one of them is an engineer, the other a major—of course, I don't know about that. But this major will turn up here tomorrow. And she—the sister of his wife—will sooner let him kill us than let us kill him. It is really very simple. (*Maria Nikolayevna enters with the tea things.*) Tell us, Maria Nikolayevna, have your sisters husbands?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Yes, Herr Captain.

ROSENBERG: Are they Russian?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Yes. Will you have some milk?

ROSENBERG: No. Don't you envy them for having Russian husbands, while your husband is of some kind of unknown nationality?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Mine is also Russian.

ROSENBERG: That's not the point. You know perfectly well what I'm talking about.

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Shall I bring you the samovar?

ROSENBERG (*rising*): Yes, we'll come in a minute. (*Maria Nikolayevna goes out.*) (*To Werner:*) Do you think I can trust her after that? (*They go out to their room. Maria Nikolayevna, followed by Haritonov, enters. Shots are fired outside. Maria Nikolayevna crosses herself.*)

HARITONOV: Well, why are you crossing yourself?

MARIANIKOLAYEVNA: For them.

HARITONOV: What do you mean—for them?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: For our people.

HARITONOV: When will you learn to hold your tongue?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: I've been learning for thirty years.

HARITONOV: Again?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Yes.

HARITONOV (*softly*): Maria dear, come here. Did you go to Safonova's?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Yes.

HARITONOV: Did you tell her everything I told you to tell her?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Yes. (*A pause.*) It makes me sick!

HARITONOV: So you're sick, are you? And if I'm killed, won't you feel sick?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: What's it got to do with you?

HARITONOV: Just this: tomorrow you must go there again and tell her—just mention it casually—that I'm suffering. Suffering. Do you understand? Yes, suffering. . . Tell her I'm sick and tired of the Germans, I don't like them; tell her I'd rather get rid of them and that I wasn't glad when they made me mayor of the town. Do you understand?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Yes, but what do you want all that for?

HARITONOV: Because it's the truth. Because I would have preferred to stay all month in a cellar, rather than shiver with fear. Yes, I know it in my bones that that old woman puts up at her place those people—you know—partisans, I'm sure of it. She won't tell the Germans that I don't like them, but she's sure to tell the partisans. In Kherson the mayor was killed, and I don't want the mayor of this town to be killed.

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: My God, rather than have all this to put up with, how much better it would have been to drop everything and to get away,—hide in some village, just as I said before.

HARITONOV (*hissing angrily*): Where can we hide? And what about

our things? My things will always remain things even without me, but I without my things might just as well be a lump of dirt! Yes, yes, dirt,—nothing. Do you understand me, you fool? (*Somebody knocks in the vestibule.*) Go and open the door.

(*Maria Nikolayevna goes out and immediately returns followed by Martha Petrovna Safonova, beside herself, dishevelled, her scarf all on one side.*)

MARTHA PETROVNA: The swine!

HARITONOV: Sh-sh!

MARTHA PETROVNA: Killed her, killed her! Right in front of my eyes!

HARITONOV: Who was killed?

MARTHA PETROVNA: Tanya, Tanya, my next-door neighbour. I thought to myself: oh, to hell with him; but after all you're a doctor, and she was just going to have a baby. So I brought her here. A fine person to bring her to! She's lying there now under your windows.

HARITONOV: Sh-sh! What have I to do with this?

MARTHA PETROVNA: Everything! It was you who signed the order that after 5 p.m. no one was to be allowed in the streets; penalty: the person'll be shot.

HARITONOV: Not I—it was the commandant of the city.

MARTHA PETROVNA: It was you! you! God damn you! (*At her outcry Rosenberg appears from the next room and stands in the doorway.*)

ROSENBERG: Who's screaming here?

MARTHA PETROVNA: I'm screaming. Why was that woman killed in the street?

ROSENBERG: Who is this woman?

HARITONOV: She's. . . oh, just a woman. . . she came to see me. Her neighbour was giving birth. . . And, well, the sentry shot her.

ROSENBERG: And quite right, too. After 5 o'clock any appearance in the street is strictly forbidden. Isn't that so?

HARITONOV: Oh yes, of course, that's perfectly true.

ROSENBERG: If anyone is fired on after 5 o'clock—man or woman, it doesn't make any difference—it is right. As for you, you're going to be arrested and tried for being out after 5.

MARTHA PETROVNA: All right, put me on trial, kill me as you killed her. . . (*Advancing on him:*) Just to have my hands round your throat. . .

ROSENBERG (*turns to the door of the next room*): Werner! Call in the guard! (*Calmly:*) Looks as if we'll have to hang you.

MARTHA PETROVNA: All right, hang me and be damned.

ROSENBERG (*to Haritonov*): What is her name?

HARITONOV: Safonova.

ROSENBERG: She probably has someone in the army, hasn't she? A husband? Sons?

HARITONOV: Er. . . er. No, I don't think so. Or maybe there is. . . I dont' really know.

MARTHA PETROVNA: Yes, there is. My husband and my sons. All of them in the army.

ROSENBERG: We'll have to hang you, my good woman.

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA (*suddenly hurling herself on Martha Petrovna, embraces her and stands straight by her side*): And I also have a son in the army! So hang me too! I hate you! Hate you! Hate you!

HARITONOV: Maria dear, you. . .

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: And I hate you as well! Hate all of you, you swine! We are two friends. . . and the sons of both of us are in the army. . . yes. . . (*Sobbing.*)

ROSENBERG (*to the guard*): Take away. . . (*a moment of hesitation*) this one (*pointing to Martha Petrovna*). Leave the other one here.

HARITONOV: Oh, thank you, Herr Captain! She won't do it again. . .

MARTHA PETROVNA: Go on, thank him, thank him, you Judas! Why don't you go down on your knees to thank him? (*The soldiers seize her by the arms. To Haritonov:*) How I'd like to spit in this German's mug, but I'll spit in yours instead. (*Spits in his face.*)

(*The soldiers drag her away. Maria Nikolayevna breaks down and sobs.*)

HARITONOV: Herr Captain, please don't take any notice of her! She's, well. . . an excitable woman, you know. Of course, they were friends.

ROSENBERG: It's all right, doctor, quite all right. I forgive your wife, because I remember your services. (*Speaks distinctly, watching Maria Nikolayevna:*) In fact, I shall never forget your services. Why, it was you and no one else who made out that list for me with the names of seventeen Communists, and yesterday you added five more. You also pointed out where Gavrilov, the chief of the militia, was. And you also told me where the bank's safe was hidden. You also. . . however, that'll do; the list of your services seems to be upsetting your wife. She's crying instead of being glad that you are helping us so much. Well, it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. Try to calm her down. (*Goes into the next room.*)

(*Silence.*)

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA (*softly*) : Was all that true?

HARITONOV: True, yes, yes, yes, true! You'd better be thankful that you're alive after what you've done!

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: I don't want to be alive, it doesn't matter any longer. If it weren't for my son Nicholas I'd only want to lie down and die.

ROSENBERG (*enters with Werner*): Maria Nikolayevna, don't forget about the tea. (*Maria Nikolayevna goes out.*)

ROSENBERG (*softly to Werner*): Now we'll carry out an interesting psychological experiment. Just a little study in psychology, the sort of thing you dislike so much. . . Doctor!

HARITONOV: At your service.

ROSENBERG: I trust, doctor, that you are really sincerely loyal to us?

HARITONOV: Sincerely, Herr Captain.

ROSENBERG: All who fight against us are really your enemies, too, doctor? Is that so or not?

HARITONOV: It is so, Herr Captain.

ROSENBERG: What do you mean by "so?" Be more precise.

HARITONOV: They are enemies, Herr Captain.

ROSENBERG: And when they are killed you should be glad, doctor?

HARITONOV: Yes, I should be, Herr Captain.

ROSENBERG: No, more exact. Not "should be" but "am glad." Isn't that so?

HARITONOV: I am glad, Herr Captain.

ROSENBERG: I trust that your wife was not speaking the truth and that your son is, in fact, not fighting against us?

HARITONOV: Yes, Herr Captain, I'm sorry to say that it is true, he is in the army, I haven't been on speaking terms with him for a long time; but I know he is in the army.

ROSENBERG: Much to your regret?

HARITONOV: Yes, Herr Captain, much to my regret.

ROSENBERG: And if he were no longer in the army, you would no longer be sorry?

HARITONOV: Of course, Herr Captain.

ROSENBERG: Come a little nearer. (*Shows him the photograph on the identification card while keeping the rest of it hidden.*) Is this face familiar to you?

HARITONOV: Nicholas!

ROSENBERG: Ah, I see you know him. (*Uncovering the entire identification card:*) Now that you see the holes in this card, you must no longer be sorry. Cheer up! Your son is no longer in the army. True, I myself did not see it with my own eyes, but I'm sure it's correct. You have nothing to be sorry about now. (*Haritonov is silent.*) Well, doctor, are you glad?

WERNER: Rosenberg!

ROSENBERG (*turning to him, coldly*): Yes? Just one more minute. Are you glad, doctor? (*Sharply:*) Yes or no?

HARITONOV (*in a low voice*): Yes, I am glad.

ROSENBERG (*to Werner*): Well, now, you see, Werner, the doctor is glad. And here we were doubting, and all our doubts were unnecessary. You may go, doctor. Everything is clear now. Thank you for your frankness. You are indeed a loyal person; that is very rare in your country and therefore all the more welcome.

(*Haritonov goes out.*)

WERNER: Listen here, what's the point of all this nonsense? If you have to shoot a man, then shoot him; but if you are a neurotic and can't do it, just say so, and I'll do the job. But what you're doing now isn't a soldier's job.

ROSENBERG: Oh, you have an old-fashioned outlook, Werner. The study of psychology is included in your duties.

WERNER: Now, look here: I'm fed up with all your psychological studies. Tomorrow I think I'll ask to join the regiment so as not to see any more of your studies in psychology. I'll go on killing these bloody Russians, but I'm having no more of your idiotic preliminary talks. I'm sick and tired of the whole thing.

ROSENBERG: Won't you have some tea?

WERNER (*going*): No.

(*Haritonov enters and feebly leans against the jamb of the door. Maria Nikolayevna comes in, carrying the samovar.*)

HARITONOV (*softly*): Maria dear, listen, please!

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: What do you want?

HARITONOV: I want to tell you. . .

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: What more do you want to tell me?

HARITONOV: I want to tell you. . . No, I can't. (*Goes.*)

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: I'll make the tea right away.

ROSENBERG (*looking askance at her, holding the identification card in his hand*): You have a son who, it seems, was in the army?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Why "was?" He's there right now.

ROSENBERG: No, "was." Or, as your husband says, to his regret, "was." But now, to quote your husband again, he, fortunately, isn't there any longer. You know, your husband is glad that he isn't there anymore.

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: What are you saying? What are you saying?

ROSENBERG: No. . . Don't think that I was directly concerned in this. I wouldn't be so cruel to a mother. But this fell into my hands accidentaly,—that is why I say "was."

(*Maria Nikolayevna takes the identification card, looks at it dully and without relinquishing it sits down at the table. She sits there silently, stupefied.*)

ROSENBERG (*after a pause*): I would not have taken the risk of telling you this, were it not that I thought you shared the same viewpoint as your husband. And your husband told me that he was glad this had happened, despite his parental feelings. (*Maria Nikolayevna does not answer.*) Have you nothing to say? Yes, that's just what he said. Doctor! (*Haritonov enters.*) Doctor, you did say you were glad, didn't you, eh? (*Maria Nikolayevna raises her head and looks at Haritonov. Haritonov is silent.*) Or didn't you tell me the truth? Aren't you glad? (*Haritonov does not reply.*)

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA (*silently puts away the identification card and speaks mechanically*): I'll boil your tea now.

ROSENBERG: That's fine, thanks.

(*Behind Rosenberg and Haritonov, Maria Nikolayevna, holding the teapot, goes to one of the cupboards and then to the other one containing the medical supplies. She rummages about and then returns to the table.*)

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Here's the tea.

ROSENBERG: Please pour it out. A soldier is always happy to see a woman's hand pouring tea or coffee out for him. That's true, eh, doctor? (*Haritonov does not reply.*) Have you really nothing to say? What's happened to the old eloquence? (*Maria Nikolayevna pours out the tea for Rosenberg.*) Well, doctor, perhaps you'll have a cup of tea with me, eh? You all look upset. Well, never mind, never mind, have some tea. You are our loyal friend, and I am glad to sit at the same table with you.

HARITONOV: Thanks.

ROSENBERG: Maria Nikolayevna, pour out your husband a nice cup of tea.

(*A pause. Maria Nikolayevna looks at Haritonov, then with just the same mechanical movements silently pours out a cup of tea.*)

ROSENBERG: Well, doctor?

HARITONOV: You will excuse me, Herr Captain, I am not feeling very well. . . I can't. . .

ROSENBERG: Just as you like; just please yourself.

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA (*calmly*): Do you want anything else, Herr Captain?

ROSENBERG: No, thanks. Werner, I'm coming to your room!

(*Taking up his cup, he goes out. Haritonov sits on the divan, his head sunk in his arms. Maria Nikolayevna stands against the wall. Silence.*)

HARITONOV: Maria dear!

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: What do you want?

HARITONOV: Maria, I can't go on this way!

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Leave me alone, I don't want to talk to you.

HARITONOV: Let's drop everything and leave, run away. I'm afraid of all of them. I don't care about anything any more.

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: It's too late. I told you so before now. But now it's too late. You don't even know how late it is.

(*The thud of an overturned chair is heard from the next room. The door opens, and Rosenberg staggers in and stops.*)

ROSENBERG: What did you mix in there? What did you mix in there, you, you! (*Falls face forward on the floor, writhing in agony. Maria Nikolayevna stands motionless.*)

HARITONOV (*fussily*): What's the matter with you? What's wrong with you? (*Runs to Rosenberg, tries to raise him from the floor; turns around. Maria Nikolayevna, impassive, stands silently against the wall.*)

WERNER (*walking in sharply, goes up to Rosenberg, and bending over him, takes him by the arm and raises him up*): Who did this?

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: We. We poisoned him, I and my husband.

HARITONOV (*goes down on his knees*): No, Herr Captain, she's not telling the truth. It's nothing. . . It's not us.

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: Yes, we did it all right. Stand up, you! (*Goes up to Haritonov and lifts him by both arms.*) Stand up, Sasha, stand up! (*Quickly:*) He and I did it. We hate you! We did this, both of us—he and I.

HARITONOV: Herr Werner! Herr Werner!

WERNER: Do you think I'll put you on trial?

HARITONOV: Herr Werner, it isn't me, I assure you, she did it all herself. . .

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA: No, we both did it. You killed our son, and we have now poisoned this scoundrel of yours.

WERNER: I shall not have you put on trial, I shall simply have you both hanged. Yes—within two minutes! Just you wait! (*Opens the outside door.*) Hey, there! Come here!

MARIA NIKOLAYEVNA (*pressing panic-stricken Haritonov to herself and leaning against the wall, shouts*): All right, get on with it! Hang us and be damned!

(*Curtain*)

VERA KETLINSKAYA

A SIMPLE HEART

That spring brought Pania's twenty-third birthday. It seemed to her that she was growing quite old, for nearly all her girl friends were already married and those who were not had sweethearts either in the army or studying in Leningrad. And here she was quite alone, and the years were passing, and though life on the whole was very pleasant and joyous, yet nobody else can take the place reserved in a girl's heart for her beloved; and if there is no beloved, what is she to do? On her birthday, when he gave her a dress length of gold silk and some soft sky-blue flannel, her father said:

"Now you can dress up to your heart's content, and look about you and choose. You are in your twenty-fourth year. It's high time."

"All right," replied Pania with a wilful toss of the head. "I shall choose when I want to."

Yet she believed her father was right after all, for twenty-three was a great number of years and her twenty-fourth year had started. She began to ponder.

And yet at times she felt absurdly childish, and it seemed strange to her that other people did not notice it but conversed with her like with a grown-up person, and esteemed her and showed such confidence in her that even Ivan Korolkov said that she was "the most important person in the collective farm." Pania was keeper of the farm stores. For three years already she had been looking after its property with great care and attention. She loved her work. Better and far more precisely than anyone else she could observe the farm's economy grow and develop. The first year, when she just started her work, the barns were small and would not have been roomy enough had there been a really good harvest, but that year the crops were nothing much and were badly collected; people farmed clumsily and carelessly. Pania's father used to chuckle:

"Well, it's a fine commanding post you've been appointed to: fancy, counting cobwebs!"

But then Vania Korolkov, just back from the Red Army, became chairman.

He was an energetic fellow, and his eyes were keen and vigilant, very often stern, but at times so youthful and bright that one wanted to look into them as into a clear brook. Pania started talking to him about the necessity of new barns.

"Wait, comrade store-keeper, the time isn't ripe yet," he answered, "you just let us stand a little more firmly on our legs, and we'll have everything we need."

In winter large capacious barns were built; the collective farm was extending its domains and erecting new buildings, its brigades were working conscientiously, trying to outstrip one another; sowing and harvesting were done in a business-like way and in due course; in autumn the barns were full. Pania had much work to do. Her father laughed up his sleeve and used to call her a "minister without portfolio," but Pania greatly relished this checking in, totalling and sharing of the collective farm's crops, to the contentment of all who worked on it, to the welfare of the State and the renown of the collective farm itself and its chairman Vania Korolkov—Ivan Dmitrievich.

Pania worked from dawn till dusk, but her frocks were almost smart and crisply ironed, and she used to wear some bright-coloured broad ribbon braided in her hair, as if every day was a holiday for her.

"Remember, you're the most im-

portant person in all our collective farm," said Korolkov. "Hold your head up higher, store-keeper, we'll live to see the day when we'll be millionaires, both you and I."

At the end of autumn, weddings became quite frequent. And one day the whole community started preparing for the wedding of the chairman and the brigadier of the best field brigade, Katia Trofimova. Nobody was much surprised and curious about when and how all this affair had begun, you can see everything that happens out in the field; and Pania wept bitterly several nights running and wanted to plead illness on the wedding-day, but in this she did not succeed. Hearing about her sickness, Korolkov dropped in to see her at her home, and his eyes looked like a brook on a fine morning.

"What is this, Pania?" he said. "You don't want to celebrate the day of my happiness?"

Pania dropped her head very low not to have to look at Vania's jovial, freshly-shaved face and at his new blouse embroidered by the other woman's loving hands.

"I'm not feeling very well," she answered moving her shoulders as if she felt cold. "I got a chill when I was out in the field; but I'll be all right by the evening if I keep to my bed."

At the wedding-feast she joined in the songs of her friends, she celebrated the great day of the newly-married couple and just tasted a glass of brandy to their health and happiness. She stopped weeping. But now she no longer plaited a bright ribbon in her hair, wrapping up her head in a warm kerchief to show she felt the cold.

That winter she refused three suitors. All inducements were unavailing; her friends worried her with their inquiries and good advice, her father grumbled:

"Now the wench has become a she-minister, and her poor old dad will die without a grandchild."

"No, no, I won't," she answered them all. She gave no explanations: "No, and that's all."

Vania Korolkov himself came to plead for one of the would-be bridegrooms.

"You'll break the spirit of one of my best workers, you see! The fellow will pine away to death, and such a good chap too! You couldn't find anything wrong with him if you tried. Or is it you don't like him? Maybe you have got another sweetheart?"

Pania grew pale and bit her lip. She glanced up at Vania Korolkov with eyes full of shame and sadness. She did not answer. And suddenly words failed him, his face looked frightened and amazed, then a deep glow covered his cheeks and forehead. They glanced away from each other and were silent for a while.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Pania," he said softly. "I didn't mean to hurt you. I was asked to urge this fellow's suit; well, I went and did it. I'm sorry."

After that they avoided each other. During work-time they spoke if absolutely necessary, then they would quickly go away in different directions.

Katia, Korolkov's wife, was then expecting a child. She moved about heavily but looked handsome and dignified, and always had a specially affable, winning and bright face for everybody. Any ill-will Pania had felt towards her was quite gone now. She admired her without envy, and only occasionally she would heave a short little sigh as if to keep back the tears.

Spring came, the season of the most strenuous work, the sowing. And work on the collective farm that year went so smoothly that Pania grew quite merry and lively. She sighed less frequently and laughed more. One could not help rejoicing, it was all so exhilerating.

The gold-silk stuff, given her by her father on her birthday, was extracted from the chest of drawers, and throwing it loosely about her

shoulders Pania went to look at herself in the mirror. The silk seemed very becoming, and she was about to start cutting out a dress. Then she laid it aside again: the time would come for making a dress of it. For a long time she fingered the sky-blue piece of flannel with great indecision, then set to work on it, hiding it carefully from all curious eyes. Several evenings running she worried over those little bits of flannel, stitching away and embroidering them with coloured silks. When everything was ready, she brought Katia three tiny baby chemises with gay patterns round their collars. She had seen such chemises in a shop window in town.

"Oh, thank you so much, Pania," said Katia, flushing all over with pleasure. "Only why did you spend so much money? You should have made something for yourself. And such pretty flannel too!"

"Live happily, you two," replied Pania, "I don't need anything now. After harvest-time I'll go to Leningrad myself and buy everything I need."

In July the Germans came.

The collective farm was far from the railway station, the mail was brought only twice a week, but the wireless and telephone abolished the distance from town. News of the outbreak of the war was known immediately. Pania was called out from her storehouse. In the office of the management she listened to the voice of Molotov, calm and grave, and around the small radio-set all the people sat calm and grave and suddenly austere. Pania also kept herself in check. She did not show her anxiety, but there was a heavy load on her heart. The men would all go to the war; Vania Korolkov would be one of the first to go, for he was a reservist.

That very evening Vania left for the district centre, and Pania thought he would never return. She went round to Katia's place. Katia's child was to be born in the beginning of August. She was sitting in the middle of the room with a stern look on her face, her hands pressed lightly to her body.

"It's moving," she said, and threw a frightened glance at Pania. "What's going to happen now?"

"We'll help you," said Pania. "If you like, I'll come and pass the night with you. Maybe they won't let Ivan Dmitrievich go?"

"He will go all the same," answered Katia. "You don't know him."

For a whole week Korolkov stayed away. In the evenings Pania would creep out of the village furtively, sit on some tree stump and look at the road and listen, but she heard nothing: neither the beat of horses hoofs nor the rattling of wheels. The road was always empty. Once some foreign looking aeroplanes flew over the village high up in the sky. Pania followed their flight with her eyes, and then she realized for the first time that the war was not going on somewhere far off, that it was here, quite close to them, and that it would involve not only those who went out to fight in the army. Everybody's life would be different. This seemed strange and frightful to her, and it was hard to believe, as if all this misfortune was only part of a bad dream.

Korolkov came back in the daytime when everyone was out in the fields, but the news spread all over the place:

"They did not let Korolkov go, he is staying with us."

In the evening he called a meeting, he spoke briefly, sternly, and Pania had the feeling that she too, as well as everyone else, were like fighters at the front, and that from now on the war would come first in everybody's interest.

"We must work now five times as well as we used to work," said Korolkov. "Do you think victory will be presented to us on a dish ready cooked? Victory is in our hands, and it depends on us."

After Korolkov's return, life in the collective farm went on in quite a new manner, the same things were done but at quite a different rate.

Such was the general mood that none of the workers spared their strength and felt equal to the heaviest task.

At the end of July the foremost German units forced their way into the district and seized the railway line. Fierce battles were going on around the district centre. Military operations did not reach the collective farm. It remained some distance from the front-line, only of an evening sometimes Pania saw red flashes of light far away, and the wind would bring along with it the menacing rumble of the distant cannonade.

Korolkov became grave and silent. One by one he called out the youngest and the most intelligent of the men and had long talks with each one of them. When he let them go, he was especially kind and friendly to them, and those who left him in this friendly way seemed to grow different in a few hours. They too became graver and less talkative, and very kind when addressing other people.

Pania was washing the floor in the passage when Korolkov dropped in to talk to her. He had not been to see her since the day of his unsuccessful suit on his friend's behalf. Pania blushed, hurriedly wiped her hands, and screening with her back the unwashed part of the passage with its streams of sloppy water, she inquiringly looked at Ivan Dmitrievich, wondering if it would be the right thing to invite him or not. But looking at his face Pania understood she had better not do it.

"Tonight," said Korolkov taking hold of Pania's arm a little above her elbow, "different kinds of goods will be delivered to you at the barns. It's not to be spoken about, you see? You will keep them separate, and you won't make any entries in the books. You will give them out only when you get notes from me. If anything happens, keep mum; it's the property of the collective farm, and end of the matter. All right?"

"Shall I go now or later?" Pania asked.

"After dark. Don't go to bed, I'll call you."

When night came, her father noticed that she was expecting something. He looked at her now and again, and grunted, but never said a word. Pania thought he was asleep when a gentle rapping at the window made her jump up. But when she was tiptoeing to the door, an arch and not at all sleepy voice said:

"Where to? In the old days everyone knew where girls used to slip away to in the dark, but now, when a girl creeps away on the sly, who can say what she is up to?"

All night long Pania received and hid away in her barns sacks of flour, sugar and grain, meat, pieces of the best quality lard, tobacco and salt. She asked no questions, only guessing vaguely that again she was being shown the great confidence that they had in her. Carefully she locked up the barns, and having made sure that the bolts were quite reliable, said briefly:

"When needed you will get it."

Then she went home in the rose mist and chilling freshness of the coming dawn. Her father met her with a searching look and sighed:

"It's a dangerous sweetheart you've got, daughter!"—but afterwards he never spoke to Pania about her absence on that night. Pania was grateful to him for this, and it was then she felt an overflowing love for the old man. She pitied him and tried to pet him on every possible occasion.

Once at sunset a woman came running into the village. She was all covered with dust, her body was sorely bruised; the kerchief of her head had slipped away and her matted hair struck out from under it. Glistening with sweat, one could see that she had been running for a very long time, and at random. She was recognized as the wife of the chairman from a neighbouring collective farm, the one eleven kilometres away.

"The Germans!" she managed to gasp, collapsing on a bench. She was brought water in a ladle. She began

to gulp it down with avidity, but the news she had to tell was more important than quenching her thirst. "They are searching for the Communists and members of the local Soviet. Our people have all gone to the forest. They've harmed nobody, but one of the chaps had a Young Communist League badge. . . they locked him up in the cellar. . . and what they are going to do with him I don't know. . . My husband said: 'Go to the forest. . . they are coming to your place! . . '"

In the night Pania was called again. She gave out some of her secret store according to Korolkov's order, then she cautiously followed the men who carried away the sacks to the outskirts of the forest; and here she softly murmured: "God-speed!" after them.

In the morning there was a sudden irruption of loudly rumbling machines, which spread around them the acrid smell of some unfamiliar kind of fuel. The soldiers jumped down from their motor-cycles, scattered all over the village and began to drive everybody to the village square, and then it was that Pania saw that there was nobody left in it but women, old men and children. The German officer looked round at the crowd, and his glance lingered on the face of Pania's father, on the deep wrinkles on it and on his venerable beard. The officer pointed at him.

"Your name?"

"Yegorov, Andrei Maximovich," the old man answered in a slightly hoarse voice, but with dignity.

"Where are all the men?" asked the officer.

Pania shrunk back with apprehension, but with a shrug of his shoulders her father answered quite calmly:

"Where should they be? In the army, of course, mobilized."

The officer threw a contemptuous side glance at the old men and boys.

"Rather hard on you if everybody's taken except these here."

"Pretty hard. . . " Andrei Maximovich agreed.

The officer looked at the silent people very sternly.

"We will establish order," he said in broken Russian. "We will not touch any peaceful people. We order you to go to work and obey the German authorities." Then there was a pause. "And where's your chairman?"

Again Pania looked at her father anxiously, but suddenly an unperturbed woman's voice from the crowd said mockingly:

"He's made off, our chairman!"

Pania, shocked and indignant, turned round to see who dared to say this, but here her father began to speak, and she understood that it was better so:

"As soon as the rumour spread you were near, he went away. There's no one over us now."

"Some milk and something good to eat! Hurry up!"

When the officer was gone into the house, Yegorov winked at the people around and said:

"Now, citizens, bring along some milk and bread. Let them choke on our grub, the only thing we want is they should leave us and do no mischief. Let's hope they won't stay."

The Germans had their fill, drank milk to their heart's content and even promised to pay. Without any apparent purpose they rummaged about in all the papers and books in the office, but they hurt no one, and towards the evening they started up their machines and were off.

"They aren't so dreadful as people made out," chattered the idle-tongued, "they're just like any other folk."

In the dark Pania lay in bed and thought:

"Now, what will happen next? The Germans are not so very frightful, they dont' do any mischief, they don't plunder. They just ate, and drank some milk, and went away again. Father says that they did not even give the order to disband the

collective farm, they demanded only that everybody should work properly."

Pania recollected the terrible moment when the officer pointed at her father, and the fright she had when the officer asked where the chairman was, and she was afraid her father would lose his head and would not know what to answer. She thought of that strange meeting on the square, the faces of all her fellow-villagers, the face of the officer when he was delivering his laconic speech, and all of a sudden a sharp feeling of humiliation and loathing arose in her.

To live under them? To rejoice just because they did not rape and plunder? To work as they had worked before? But already now, after the Germans' brief stay, it became unbearable even to think of the lawlessness and oppression they had all felt preying heavily on them. There they had stood like a flock of sheep, and an impudent paltry officer had given them order in bad Russian and could have killed everyone of them as simply as he had today graciously deigned to go away without hurting them. . .

Never in her life had she felt so depressed and so degraded. How could she go on working? For whom to work, if at any moment those rattling machines with their strange sickening smell could rush into the village and the enemy soldiers could take all they had acquired by strenuous work, load it on carts and carry it away? Pania imagined how their work would go on now, without songs, without joy, without any feeling of security or willingness to toil. . . She imagined how they would bring the corn to the collective-farm barns, not knowing whether it would remain whole or whether they should have to deliver it up to the Germans. And how could she keep the ever-increasing collective-farm riches without taking pride in them, in constant terror, not as their mistress but as a slaving steward? . . And what would her father do? Why today had he not refused to answer the officer? Why was he the first to speak about bringing the Germans milk and bread? . . Would not this fact brand them with shame, both him and her, for all their lives? Maybe he is nothing but a coward? . .

Burying her head in her pillow, so as not to be heard by anyone, Pania wept bitterly. And suddenly she recollected that six months ago she had also wept at night. How shallow and absurd that other grief seemed to her now! An unrequited love! Well, what of that? How many other things were there to compensate her for it! Her work which she did with all her heart, both for herself and all the community, the happy harmony of their life on the collective farm, the esteem she enjoyed from the community for her good work, for the pains she took and the conscientiousness she always displayed, the opportunity to accomplish whatever she chose to undertake. . . and there had not existed then this sickening feeling of humiliation and stifling, as if she had been gas-poisoned, had nothing to breathe. . .

"Don't whimper, daughter," she suddenly heard her father's kind voice in the dark. "They won't hold out long, they'll go to hell! And as to myself, I've thought it all out, the matter is as clear as crystal. While it's only milk they ask for why should we kick against the pricks and refuse? Well, had I refused, had I spat in his face, would there have been any sense in it? It wouldn't have done any good either to me or to anyone else, would it? They would have spiked us or laid us out with their tommy-guns, and there would have been an end of us. Then they can always burn the village and outrage the people. . . This is what I've decided upon. As long as possible I'll pretend to be a quiet old chap. Let them think I'm a dolt, it's not for me to live under them. But as soon as something wrong, something against my conscience happens, well then, haven't we got thick forests around us? And

isn't there space enough in them? It's our people who are there, to them I'll go: 'Then, good people, will you take me on as a forest-dweller?' Isn't it right what I say?"

For a very long time they went on talking that night, and Pania went to sleep feeling reassured and comforted. All her life she had lived beside her father. She had heard his jokes and good-natured grumbling, but she had never asked herself what kind of man he was, and whether he was indispensable to her, and now, at this dreadful moment, he proved to be a friend and comrade, and they understood each other and shared their every thought, and each decision was mutually agreed upon. That was fine. . .

Next day the men returned from the forest. They placed patrols on the roads and did not go home for the night, but slept all together in Korolkov's house and next door at widow Matveyevna's place, all this in order to gather the quicker and act jointly in case of alarm. They were not separate individuals any longer. They were fighters in a partisan detachment, all armed with rifles or fowling-pieces, some of them even having grenades, and as commander of the detachment they had Ivan Dmitrievich Korolkov who was now called by his partisan nickname and whose partisan detachment was known as "Comrade Dmitrich's Detachment."

The very first evening Korolkov came to Pania's house, but this time it was her father he wanted to see.

"Well, how're things now?" he asked peering into Yegorov's face with his keen, observant eyes. Oh, those eyes of his were no longer like a clear brook in the morning, they had darkened from mistrust and watchfulness.

Pania flushed and covered her eyes with her hand to hide her shame. All she and her father had agreed upon in the night now seemed to her to be quite wrong and inadequate. Again she keenly felt how degrading her father's docility was.

"You just wait a bit before you start cracking your jokes," said Andrei Maximovich benignly, "first listen, and then you can judge for yourself. Perhaps my old brains are not so weak as you think them to be, and my beard may serve as something better than a bait for the Germans. What if it can do the Soviet power a good turn?"

"Go ahead," said Korolkov, "that's why I've come, to hear what you've got to say."

Then they began to talk, and Pania leaned against the wall and listened and looked at them, and the more understanding there was between the two men, the lighter and merrier her heart grew. Finally Korolkov rose, and coming up to say good-bye to her, said: "It's a good head-piece your father got, he seems to take after his daughter." She saw his eyes looking warmer again and brighter, and a hot wave of pure happiness which she had never experienced before welled up in her heart, and life no longer felt stifling; it was by no means empty, it was brimful as never before, dangerous, it is true, complex, but so very interesting.

"Your hand, comrade partisan storekeeper!" said Vania Korolkov in that friendly free manner which had existed between them till last autumn, till the day of the unlucky pressing of that other man's suit. "Don't hang your head, victory will be ours!"

From that day the life on the collective farm went on in a somewhat strange way. The Germans did not turn up again either in this village or in the neighbouring one. The line of the front was moving away further to the east, the whole district was turned into the German rear, but the Germans themselves were not to be seen. The partisan scouts imparted that there were German patrols all along the railway line, and German garrisons in the district centre and at the railway stations. They said also that in two of the villages several

people had been shot by the Germans, why nobody knew, and in other villages nearer the front all the inhabitants had been driven away to do some construction work. But all this was happening in some place that, though not very far away, was yet not under their very eyes; and as there were no Germans here, their irruption was soon forgotten.

As before Ivan Dmitrievich managed the collective farm, people prepared for the housing of the crops, reckoning them up and estimating how much would be given out for each working day. Everything seemed to be going on as usual, but the feeling of confidence was lacking, there was nothing certain, anxiety lurked in every heart, depriving people of joy and quiet sleep. The partisans laboured out in the fields, gradually moving back to their own houses to pass the night with their wives, and only the young unmarried chaps kept together. Sometimes Korolkov would go out into the forest with them, and there they would stay for some days and always return in high spirits, very tired and very dirty, so that the first thing they did on coming home was to heat the bath-house. One day not all of them returned. Korolkov told them that eighteen-year-old Kolia, the son of widow Matveyevna, had perished during an operation. Matveyevna grieved till she grew quite listless, she would not see anybody, refused to eat and turned against the partisans, forbidding them to enter her hut. The old woman's lamentations were heard allover the village, she screamed that the partisans had destroyed her son's young life for nothing, that the Germans had not touched anyone, so that you only had to keep quiet and mind your own business. Korolkov did not take these words to heart, there was nothing to be done about it, the old woman had lost her only son and her grief had made her so wretched. . . But Matveyevna soon found an unexpected support:

"That's quite right," said old man Budakov, "they'll only bring trouble on us. When the Germans find out that we keep partisans, they'll have us all hanged and they'll destroy our farm. The detachment should be disbanded, let those who are Communists leave our place in peace, it's their own concern. As to the non-party men, what will the Germans do to them? And then, where are they, those Germans?"

Time out of mind the whole village had never called Budakov by his first name and his father's name as is used. He was known by the nickname of "Your Excellency." He had been a soldier during the whole of the last war against the Germans. While half of the men who had gone out to fight never returned at all, and many others returned crippled, Budakov lived peacefully in the character of a staff-general's orderly and came home quite fat, with a good little hoard of money, and he immediately became one of the most substantial farmers. He was disliked by everybody, and his nickname had been given him not good-naturedly but in scorn.

"Your Excellency" entered the collective farm only when it had quite taken root and stood firm on its legs, and many had been the contentions at the time whether to accept him as a member or not; but there was nothing to say against him, he was no "kulak," and as to the man's having a shallow and greedy soul, well, you could not take his soul out of him and lay it down on the table for people to see.

Hearing bits of Budakov's conversations, Korolkov called a meeting. When he came out to speak to the people, his eyes seemed to Pania to be quite dark with wrath.

"There are some individuals among us," he said, "who never liked the Soviet power. It always stuck in their throats, and they preferred licking officer's boots to serving their country honestly. Those men only upset people, they poison the minds of women, mothers and wives: they say it's no use fighting, let 'somebody else' fight and drive the German vermin away from our land, and we meanwhile, we may

sit in a snug corner and wait to see which way the cat jumps."

"Well, and you? Are you a whole army to grapple with such forces?" shouted Matveyevna, running forward and lifting up her thin, labour-roughened hands. "The Red Army is retreating, and you, just a score of men, what can you do? In all my life I've never licked officer's boots, and now I'd better hang myself than go and sneak before the Germans! But why did you waste my son's life? Against whom did you lift your hand, you with your poor forces? And you, Vania, my neighbour, our chairman, when you were still a kid I loved you as one of our own, you hot-head! You don't think of anything, you don't seem to understand that your wife is near her time, you should pity her, you should pity the child!"

Ivan Dmitrievich's expression changed. His face became distorted as with physical pain. With compassion and anguish he looked towards the place where Katia was sitting, and all the people's heads around him also turned in that direction. But here growing suddenly pale Katia rose from her bench, stood straight up with her large protruding shape and said, softly, yet very distinctly:

"I'm not a weight that dangles around my husband's feet. What is best to do he knows all right, and I'll never be in his way. You spoke about the child, Matveyevna: now tell me, will any mother consent to have her child born in German captivity, without a Motherland? Your grief is a very great grief, but why now, when people want to avenge it, are you there sowing discord and trying to make everyone soft-hearted? You did not stop to think properly why people are giving up their lives, you've just upset us for nothing. . . It's a shame!"

Katia turned her head away, pressed it against the wall and began to weep.

Pania never spoke at meetings, she could not speak coherently; and at the present meeting too she had no intention of speaking, though her mind seemed to be full of fine, convincing words which were all crowding there in confusion. She was looking at Vania Korolkov, she suffered for him because his authority seemed to be wavering, his cause was threatened and he was probably feeling painfully wronged. She would have liked to help him, but she was not confident of her ability to do so. And she knew that if she began to speak she would never be able to express what she so clearly felt,—the absolute impossibility of life without rights, without joy, without stability. She looked at Katia and pitied her, and suffered for her because they both loved the same man and were both anxious about him when he went out with the partisans to fight. But Katia's lot was harder, and now her very soul was being turned inside out before everybody, and somehow she had to answer both for herself and for her loved one. . .

When Katia began to speak, Pania's heart missed a beat, she was so frightened, but the words Katia said and her voice that was so sure and sincere, was just as it should be. "I'd never have been able to speak as she did," thought Pania. "Katia is cleverer than I am and pluckier too, and better educated, it's quite fair that Vania took to her!" She came up to the weeping girl, and putting her hands on her shoulders she repeated her thought out loud:

"I'd never have been able to speak out as you did. Don't cry, it's bad for you. . . You are the right sort!"

"My wife," said Vania Korolkov, "my wife gave you an answer; she gave an answer to all those who want to stay at home, who are chicken-hearted and don't dare to look ahead of them. And now I tell you, citizens and comrades, I tell you that tomorrow our detachment is again marching out to effect some very important military operations, and the Germans will feel what our partisan wrath means! Let those who want to stick to their mothers' skirts, those who want to lie snug under their wives' blankets, let

them remain at home; we don't need such men; but let them also remember that people who make others pull their chestnuts out of the fire for them will always be the losers themselves and will do an ill turn to their neighbours as well, for people will neither esteem nor trust them."

In the morning the village grew empty again. Only old men and youngsters remained in it and grave-faced women who were trying to hide their torturing anxiety from one another.

Autumn had come, the time of the white nights was over, every evening darkness crept on earlier and grew denser. And one night all of a sudden a steady, bright column of fire shot up into the thickening murk beyond the forest. Pania was already on her way to bed when she saw the rosy reflexions on the window-panes and hurriedly ran out onto the porch. The fire was far away, beyond the forest, yet Pania saw the tongues of flame and the dark curling clouds of smoke slightly tinged with crimson from below. Some building well dried out by time was blazing like a skilfully piled bonfire. It was evident that the people there were helpless in their struggle with the fire. The flames were leaping up and triumphantly throwing up swarms of sparks. Then suddenly a second pillar of fire sprang up, and somewhat farther away a third one.

"They've come!" Pania heard a muffled voice saying, and tearing her eyes from the terrible yet fascinating sight she saw the strangely stooping figure of her father beside her.

"Who's come?" she asked.

"Who's come?" repeated the old man. "Those who can set fire to our houses, that's who's come."

The fire was kindling up afresh, now and again hurling up new columns of fire and smoke.

"The whole village is ablaze," said Pania's father. "The scoundrels!"

By midnight the flames began to subside, then only a pale fluctuating glow lingered above the forest, outlining the pointed pine-tops.

Pania returned home, lay down and tried to go to sleep, but sleep was impossible.

A cautious, scarcely audible rap on the window disturbed her troubled dozing just before day-break. Hastily Pania threw on her shawl and went out noiselessly. She was not astonished to see in the dim haze of the dawn Vania Korolkov's tall, erect figure. She had been expecting him, she had known he would come either this day or the next.

"Come along," whispered Vania. "Have you got the keys?"

Silently they walked through the sleeping village on their way to the barns. There several dark figures rose to meet them. Pania started, but Vania Korolkov touched her shoulder reassuringly:

"Our people."

In the barn Pania lighted her lantern, recognized the familiar faces around and smiled to them hurriedly without stopping to speak. Taking their loads one by one, each of them went out and was immediately engulfed by the darkness of the wood. The last man to go was Ivan Dmitrievich. He went with Pania some of the way and then, saying good-bye to her, he took both her hands in his and said:

"Dear friend of ours, are you aware or not of the danger you are exposing yourself to?"

Pania shrugged her shoulders, then growing bolder she asked:

"The fire. . . it's they? . ."

"The villains demanded the whole crop, the collective farmers would not give it up. Well, then the ball started rolling. They put a gibbet in front of the machine and tractor station there. Four persons are hanged. Who they are, we don't know yet. . . Tell everybody that the Germans may arrive at any moment."

"What should be done then?"

"Tell your father he must act as agreed. And you, take care of yourself, and if anything is amiss come straight to the forest."

"Well, and if they force the barns open when I'm not there?"

"Can you keep them back?"

"I don't know," said Pania moving her shoulders as if she felt cold, "only how can I run away from the post I'm responsible for?"

"You just take care of yourself. . . you hear me?"

"I hear you," she said stubbornly. "And you? Do you take care of yourself?"

He pressed her hands together, then sighed, let them drop and with a determined air strode away vigorously. Gloriously happy, though she did not know whence that happiness came and what was its cause, Pania did not move from the spot till the forest had hidden Vania Korolkov from her sight and the sound of his steps had died away in the distance. Then she returned to the barns and tested the locks with her usual thoroughness, just as she always did, when there was nothing to turn away her attention as there was today.

She sat down close by on a mound of earth. She did not feel sleepy. It was in fact too late to go to bed, for it was already dawn and so many thoughts and memories and dim pictures of terrible ordeals were crowding in her head. The German officer's face loomed up before her, scornfully evil and overbearing, then suddenly her memory showed her a wonderfully fair vision of last year's hay-making with its joyous animation, its songs ringing in the air above the fields, the black shadow of the dancers flickering against the background of the bonfire. . . And again, driving back the radiant visions of the past, she saw the pitiful arms of fire raised to the sky by the burning village, she heard the crying of children and the wailing of the women who were throwing out of the windows their hastily collected household goods.

A muffled drone cut short her musing. Was it aeroplanes? She threw back her head and examined the sky which was already quite light and sparkled in the beams of the rising sun. No planes were to be seen. But scarcely had she had time to think that those unseen planes had a peculiar unfamiliar drone, when four motor-cars rushed into the village at full speed. "Those were not planes droning, but the motors of cars," Pania just realized, and started up to run away. But it was too late, and there was nowhere to run anyway: German soldiers were already jumping out of the cars, and three of them strode towards her.

"Who are you?" asked one of them, barring Pania's way.

"Yegorova," Pania answered, at the same time weighing in her mind how best to answer the questions. Should she own up to being the collective-farm store-keeper? But then they could order her to open the barns? And then what was she to do? Was she to obey or not?

"What are you doing here?"

Pania was too frightened to know what to answer; then suddenly she seemed to see her own self as she was standing there frightened, confused, depending on the tender mercies of this gruff soldier who was questioning her in his broken Russian and wanting to lord it over her here, in her own village, on her own land, in her own country! . . Pania felt how humiliating her position was, she grew angry, and this helped her out of her trouble. Feeling angry, she found the proper answer:

"I'm keeping watch," she said. "I was ordered to do so, and you see I'm doing it."

"Oh, you were ordered to," repeated the soldier, turned round and walked towards the houses.

The Germans were already prowling all over the village, breaking into the houses, peering into the cellars and sheds. First one, then another with a sack on his shoulder would come up to a car and store away his sack in the body of the machine. Pania saw one of the soldiers come out of Matveyevna's house, with her clock carelessly wrapped up in a woman's chemise. Pania was not so

much taken aback by the plundering itself as by the calm, unhurried business-like way in which it was being done. The soldiers sorted, examined and loaded their booty into the cars as if they were owners picking out the things to be taken from those to be left behind before moving to a new place. And the two German officers who had come in the cars did not stop this barefaced plundering, for evidently it was planned out beforehand. Passing by, the officers would address the soldiers with encouraging words and would chuckle good-naturedly at such things as a clock or some woman's slippers.

Pania saw how "Your Excellency" was conducted by a soldier to the office of the management, and that later some officers also went there, followed by the Russian-speaking soldier, the one who had questioned her. Then her father and several other old men were also led there. For a long while she waited, expecting her father to come out, but he did not. All of a sudden she heard a stifled old man's wail. Forgetting everything, she rushed to the office building, ran up the steps and opened the doors wide. The officers were sitting at Vania Korolkov's table. The soldiers were standing a little distance away, and in one of the corners her father stood spitting and wiping with his sleeve the blood trickling down his chin.

"Ah!" the officer drawled with satisfaction, "she has come of her own will!"

"You are the store-keeper, bring along the keys," said the soldier-interpreter.

Pania clung to her father and said without looking at the Germans:

"I've got no keys."

"Open the barns," said the interpreter. "If you don't open them, it'll be the worse for you."

Stubbornly Pania repeated:

"I've got no keys."

"Partisan!" the officer yelled out suddenly, starting up. "You are a partisan? I'll shoot you!"

Pania pressed closer to her father and said softly:

"Shoot, but I won't give you the keys."

The officer seized his pistol and aimed it at Pania. The second officer smiled, shifting his wicked eyes from father to daughter.

"Where are the partisans?" asked the soldier who spoke Russian.

"I don't know," said Pania shrugging her shoulders. "We have no partisans."

"And who's that Dmitrich?" the soldier asked again, and drew nearer to her.

Pania grew pale and her heart beat anxiously. So they knew about Dmitrich's detachment, they were looking for him. She suddenly thought of Katia, of her being alone at home. What if somebody showed the Germans Korolkov's house?

"Who's Dmitrich?" she asked with astonishment. "I've never heard such a surname in all the district around."

"Where is your chairman Dmitrich?"

Here Pania recollected her first contact with the Germans and the words shouted by the woman, which had made her so indignant; these now were quite different Germans, yet she said:

"You know perfectly well yourselves that on the very first days of the war he joined the army. I don't know where he is. You seem to know more than we do. You know that there are partisans, but we don't."

In her inner self she was quite pleased with the shrewd answer she had found, and throwing a furtive glance at her father she saw that he was pleased too. But the officers started up and yelled out something in an irritated voice, and the soldier also yelled evidently translating the officer's shout.

"You don't know? Don't you know that your chairman Dmitrich came to your house and sat the whole evening talking to you? That you gave out corn to the partisans from the collective-farm store-house? That the

partisans lived here a whole month and held a meeting?"

So somebody had given the Germans information about everything that took place in the village? A traitor lived among them. And now everybody would perish, they would all be tortured. . . may be killed. . . Four gibbets. . . The village blazing in the night. . .

"I don't know who may have told you this. . . we have been slandered. . ." muttered Pania; and she herself understood that her voice sounded uncertain.

The soldier said something to the officers, and one of those, who evidently was the senior commander, nodded. The old man "Your Excellency" was brought out from behind the partition. He shrank into himself and looked askance at Andrei Maximovich and Pania. Pania averted her face with loathing; she understood that now was the moment when he would denounce them all, if he had not yet done it.

"Who's Dmitrich?" asked the Russian-speaking soldier.

"Your Excellency" blinked his eyes and was silent. Pania was already beginning to hope that he would not speak, but here the officers shrieked at him and covered "Your Excellency" with their pistols, and the soldier also shouted out:

"Speak, we won't harm you!"

And then "Your Excellency," urged on when he hesitated by shouts from officers, began to relate everything he knew about the partisan detachment, about Vania Korolkov himself and about the meeting. He did not forget to stress that he had proposed they should disband the detachment and that Matveyevna had demanded the partisans should quit the village, and accused them of her son's death. The officers grew interested. They ordered Matveyevna to be brought before them and asked:

"You say she had a son in the detachment; why, she probably went over to the forest to see him, she must know where they are hiding?"

Matveyevna was brought in. The old woman seemed to be crazy, so brightly and at the same time so sullenly her eyes shone in her emaciated, wrinkled, wrathful face.

The officer offered her a seat and smiled to her as affably as he could; the soldier began to translate the officer's words saying he knew and lamented the needless death of her son, that young, inexperienced lad. The old woman stood, hopelessly shaking her head, with the tears running down her withered cheeks.

"We know," the soldier went on translating, "that you were sensible and tried to make your co-villagers stop this useless struggle." The old woman began to listen more attentively, and her tears ceased flowing down her cheeks. "We know that you addressed the meeting and gave sensible advice." Here Matveyevna quite unexpectedly ran up to the table and started speaking very hurriedly, as if afraid of being interrupted and not having time to speak out everything she had to say:

"You plunderers you! Plunderers and incendiaries, you murderers of our people! What I said to my own folks in a bitter moment of grief, these words of mine are none of your business. People listened to them and people answered me back; amongst us we can say everything we like, but you, are you human beings?" she screeched out suddenly in a high pitched voice. "What right have you to meddle with our affairs and to poke your bloody hands into our very souls? Who is it who called you here to our land? Who invited you into our houses? You think I've become blind with grief and don't see your wolfish fangs? You think that the pain of a mother's heart in me has made me so crazed I'll play my own Russian folk foul and go and denounce my people to you? Yes, it's true: we had partisans, and my son was a partisan, and till now they are hiding somewhere in the forests and marshes; and glory to them, glory and esteem from every-

body! We bow down to the ground before them for the blood they shed for us and for all they suffer; and to you, fascist murderers, you foul hitlerite vermin. . ."

The soldier had stopped translating the old woman's words, but probably their tone was enough to convey their meaning, because the officer with the pistol fired. Matveyevna fell backwards.

All this happened so quickly that Pania had not even the time to close her eyes when the officer shot at the old woman in such a cold-blooded way. And now he was already shoving the pistol into its case, while the other officer looked askance at the body lying on the floor with the bubbling blood oozing out of it. This other officer turned away making a wry face, and said something to the soldier who screeched to Pania in a histerically squeaky voice:

"Take it away! Quick! Take it away, and then come back and bring the keys along; if you don't, your father will follow the old woman!"

Matveyevna moved and groaned. She vomited blood.

"Well?!" shrieked the soldier to Pania who stood stiff with terror.

Pania was suddenly seized with a dull kind of stupor. She bent down over Matveyevna, lifted her up by the shoulders and asked:

"Where shall I take her?"

"Take her wherever you like, only be quick about it," said the soldier, and his face twitched as if he was going to have a fit. "Take her away. Do you hear? Go and come back again. Understand?"

The old woman was tall, taller than Pania, but when Pania took her up in her arms, Matveyevna's withered body seemed light to her. Pania carried out the dying woman into the street. During the last hour the sun had risen high in the sky, the bright August morning flooded the village with streams of sparkling light, the merry sparrows hopped about in the dust, a grasshopper was chirping away in the garden, and under the eaves of the houses some pigeons were cooing. And everything around her seemed so habitual and so pleasant to Pania. Quite usual and at the same time so wonderful. The horror that she had just experienced was so monstrously impossible that her head grew giddy and she nearly fell down together with her burden. But making an effort she pulled herself together, and weeping carried old Matveyevna to her plundered, empty house. When she laid the old woman on her bed, Matveyevna had ceased breathing. Pania folded her hands upon her breast as is the custom, wiped away the blood from her face and then, hesitating a little, she made the sign of the cross over her. She made the sign of the cross just because she knew no other way of honouring the unfortunate dead.

Now she had to go back. She had to go either to death or to dishonour. Pania passed by the German cars into which the soldiers were still stowing away their booty. There was nobody in the street, not a single face could be seen through the windows; the soldiers walked from house to house, backwards and forwards, as if there was nobody except them in the village. Perhaps indeed everyone had had time to run away to the forest?

Suddenly Pania stopped, hearing the desperate shriek of a woman's voice, loud though muffled by distance and the walls of houses. Terror and a call for help sounded in this voice, and despair because there was no one to help her. Pania started running in the direction whence the shriek had sounded, but it had ceased before she was well aware from where it came. . . And then, how would she help? How could she help?

She suddenly thought of Katia. There stood the Korolkov's house. The door wide open, a stocking lying on one of the steps, and something else too, something small and blue. Why, the baby's chemise that Pania had embroidered and given Katia!

Pania ran into the house. The house

was empty and silent. The door of the wardrobe was hanging, torn off its hinges; in the wardrobe there was a litter of what had remained of the linen, Vania Korolkov's holiday necktie, so well known to Pania. On the floor, all trampled by booths, lay a child's bonnet trimmed with lace and a pair of knitted child's slippers.

"Katia, Katiusha!" Pania called softly, stifling her wrath and desperation.

Stillness, no Katia.

"Katiusha!" Pania repeated without hoping to get an answer, but not daring to leave the house and go out into the street where degradation and death awaited her.

"I'm here," suddenly sounded a muffled voice.

"Where?"

From beneath Katia lifted one of the boards of the floor. With tears of joy Pania helped her to get out of the secret cellar.

"You can't stay here, Katiusha, they may come again, they may find out that you are Ivan Dmitrievich's wife, they know all about him. That scoundrel, 'Your Excellency,' told them everything that happened here." A new idea flashed through Pania's mind. "You must go to the forest, Katiusha, and find the partisans, you'll tell them that 'Your Excellency' is a traitor, a venal coward, and things are very hard with us. . . Father is being kept at the management office, and I am to go there or they'll kill him, and Matveyevna has been shot. . . And let them help us, tell them that there are fifty of them and they're so busy looting they could be shot from behind a bush, everyone of them. If only you could find them, Katia!"

"I know where they are," Katia replied softly. "If I could get there... I'm afraid there's something wrong with. . . But all the same I'll go. . ."

It was dangerous to go out through the porch. Pania opened a window, sprang out lightly into the kitchen-garden and stretched out her arms. With the special caution natural to all pregnant women, Katia with her heavy burden crawled over the window-sill. Pania caught her in her arms and helped her to stand on her feet. The quiet, fragrant forest, shimmering with sunbeams, ringing with the glad voices of birds, began right there, just beyond the kitchen-garden.

"Go," whispered Pania, looking around her, "go quickly. . . Is it very bad with you?"

"It's nothing," said Katia, "I'll reach them. . . And you. . . where are you going?"

"To father," Pania answered calmly. "Good-bye, Katiusha. . ."

Impetuously she clasped Katia in her arms, and it seemed to her she pressed against her heart for the last time everything she loved, life itself and all her past which now looked so wonderful.

In the street the soldiers were still making free with other people's property. Pania walked past them with utter indifference. All the strength of her soul was concentrated on the one desire: to be worthy of the great ordéal which was awaiting her.

Coming up to the office building, she threw one last glance at her dear village, and then suddenly, forgetting everything, she tore along to that end of it where her barns were. Close to the largest barn she had noticed a group of soldiers fumbling with the lock. Pania rushed right into the middle of the group, even pushing aside one of the men, and seized the hand of the soldier who was trying to knock off the heavy lock with an axe.

"Don't you dare!" she screamed, barring the way to the door with her body. "Who gave you the right to break the lock? I'm the store-keeper! Don't you dare!"

Seeing around her about half a score of wicked faces excited with the hunt for booty, she faltered for a moment, but yield she would not. To give up to these savages the collective farm's property entrusted to her care, that was too much for her. And she shouted out with a tone of

authority which has never before sounded in her voice:

"You shan't break in! I'll not allow it!"

The soldiers stepped aside holding counsel. They did not understand what Pania was saying, but her determined authoritative tone was so unexpected that it had a sobering effect on them. One of the soldiers ran to the office. As before Pania stood alone before the crowd of soldiers, barring the way to the barn. All of a sudden the man who had tried to break the lock yelled out something to the others and brandishing his axe he struck Pania on the shoulder with the butt end. With a cry Pania fell. Spurning her aside with his foot, the soldier, with a frenzied blow of his axe, broke the lock. The door flew open. The soldiers rushed in. Pania staggered to her feet and reeling with pain followed them. They were feeling at the sacks, cutting them open and carrying them out.

"What are you doing?" she said in a faint voice, heedless of the tears that were running down her cheeks. "What are you doing?"

Hearing voices behind her, she turned round. In the bright quadrangle of the door she saw one of the officers, the one who had shot Matveyevna; her father, and the Russian-speaking soldier. The soldier who had forced the lock began to explain something. The officer fixed a scrutinizing stare on Pania, leered and asked something of the interpreter.

"Well, have you brought the keys?" asked the interpreter.

"What do you want the keys for?" Pania said, her voice low with pent-up fury. "You are burglars, and I have no keys." The interpreter was not even angry, he laughed insolently and turned to Andrei Maximovich:

"That is your daughter? That's the girl that feeds the partisans out of her storehouse?"

Pania saw that her father was spent, his face was grey; with fear and pity she waited for him to speak. Her father said:

"We have no partisans, I've told you so, I was slandered out of spite."

In a reluctant kind of way, lazily, the officer lifted his hand and gave Andrei Maximovich a box on the ear. He ordered:

"Search everything!"

With wild enthusiasm the soldiers started to ransack the barn. Clouds of flour-dust rose from the ripped and trampled sacks. The spilt grain crunched under the tramping boots. Clinging to her father, faint from the pain in her shoulder, Pania saw with dismay that the soldiers were coming nearer and nearer to the corner of the barn where she kept the partisans' sacks of tobacco and salt. There! A soldier had already got his hands on one of the sacks. He ripped it open with his knife, grabbed some tobacco greedily and gleefully called to his comrades. One after the other all the sacks were opened. The soldiers bustled round them, filling their pockets. . . All this Pania seemed to see through a haze.

"Where are the partisans?" asked the officer, and gave her arm such a wrench that she fell on the sacks. "You'd better let on where the partisans are."

"Don't know," said Pania. "You plunderers. . ."

"If you don't say where the partisans are and how many men strong they are, it will be the death of you," said the interpreter, trying to insert one more packet of tobacco into his bulging pocket. The packet wouldn't go in, and the soldier grew angry. "Say, you fool, do you want your death?"

"I shall tell you nothing," said Pania bending her head with a stubborn air, "you may kill me, all the same I shan't speak!"

His fist hit her temple, the next blow bruised her lips. Then the soldier kicked her in the side with his boot. As she lost consciousness, she felt the blows come one after the other, but the pain she did not feel any more. All her body seemed numb. The sounds of the loothing reached her

from afar as in a dream. . . then came the desperate cry of her father's, and quite near and very distinctly she heard the interpreter's voice:

"Don't fear, old man, we won't hurt you. . . You'll see your daughter die. That is enough for you. Look, there's your daughter."

Pania expected more blows, but nobody touched her. She opened her eyes. It was nearly dark and very still around. She tried to raise herself but could not. Her body would not obey her. Then straining all her strength she cautiously turned her head, trying to overcome the acute pain in her shoulder and in the nape of her neck. There was no one in the barn, and the door was tightly closed. Only the bright strip of light under it reminded her that somewhere outside the sun shone and birds sang in the green branches. What would they do to her? Why was she locked up here alone? Did not the soldier say they would kill her? Or perhaps they only wanted to terrify her father?

It was nearly still outside the barn walls. Only the faint sound of some strange crackling noise was heard.

Suddenly she detected a faint smell of smoke. Smoke was penetrating through the chinks in the walls. Against the strip of light under the door she could see grey shadows moving. Then a merry crackling was heard on the other side of the wall. Just so the dry twigs had crackled in the bonfire during hay-making. . . And Pania realized that indeed it was the crackling of dry twigs burning. She raised herself on her elbows and crawled towards the door, not heeding the pain she felt, with but one longing—to escape from the burning trap and afterwards let them beat her, let them shoot her. She heard the indistinct shoutings of her father's voice:

"Let go! let go! She'll burn there alive!"

Then laughter and voices, and the sounds of burning wood growing louder and louder. The smoke got denser, it was hard to breathe. Pania was still crawling, sometimes pressing against the hard earthen floor just to try and ease her pain. The door was already near at hand. Pania did not know how she would be able to open it, still she kept crawling doggedly towards it. The smoke suffocated her, and she probably lost consciousness for a few minutes, because when she opened her eyes again she saw neither the bright strip of light nor the door itself: flames and smoke screened everything around, a skipping jet of fire stole up to her very feet and licked at her skirt. Pania stretched out her hand to withdraw her skirt, but at that moment a whiff of flame blew on the nape of her neck. . . her hair kindled and cracked. . . the stinging pain of the burn electrified her. She staggered to her feet and blindly rushed to the spot where the door should be, but a blaze of fire breathed in her face and scorched her eyelashes and eyebrows. . . She drew back, she saw a dark corner in the barn which had not yet been enveloped by the flames. She tried to run there, stumbled against a sack and fell. . . Loud detonations, the near-by rattling of a machine-gun, cries and moans reached her dying senses. She could yet hear how they forced open the door, how the burning boards crashed in. With her last flash of consciousness she took in, like returning life, the sounds of Vania Korolkov's voice: "Take care! She may be near the door," but this joy was the last and the silence of complete quiet engulfed her.

The charred corpse folded in a piece of gold-silk stuff was solemnly carried in a red coffin along the village. The coffin was followed by the partisans bearing the tommy-guns seized that day from the Germans. Their faces were stern and dark after the recent battle. Then came the women and children throwing gloomy side-glances at the yet unremoved German corpses. The women's and children's faces had also lost their usual

look. It was as though the gunpowder smoke had laid an ominous darkness on their skin, as if the frenzy of the fight had passed through their souls, too, laying its terrible impress on those tender cheeks and trustful eyes. And, indeed, was it not so? At the first sounds of shooting hadn't they crept out of their corners, these women and youngsters? Hadn't they rushed to help the partisans even at the risk of being hit by a bullet? Hadn't they thrown at the Germans everything they could lay hands on: logs, ovenforks, anything? . . Hadn't they picked up their wounded and carried them into the houses with such care?

The partisans were in a great haste to go. They could not linger even to pay the last honours to their dear friends. They laid down the coffin on the ground on the outskirts of the forest, and then, while some of the men were digging the grave, in the same austere silence as before, they carried another coffin through all the village and laid down Matveyevna in the same grave as Pania. And when the mellow, fragrant natal earth began to fall on the lids of the coffins, Vania Korolkov bowed down very low and said softly: "Forgive me if ever I've wronged you." Then he turned to all the people around and spoke out loudly, and his eyes were darker than a river in foul autumn weather:

"When we come back for good, we shall place a big memorial here, and we shall teach our children and grandchildren to take off their caps and bow down to the ground when they go by here stepping on our own happy soil. . . And now, good-bye, dear friends! We shall keep in our memory your glorious death! We shall remember those who tortured you, and not one of the guilty ones will evade our judgement. We'll avenge you, comrades!" Then he stepped aside from the grave and commanded in a sonorous voice: "Attention!"

And the partisans in close order marched off to the forest, gradually falling into single file when the forest thickened.

Katia remained by the grave. Her birth-pangs began, and some women gently and slowly led her home. Andrei Maximovich too stayed on longer than the others. He knelt beside the grave and pressed his wrinkled forehead against the cool earth which had forever hidden his daughter from his sight. Then he shouldered his new German tommy-gun and hastened after the partisans.

BORIS LAVRENEV

A STOUT WILL

He stood before the captain: snub-nosed, with high-cheek bones, in a short coat with a reddish artificial beaver-collar. His snub nose was purple with the cold of the dry steppe wind; the chapped blue lips were quivering, but his dark eyes gazed unflinchingly and almost sternly at the captain.

With utter disregard for the weather, his feet were shod in grey canvas shoes worn down at the toes.

The captain glanced at the accompanying note from the liaison private of the defence staff of the sector: ". . . picked up this morning near the front-line. . . testifies that for two weeks has been reconnoitering amongst the German forces in the district of the State farm. . .. sent because he may be of service to the battery. . ."

He folded the note and thrust it into his sheep-skin coat.

"What's your name?"

The boy squared his shoulders, lifted his head and attempted to click his heels together in answer; but his lips contracted with pain and he replied hurriedly:

"Nicholas Vikhrov, Comrade Captain."

Shaking his head, the captain looked at the boy's shoes:

"Your footwear is not in keeping with the time of the year, Comrade Vikhrov. Your feet are probably quite frozen, aren't they?"

The boy cast his eyes down and manfully tried to keep back the tears. The captain, wondering how he had managed to make his way at night over the icy steppe in those canvas shoes, felt a chill run down his spine. He patted the boy's shoulder.

"Come along to my place, we'll get warmed up and have a chat."

In the commander's casemate the fire in the stove crackled and hummed. The boy stood on the threshold and looked around.

"Take your things off," invited the captain. "You'll be as hot here as if you were on the beach at your summer camp!"

Nicholas took off his coat, carefully folded it with the lining outside and, standing on tiptoe, hung it over the captain's sheep-skin coat. Shorn of his coat, he appeared woefully thin. The captain reflected that he had probably known acute hunger

"Take a seat. We'll have a bite first and then get down to business. Do you like your tea strong?" He poured the tea into a large porcelain mug. "Have some sugar." He drew a battered six-inch cartridge case towards him, packed to the top with snowy bluish sparkling lump sugar.

From under his eyebrows the boy looked at him strangely. His thin face wrinkled up, and the large uncontrollable tears of a child fell upon the table. The captain sighed, went up to the boy and put his arm around his bony shoulders.

"Come, drop that," he said persuasively. "Stop it. What's happened is past. No one will harm you here."

Swiftly and shyly the boy wiped his tears away.

"I. . . I. . . . am not. . . Comrade Captain," he said ashamedly.

Zhenya Slavin, fifteen-year-old Byelorussian partisan, is an excellent scout

"I'm not crying about myself. It's just that I remembered my mother."

"So that's it!" said the captain. "Your mother? Well, have patience, and we'll rescue your mother. Is she alive?"

"Yes." The boy's eyes lit up with tender affection. "Only, you know, we're starving. Mother used to collect the potato peelings from the German kitchen so that we'd have something to eat, but the sentry once caught her at it and hit her. Her arm doesn't bend ever since that blow."

He pressed his lips together. The glow of tenderness in his eyes was replaced by a hard glitter. The captain patted his head.

"Well, lie down now and take a rest."

The boy looked up at him pleadingly:

"Later on. . . I don't feel like sleeping now. First I'd like to tell

you everything." His voice held such urgency that the captain did not insist further.

"All right! Let's begin right away. How many Germans do you think are in the State farm?"

He moved to the other end of the table and took out his notebook. The boy answered quickly without hesitating:

"An infantry battalion, the 175th Regiment. They're Bavarians."

Such an exact reply was a surprise to the captain, and he stared at his guest fixedly.

"But how do you know?"

"The figures are marked on their shoulder straps, and I memorized them. Then there is a motor-cycle company and a platoon of medium tanks. There are field and anti-tank guns in the strongholds. They have entrenched themselves very firmly, Comrade Captain, and the lorries are continually delivering cement. I could see this when I peeped through my window."

"Can you tell us where those strongholds are?" said the captain moving forward. He suddenly realized that he was dealing not with an ordinary naive child but with an extremely observant, intelligent and efficient scout.

"Their largest stronghold is in the melon-patch, behind the old threshing space, and the other is. . ."

"Just a moment," interrupted the captain. "Really, your finding all this out is simply splendid; but you know, we've never been in your State farm and we haven't the slightest idea where the melon-patch or the threshing space is. And, you know, my boy, a ten-inch naval cannon is no joke. Suppose we begin by firing at random, we can destroy a great deal before we hit our target. And you must remember that our own people are there as well, including your mother."

Glancing at the captain, the boy asked perplexedly:

"But you've a map here, Comrade Captain, haven't you?"

"Yes, of course. But will you be able to make it out?"

The boy smiled with indulgent superiority.

"I should say so. My father is a land-surveyor, and I can draw maps myself. My father is also a commander now," he added proudly as an afterthought.

"It seems then that you're not a boy but a real treasure," joked the captain, unfolding the staff map on the table.

The boy kneeled on the chair and bent over the map; his face animated, his finger fixed on the spot marked "The 'New Way' State farm."

"Here it is," he said, smiling happily, "as clear as two pins. What a fine map you have: as detailed as a plan! Well, here from the east is the old threshing place. . ."

Like an experienced topographer he correctly pointed out various places on the map. Soon the captain's pencil had marked around with red crosses all the targets. The captain was highly pleased.

"That's fine, Nicholas!" he said, patting the slender shoulders approvingly. For an instant the boy forgot that he was a reconnoitre scout and childishly placed the man's palm against his cheek. The captain's caress made him a child again. The captain folded up the map.

"Now, Comrade Vikhrov, obey orders! Off to bed with you!"

The boy made no objection; his eyelids were heavy with sleep, he yawned blissfully from satiation and warmth. The captain put him in the cot, covered him up, and returned to the table. There he busied himself with various calculations. So engrossed was he in the work that he did not notice the flight of time until a soft call aroused him from his labours.

"Comrade Captain, what time is it?"

The boy sat up in the cot, anxiety possessing him. The captain said jokingly:

"What are you worried about?

Go to sleep! We'll wake you as soon the scrimmage begins."

Nicholas' face darkened, and he said insistently:

"No, no, I must go back now. I promised my mother. She'll be worried and think that I've been killed. I'll go just as soon as it gets dark."

The captain was dumbfounded, he could not imagine that the boy was seriously contemplating to traverse again that fearful road through the midnight steppe, a feat which he had accidentally managed to accomplish.

"Nonsense!" he said angrily. "I won't let you go! Even if you give the Germans the slip, you'll probably get caught by one of our shells in the State farm."

The boy knit his brows and reddened.

"The Germans won't catch me, they stay indoors all night because of the cold. I know all the paths by heart. Please let me go. Please!"

His pleading was so persistent and importunate that for a moment the captain thought that perhaps the boy's entire story was a well-planned comedy. But glancing at the childish eyes he rejected the supposition.

"You know, Comrade Captain, that the Germans don't allow anyone to leave the State farm. It'll be all the worse for mother if they find I'm missing."

"Yes, everything's clear." The captain drew out his watch. "It's half past four now. Let's go to the observation point and see how things are there. As soon as it gets dark we'll see that you'll get home. Be careful, keep a sharp look out!"

At the observation point far in front of the battery the captain sat down at the range-finder. In the evening dusk of the snow-covered steppe the State farm buildings could be seen faintly, dark against the horizon. Turning, the captain called the boy:

"Here, take a look, perhaps you might even see your mother!"

Comprehending the joke, Nicholas looked through the field-glasses. The captain slowly rotated the wheel to a horizontal position, displaying to the boy the panorama of his native place. Suddenly Nicholas pushed away the glasses, and, boyishly roguish, began to tug at the captain's sleeve.

"Why, there's my starling's house![1] My own bird, Comrade Captain! Honestly!"

The captain looked through the range-finder. In his field of vision he could see, high above the network made by the bare maple branches over the grey roof, against a background of rust, a tiny dark spot on a pole. The captain saw this quite distinctly, and it suggested a new line of thought to him. He took Nicholas by the hand, drew him aside, and quietly spoke to him, while the puzzled range-finder operators looked on.

"Do you see now?" he asked. And Nicholas, his eyes shining mischievously, nodded speechlessly.

Darkness was falling. The captain accompanied the boy to the boundary line. When Nicholas and the two Red Navy men were swallowed up in the gloom, for a long time the captain stood anxiously listening for any sound of firing.

Dawn found him already at his observation point, and as soon as he was able to distinguish the dark bird's house in the greying sky, he gave the order to fire. The first volley of shots shattered the morning stillness. Slowly the rumble rolled over the fields. The captain saw the pole sway twice and, after a while, once again.

"Too far to the right," he thought and ordered another volley. This time the bird's house was not hit and the captain shot three volleys from both towers. With the excitement of an artilleryman he saw through the smoke logs and chunks of concrete shooting up in the air. The captain smiled and took new aim. Again the bird's house seemed to

[1] Russian boys are fond of putting closed boxes with a little hole for entry and exit, on high poles or high up in the forked branches of trees, for starlings to nest in,

bob in a friendly manner. The shells fell upon the spot where the map had indicated ammunition stores and oil dumps. Now the captain succeeded at the first volley. A wide strip of pale fire blazed across the horizon. Everything disappeared in clouds of smoke: trees, roofs, and the pole with the bird's house. The explosion was a heavy one, and the captain thought anxiously of the boy.

The telephone shrilled with orders to cease firing. Launching an attack, the infantry went into action. Then the captain leaped on a motor-cycle and openly flew across the field to the boundary line. From the State farm came the rattle of machine-guns and the bursting of grenades. Taken by surprise, the Germans put up only a weak resistance. Now flags flashed from the village edge, signalling that the enemy was retreating. The captain shot straight across the steppe. Over the State farm gardens hung greyish-white smoke from the blazing benzine and the muffled crash of bursting shells. The captain hurried to a house with a green roof standing between the half-shattered maple trees. Even from the distance he could see a woman, with a shawl wrapped around her, standing at the gate. A small figure held her by the hand. The latter rushed forward to greet the captain, and he lifted Nicholas high up in the air, then pressed him to his breast. But just at that moment the boy evidently did not feel like being a child and tried to struggle free from the captain's embrace. He let him go, and Nicholas brought his hand up smartly in a salute and reported:

"Comrade Captain, scout Vikhrov has carried out his assignment."

An approaching woman with weary eyes and a tired smile stretched out her hand to the captain:

"How he waited for you! We all waited! Thank you, oh, thank you, dear ones!"

And she made the captain an old-time deep Russian bow. Nicholas stood beside the captain.

"Well, that's fine! Splendidly done!" said the captain. "Were you scared in the attic when the firing started?"

Nicholas gazed at him confidently and unassumingly.

"It was awful, simply awful, Comrade Captain! As soon as the first shells landed, the whole place shook as if it were about to fall to pieces. I almost beat it from the attic, but then I felt ashamed. I said to myself: 'You just stay where you are.' And so I remained until the explosion. Then after that I don't remember how I found myself on the ground."

He shamefacedly hid his face in the captain's sheepskin coat: a thirteen-year-old hero, a small Russian person with a stout heart, the heart of his own people.

A Russian Schoolboy from the Village of Komarovo

The boy was called Kolia, and he lived in the village of Komarovo, in the district of Liady, Leningrad region. The Germans put him to death one serene evening in June. Two soldiers led the thin fairheaded boy through the village. Kolia walked ahead of them, his tanned, bare feet stepping lightly through the warm dust of the road. His face was badly bashed, and one eye was nearly closed by a swelling. A thin stream of blood trickled from the corner of his mouth.

The soldiers took Kolia to a large open space behind the village administration building. There, from the green grass, amidst daisies and bluebells, rose the stout legs of the gallows. Many men and women, honest Russian people, breathed their last on this spot.

Reaching the gallows the executioners stopped, for the noose was occupied. One of the Germans brought a stool and started loosening the rope from the neck of a girl who had been hanged two days before. Then he flung aside the lifeless body and shouted something to the second soldier. The latter gave Kolia a shove with the butt of his rifle and pointed to the stool. Kolia raised his head and looked around. He could see the women of Komarovo hiding behind the corners of some outlying houses and watching him with fear and compassion.

Kolia made to say something, but the blood gushed from his mangled mouth. The boy straightened up, leaned back as if about to throw a stone and struck the German a mighty blow over the mouth. The other German jumped off the stool and swearing viciously ran over to Kolia. The boy struck out at him too. He was not trying to run away, he was not afraid of his executioners.

In their fury the Germans twisted the thin lad's arms; they hauled him up by the hair into the noose, and before knocking the stool from under his feet, welted him mercilessly over the head and legs.

Then, when Kolia's thin body was dangling in the air, looking thinner then ever, the Germans attached to it a piece of cardboard which they had removed from the girl's body. A single word "partisan" was written across it.

Kolia never was a partisan. When our troops retreated, Kolia stayed behind in the village with his aunt. At first he looked at the Germans with a mixed feeling of fear and boyish curiosity. For days he roamed about the streets, watching these strange soldiers, who could not speak Russian, grabbing all the hens, driving away the cows and beating up helpless, old women. Everything was turned inside out. In broad daylight the Germans were robbing and stealing, and there was no one to complain to, while the women collective farmers, who usually stood for no nonsense, now could do nothing but hide away and cry. The girls were afraid to sing and the boys did not feel like playing. Life was all wrong.

In April, on Hitler's birthday, the Germans removed every Russian sign and street name. This lent a still sadder and gloomier air to the village. The people spoke in whispers and often sighed as if gasping for air.

There was hardly anything to eat, for the Germans had taken away all the grain and potatoes. The silence of a cemetery weighed over the village.

Once the aunt was summoned to be questioned and was made to sign a promise to send her nephew to a school which the Germans were going to open. Kolia listened to his aunt's frightened muttering and said in order to calm her:

"All right, auntie, don't cry, I'll go."

Like everything else in the village, the school too was all wrong: no maps, portraits and slogans, as in the old days. And soon a comical creature, bald, filthy and despicable, presented himself. When he introduced himself as the teacher, the boys sniffed. There was too much of a difference between the former teacher, the young jolly Anna Ivanovna, and this bald-headed fright.

Kolia did not even smile, as if he had known beforehand that in this school the teacher too would be all wrong, and the mean words that he spoke just what were to be expected. The teacher handed the boys some stout books with pictures. The books were printed on clean paper and bore the title of *The Calendar of New Europe*. Turning over the title page, Kolia beheld the foolish, stupid and cruel mug which he used to recognize from caricatures.

In that book everything was a caricature which looked as if made in earnest, and the inscriptions under the portraits of Hitler, Göring and Goebbels were printed in Russian characters, but their meaning remained an ugly caricature. During the lesson the boys repeated after their teacher ridiculous lies extolling the Germans.

Before the lesson was over, a soldier with a rifle entered the classroom. The teacher jumped up in a fright and shouted to the boys:

"Stand up!"

The soldier said something in German, and the teacher, closing the book with a bang, addressed the class:

"You will now go to work. You know that all the horses are at the front, and therefore you must help our nice soldiers to build good roads; you must work well, otherwise you will be punished severely."

The soldier took the boys to a place some six kilometres from the village, where a new road was being built across the marsh. The boys were harnessed in like horses, four to a cart. Down the road, at a distant quarry, these carts were loaded with rock and through the deep mud, over which clouds of mosquitoes hovered, under the burning sun, the children dragged the carts to the road building site. When a thin little girl fell in the harness, unable to rise, a soldier ran over to her and prodded her with his boot. The girl lifted her head and sank back. The German swore and threw her aside into the ditch. Soon two more fell down.

Kolia came home late. His aunt was asleep, and on the table Kolia found an onion and some salt, wrapped in a rag. Then he rummaged under the chest of drawers and produced some books. These were his old school-books with worn bindings and torn edges. Kolia had never liked them and had always tried to throw them away as far as possible, but now he tenderly smoothed the crumpled corners of the pages and turned them as if for the first time. Greedily he looked at the pictures of Moscow and Leningrad in his geography book. In his reader he could not take his eyes off Chapayev's portrait, and then he saw a picture of a pioneers' detachment with a banner and a drum. Here Kolia recalled how a soldier had struck him over the back with a stick at work today. A feeling of impotent anger and of self-pity choked him, and bending his head over the books, he cried bitterly.

In the morning Kolia resolved not to return to school anymore and to leave the village altogether.

He recalled that the Germans had ordered a fair to be organized at Liady, and he decided to go there. His best friend, Seryozha, went with him.

The fair also looked all wrong: none of the usual noise of a fair, no gay laughter, none of the glitter and colour which lend life to a fair. A few women stood on the market square, their faces equally scared. They had been driven here from different villages, to lend the "fair" a semblance of life.

Pushing their way through the people, some soldiers and policemen were walking up and down the place. They looked into the people's bags and swore in disgust: nobody had anything to sell, only two old women displayed a heap of woven baskets; a legless cripple timidly held out a box of matches and to the question of "How much?" he would answer in a whisper: "Sixty." The people paused in front of the box of matches, staring at it with fascinated intensity. Kolia's head emerged from behind somebody's back. When he saw the outlines of the Kremlin on the box, he felt sorry that he had no sixty roubles.

For a long time the two boys meandered about idly; suddenly a heart-rending cry of a woman was heard from somewhere on the far side of the square, and the people came running from there in every direction. The boys saw several soldiers dragging a woman along by the arms; she kept on falling and flopping limply on the ground like a large fish. Seryozha persuaded Kolia to return home right there.

In the evening the aunt got down on her knees and begged Kolia to go to school the next morning if he didn't want to be the ruination of her. Kolia promised to go, but it took him long to fall asleep, for he was thinking hard how to escape from this life of lies.

Before daybreak Kolia went into the hall with its walls pasted with old newspapers yellowed with age; from one of these he cut out a large caricature of Hitler and hid it in his pocket. On his way to school he procured some cart-grease. It was early when he reached the class-room, and there was nobody there. The chest in which *The Calendar of New Europe* lay was unlocked. Kolia took out the upper book, the one the teacher kept on his desk, turned to the title page, smeared some grease on the reverse side of the caricature and pasted it over Hitler's portrait in the book. Underneath he wrote in pencil: "Death to Hitler!"

Similar inscriptions Kolia made under the portraits in the rest of the books.

There was pandemonium in the class-room when the boys opened up their books and found this inscription under Hitler's picture; for the first time in many weeks there was laughter and shouting, as they showed the inscriptions to each other and added their own biting epithets to Göring and Goebbels for good measure.

First came the teacher and the village elder, both pale, their hands trembling. They yelled and threatened and finally they piteously begged the children to tell who the culprit was, but the boys kept silent. Then the village elder brought along a German, the assistant to the commandant, a tall red-haired brute, with the lifeless eyes of a dead fish. The teacher and the village elder looked at him as though ready to lick his boots. The German glanced at the caricature and said something to the teacher, who translated the following:

"The assistant to the commandant says that unless you tell immediately who has done it, all of you and your parents will be hanged."

Nobody spoke. Suddenly Kolia, who had been observing the scared boys from a corner of his eye, lowered his head and declared in a loud voice:

"I did it!"

Before taking him to the gallows,

the Germans beat him mercilessly, trying to make him confess who told him to do it and whom of the partisans he knew. The boy stubbornly refused to answer. He did not care to tell his torturers that he was connected with no one and that he did not know any partisans. Anyway, these beasts would be unable to understand that no Soviet man could live under their yoke, read their books and breathe the same air with them.

M. LANSKOI

Ludmila Pavlichenko

It was in the Ukraine that Ludmila Pavlichenko's childhood was spent. Nothing seemed fixed and settled to her then. They were always on the move. Her father, a district official, had to go from place to place wherever his learning and experience were wanted. Mother taught in schools. When father migrated, the whole family followed in his wake.

At Byelaya Tserkov they stayed on rather longer than elsewhere. The sweet fragrance of poplar leaves and romantic memory of the tempestuous past of the Ukraine pervaded the drowsy-looking little town. Here, in bygone days, the very air resounded with the glory of the Cossacks' valourous deeds. They galloped by, with swords a-flashing, and, on a furious Argamak steed, the undauntable hetman of All Ukraine, Bogdan Khmelnitsky, would ride out before his warriors.

That glory had died away. But it lived again in the whisperings of trees, when the nights shimmered blue with moonlight.

. . . The tiny white houses smothered in the wild richness of verdure. . . Golden-faced sunflowers peeping curiously over the tall wattle-fences. . . A garden all suffused with sunlight. . . On the wattle-fences, boisterous sparrows with their most devil-may-care looks clamour in away for all they're worth. . .

In the thick grass, a dark skinny girl, a mere mite, would prowl stealthily, clasping a sling-shot in her brown little hands. Now, a sling is assuredly a boy's plaything and weapon; but the little girl preferred it to dolls. She would take her aim at a sparrow and let fly. Occasionally, her missile would bring down some grey-feathered wool-gatherer, and a true hunter's joy would make the kid's eyes flash brighter. Hers was the eye of a good marksman.

It was a fight with boys that this slip of a girl loved dearly. She couldn't and wouldn't stand their chaff, their contempt for "only a girl." The urchins licked her to their hearts' content, pulled her by her hair, so she had to retreat; yet even when withdrawing her forces she remained undefeated. Prompted by her experience of many a battle, she would watch for an opportunity to waylay her foes one at a time. Like a whirlwind, she pounced from an ambush, hammered the flabbergasted adversary with her weeny brown fists and on winning the field escaped from pursuit, burrowing in the dense growth of the garden.

She was growing up, and went to school. While there, she remained her own wilful and untamed little self, and bossed her school-fellows like a veritable chieftain.

Learning came easy to Ludmila. Diligence and assiduity were Greek to her. From the teachers' viewpoint, the girl's conduct was intolerable.

More than once her exploits were the subject of debate at the School Council, and the question was raised:

what was to be done with Pavlichenko? It was not Ludmila alone who was to blame, but also, as a matter of fact, the teachers themselves. They failed in trying to find a key to that unruly, bright individuality that could not be made to run in standard grooves.

When graduated, she was confronted with the necessity of choosing her road in life. She became a worker at a factory.

When still a little school-girl, Ludmila took to reading like a duck to water. She read indiscriminately whatever she could lay her hands on, read till she all but dropped with sheer fatigue. Books of travel and adventure were her favourites; books about big-hearted and fervent-spirited men, everyone with a will like flint, whose business in life it was to break new ways for others to follow.

Sport was another passion with Ludmila. Target shooting thrilled her as did everything she really liked. Her very first attempts at the shooting-range showed her efficiency. The girl's eye was as sure as when she was a child. Maybe, it was all coming back to her: the garden, the sling, those sparrows. And then, she was always spurred by that unquenchable ambition of hers. Whatever it was she happened to put her hand to, she just had to do it better than anyone else.

She left the factory shop for the historical faculty. And there the truth forced itself on her that at the university one had to go about one's studies in quite a different way. System and perseverance in work became indispensable. The time had come for her to fight her very disposition and all her habits. No interference from without could break them, she herself remoulded them decisively. History became a more and more absorbing subject, particularly the history of the Ukraine. So when, before being graduated, she was to write the diploma paper with a view to getting a fellowship, it was the life of hetman Bogdan Khmelnitsky that she chose for its subject. How to account for her choice? Probably, her fiery imagination, yearning for romance, was swept away by that brilliant personality: a diplomat, politician and warrior, a man of indomitable temper and matchless bravery. She plunged into work with abandon, and avidly devoured books and manuscripts.

But she was prevented from accomplishing her work. One night, when tired with reading she stood by the open window, gazing at the fluffy-looking Ukrainian stars, Hitler's evil ravens had already spread their metal wings. Out of the star-studded dome, thunder and flames came down on her beloved Kiev.

When the day broke, she saw houses riven open by bombs, like filberts after passing through nut-crackers; she saw blood on the pavement and on the walls of houses; she saw children's bodies already stiffening. Red Army men marched through the streets, bound westward. Their helmets cast iron shadows onto their stern, dust covered faces. In the familiar aspect of the city she seemed to discern something like a new expression, that of wrath and sorrow. And she realized that the city and the whole country rising in arms behind it were more precious to her than anything could ever be, that without them life itself would have no meaning, no justification. She had come to a decision.

Next day she applied for the permit to enlist. This was not easy to obtain, but she stood her ground. In a week's time in the 25th Chapayev Division near Odessa there appeared a new fighter, Red Army man Ludmila Pavlichenko.

That day she entered her new life of military achievement. It was not long before she opened an account of the enemies killed, to which a figure was added every time she fired her rifle.

She loathed those aliens that had invaded her beloved ancient land, trampled it down under their hobnailed boots, maimed and violated

it. She killed them, fully conscious that killing them was necessary for the sake of Motherland.

In her letter to her mother she wrote:

"Now I have seen a thing or two. Their atrocities make me simmer with wrath, and wrath is a good thing to feel during a war,—it is next of kin to hate and sacred vengeance. . ."

After the fight the girl became inured to sleeping on the bare ground making shift with her greycoat for bedding.

She never left the combat zone; as a matter of fact, she was even a little more to the fore, in one of those snipers' "nests" dug out in the unyielding rocky soil. No matter how inclement the weather, she lay there on the watch for the enemy. She struck down Hitler's hyenas with perfect coolness and without undue haste.

On the approaches to Sevastopol scores of the enemy's observers, officers and scouts who bit the dust had each her bullet in his eye or between his eyes. She felt no compunction in quenching for good and all the rapacious wolfish light in the robbers' peepers.

Now there came the time when sniper Pavlichenko's name was in everybody's mouth in Sevastopol: there were many who just could not believe it was only a girl whose work was becoming the burden of legends. One day a petty officer from a torpedo-cutter's brigade came to the outposts, a square-shouldered cloud-kisser of a man; his request was that Ludmila should be shown to him. For quite a while he watched her, keeping his distance, for his shyness kept him from approaching her, and at last, with a decisive wag of his forelock, he gave vent to his admiration:

"Good Lord, isn't she a marvel? Just a dragon-fly by the looks of her, but an out and out dragon by her deeds!"

A glittering medal adorned Ludmila's tunic. She was promoted to the rank of sergeant, then of senior sergeant; finally she was made instructor of a snipers' squad.

She herself picked men for the squad, taking their full measure, appraising all their qualities. She, who in her early years had defied all tutorial influence, became now a patient and expert tutor. Sometimes men were sent to the squad without her bidding, men obstinate and undisciplined, whom, on the face of it, she would not have selected for the job.

One fine day, there came two marines, two saucy bucks—Kisselyov and Mikhailov. They were cronies. Drawing their own conclusions from the appearance of the senior sergeant, they were apt to get cheeky, putting on airs meant to convey that they were not inclined to obey "a skirt," not by a long way. After several unsuccessful attempts at hitting it off with them in a kindly spirit, Ludmila, like a true commander she was, gave it them so hot that the two pals sang small and understood in a twinkling that it was not going to be all jam. Before ten days were out they became Ludmila's devoted friends and companions-at-arms, ready to give their lives for their sergeant. Once they saved their senior from a desperate predicament actually at the risk of their own necks.

Not only our soldiers came to know Ludmila: the Germans became aware of what a formidable sniper she was. With that typical German stolidity they first tried to ensnare Ludmila with all kinds of absurd promises, but when it dawned upon them that their idiotic allurements were not going to take them anywhere, they broke into a frenzy and started bawling obscene vituperations, threatening in what they presumed to be the Russian language "to hang the 'knafe' by her heels." Ludmila merely smiled a mischievous one-sided smile that promised no good, and went on perforating those hard skulls with her bullets.

She had become an experienced

fighter. No dodge of the Germans could take her in. She patiently awaited for some live German to pop his head from under cover; and then he immediately became a dead German. And she kept on counting:

"Two hundred and seventy-three! There is going to be more of them!"

The personal account accumulated. And once more Ludmila was writing to her mother: "I exchange 'compliments' with the Fritzes by means of a dioptric sight and individual shooting. I can tell you this is the right and the soundest way of dealing with the Germans, for if you don't kill them on the spot they are sure to give no end of trouble afterwards."

She followed this rule of hers without fail. She laid them out at the first go, straight away, like mad dogs. She was at it day and night, allowing herself no respite.

Her last affair in Sevastopol she carried out together with her well-tried friend, sniper Leonid Kitsenko. In less than an hour's time, as unruffled and methodical as usual, they dispatched between them a dozen or more officers and soldiers at the German commanding station. Not one of their bullets was wasted.

Senior sergeant Pavlichenko's current account reached the figure 309.

As ill-luck would have it, it was not for her to round it off by adding one more German to it: a mine splinter hit her and disabled her for the fourth time; so she was ordered to be evacuated.

The Order of Lenin joined the military medal above the breast-pocket of her jacket. On the tabs a little square replaced the three triangles.

"I owe everything to my Motherland. He who threatens my Motherland is threatening me, and for whoever threatens me I've got a bullet ready."

And her bright young eyes seem to go deeper under her eyebrows, and a flash of dark fire comes into them. It is her heart that is flaming up in her, the heart of the indomitable fighter fostered by her country, by her own Soviet Power, the heart full of energy and passion, willing to shed its blood to the very last drop for the honour and liberty of the Soviet land.

Ludmila Pavlichenko attended the Washington Students' International Congress as representative of the Soviet students. She will come home, and is sure to enter the fight again. Her account is not closed yet: there are still many Germans on Russian soil. There must be none of them left, not a single one.

BORIS LAVRENEV

From the Depths of the Sea

When the vessel put in at the Kupechesky Harbour of the Kronstadt and moored at the piers, young Nikishin, with a leave-of-absence in his pocket, hurried off to the beach for a swim. Here it was that he spent all his brief spells of leisure. As a boy he had learnt the crawl-stroke, and now he practised it as he raced through the turgid waters of the Gulf of Finland.

The flash of a snow-white seagull caught his eye as it swooped and plunged into the wave. Admiring it, he changed from the crawl to the breast-stroke and swam under water for twenty yards or so.

He had kept in training, and become an excellent swimmer and diver. He was already dreaming of winning the race from Oranienbaum to the Kronstadt in the coming contest of the Baltic's strongest swimmers, and establishing a new record for the fleet.

Attractive though he found this sport, Nikishin forgot everything when he returned to the base where his submarine lay. He admired it from a distance and involuntarily quickened his pace. He was anxious to be on

A submarine preparing to start out

board again, to clamber in through the open hatch and find himself once more among his fellows and the immaculate cleanliness of machinery and apparatus. . .

Nikishin was a torpedo-man. And even in the exercises at the torpedo-tubes he strove to economize every second, as he did in his swimming.

After the day's successful swimming-practice he said with a touch of pride to his mates:

"I swam a hundred metres with the crawl-stroke in one minute nine-and-a-half seconds. That's one and three-fifth seconds better than my record."

But he felt still prouder when he heard Captain-Lieutenant Sereda, the commander of the vessel, praising him for saving some seconds in firing torpedoes.

. . . Then came the war. It upset Nikishin's plans, of course. He was no longer dreaming of breaking swimming records. For meritorious service he had been promoted to the rank of petty officer, and had become torpedo-commander.

While she was submerged, the vessel kept to her set course, raising only her periscope at infrequent intervals. But it was at one of these moments that the periscope was observed by German coastguard vessels. The submarine sank rapidly and lay on the bottom. Depth charges exploded close at hand, the steel body quivered.

A terrific explosion. The Diesel-engines ceased working, and the lights went out. The lamps, the glass in the instruments,—everything was shivered to pieces as the submarine struck the bottom hard.

At that moment Nikishin was at the torpedo-tubes. He flashed his pocket-lamp here and there and tried to make out what had happened. Through the waterpipes from the washrooms, from under the torpedo-apparatus and from somewhere in the water-tight compartment water was coming in. Myaznin the electrician was lying in a dead faint from shock, and gunner Zinovyev was trying to bring him round. The bulkhead door was battened down, cutting off all communication with the adjoining sixth compartment.

All this Nikishin saw at a glance and, grasping the situation, took upon himself, as the head of the four remaining in the compartment, the responsibility for action.

First he tried to get some idea of the situation from his neighbours in the next compartment.

"We're in water up to our necks here," came the muffled reply. "What about you!"

Nikishin recognized the voice of the chief electrician, Milyutin, and said:

"The water is up to our knees here. Zinovyev, Moriev and Myaznin are still alive. Hold on."

Nikishin gave orders for the leaks to be wedged and caulked without delay. Mattresses were flung into the hold from where the water was flowing into the water-tight compartment. Zinovyev came round and roused himself to help. When the flow had been checked, Nikishin decided to climb aloft by the torpedo-apparatus and endeavour to organize help.

First he tested and put on a life-belt, carefully put away his Young Communist League membership card and identification-card in a water-proof bag, ate two bars of chocolate from his emergency rations and drank a mug of water. Gunner Zinovyev lifted the lid of the torpedo-apparatus. Then the friends took affectionate leave of each other, and Nikishin, taking a bolt with him for signalling purposes, got into the steel tube. Slowly the metal lid descended and shut fast. Nikishin closed his eyes and once more in his own mind took leave of his comrades.

A muffled tap. . . It was Zinovyev signalling that the water would be released in half-a-minute. Nikishin, within his light diving apparatus, responded with a sharp rap on the steel wall with the bolt. He was ready. Several trying seconds passed, then he felt that the tap had been turned on and heard the rush of the water.

A nervous tremor passed through him, and his teeth chattered in spite of himself. He tried to concentrate his thoughts on the journey he was about to make by sea.

"I'll do it! I'll swim there. . . But why doesn't he give the signal? What a long time he is about it?" he thought to himself. He knew that gunner Zinovyev was watching the manometer at the moment, waiting till the pressure in the apparatus corresponded to the water released. Then he would give another signal—two raps. . . There they were. . Nikishin replied: "All's well!" The front lid of the torpedo-apparatus rose. The water filled it, and now the way was clear. What was needed, was the strength to force his way through the heavy roof of water.

He got to the end of the tube and threw out the buoy. Then the passage through the layer of water began. There was a roaring in his ears, his head seemed in a fog. . . "Hold on, I'll swim it and save them," he kept repeating to himself. He had to make a tremendous effort of will so as not to lose consciousness. His head was ready to split with pain, it seemed crushed in a powerful vice. . .

A few moments passed, perhaps fractions of a second, but they dragged like hours. . . The dark wall of water stretched on into infinity. Nikishin felt his strength failing. He made a violent effort, a last furious movement of arms and legs. But the wall of water lightened not a whit. He was losing consciousness, he could no longer move hand or foot, and was floating slowly upwards only by his own momentum.

And at that instant, when it seemed that his life and with it all hope of saving his comrades was about to be extinguished, he felt himself bobbing up like a cork on the water; he had been suddenly and miraculously relieved of some tremendous weight that had borne him down; the huge press no longer crushed him, the torture of the diabolical vice ceased.

He felt a great relief and freedom. He understood vaguely that he had at last forced his way through the density of the water and was now out of danger. The realization brought new strength. He tore off his mask, and saw the starry sky looking down upon him. The familiar sound of

the waves lapping sobered him and roused him to consider the situation. He took a deep breath.

Nikishin looked about him, and up at the vague dim radiance in the night sky. Taking his bearings by the stars, he swam in the direction of the shore.

Several hours passed. No sign of land. He swam on. Fatigue was beginning to tell on him, his muscles were growing numb from the cold water, his head was going round. At long last the stars grew dim and faded out. The night was drawing to a close. Daybreak was near. Clearer and sharper grew the outlines of the distant shore.

When at length he did feel slippery mud under his feet, his joy knew no bounds. He had stayed the course, he had won the race!

A few hours later Nikishin and the men of the shore battery were going out to meet the launch in which the first party of rescued men were arriving. He kissed the electrician Myaznin and gunner Zinovyev How good it was to be alive, and what luck that he had learnt to swim so well when he was a boy! That crawl, for instance,—it was just that stroke that had helped him to hold out in his long swim.

Z. FIRSOV,
Army Surgeon

Kiev Avenges!

They were led through Kirov Street, past the fine tall buildings on the left hand and the pleasant shady parks that swept down to the Dnieper on the right.

Yonder, across the Dnieper, rose the ancient walls of the Arsenal.

Yonder, across the Dnieper, stood the Taras Shevchenko Museum, a bluish-tinted palace designed long, long ago by the famous Rastrelli. Close by towered the imposing and monumental edifice erected by Soviet architects for the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

So it looked then. Now all that has gone. Barbarians came and desecrated the things the Ukrainian people held sacred, trampled upon its art and its creative life. The once beautiful city bears the stamp of the vandal who laid it waste. . .

Barefoot, in ragged jerseys, with marks of savage beatings on their bodies, with bloody scars on their faces, they were driven on, the men of the Red Navy Dnieper Flotilla.

It was not their fault that they had fallen into German hands. In the fierce grim battle they had fought to the last cartridge, fought as long as they could stand on their legs and their hands could hold a gun.

But the odds had been against them. The Germans descended upon the wounded, exhausted survivors, carried them off and threw them into dungeons where they were tortured and tormented. Not one had betrayed his duty or wavered for an instant in loyalty to his country. So now they were going for the last time through their own city, these Dnieper sailors. One could hardly drag his wounded leg after him, another was supported by two comrades, a third wore around his head a bandage dark with blood.

It was a gloomy city now to which they were bidding farewell. On their left was the Kreshchatik, where every year on big holidays, in November and May, there were parades in which the glorious Red Navy men of the Dnieper marched.

It all came back to them with a rush of memories, the rustle of the banners fluttering free in the breeze, and the joyous shouts of the holiday multitude greeting their army and navy.

"Pull yourselves together, boys!" a sailor with a stump of an arm called

out briskly. "Let's march this once as we used to do!"

The convoy eyed him askance, and one said:

"Shut up, Rus!"

The men of the Red Navy dressed their ranks. The bare feet fell into step on the wet pavement.

A little girl was suddenly moved to throw her handkerchief to the man with the wounded head. Her mother tugged her back by the hand in a fright.

"He should wipe away that blood," the child cried obstinately. "Look, his blood keeps running down!"

A grey-haired woman with tear-filled eyes stepped forward resolutely and, getting a piece of bread out of her bag, offered it to the one-armed prisoner.

"Thank you, mother," he said softly.

"What's the sense in wasting good bread: they're going to be shot anyhow!" came a mocking voice from the sidewalk. The speaker laughed.

"Here then, and may it choke you! Traitor!"

The lump of bread, flung with full force, hit the traitor between the eyes. Instantly, a tall soldier in the convoy gave the sailor a violent blow in the back with his tommy-gun. The unfortunate man doubled up. His comrades supported him. Straightening himself with an effort, he looked for the grey-haired woman in the crowd and called out, loudly this time:

"Thank you once more, mother!"

Spacious Kreshchatik was behind them now. They were led out to Bessarabia Square and lined up by the covered market place.

"Let's sing something for the last time, boys!"

They sang the old familiar sailors' song: "Wide spreads the sea around us." The Germans laughed and jeered as they formed a half-circle. The officer barked an order. People in the crowd shrieked, a young girl went into hysterics.

Vainly the mother waits her son's return,
When they break the news,
she'll sob and sigh...

The words of the grim old song rang out as the first volley was fired.

By evening all Kiev knew of it. From mouth to mouth the tale was passed of how the men of the Red Navy had died. It spread over all the Ukraine and reached us on the other side of the front-line. None knew the names of those men, but all knew they had died as only heroes die.

"There's many a one there paying back the Germans for that deed," said a man who came from Kiev.

Then he told us about three young self-appointed avengers whose names cannot be disclosed as yet, though they are no longer in the land of the living.

The Germans were trying to restore the "Bolshevik" works so as to recondition their tanks there. They brought machine-tools to it, and a locomotive ran on the track.

Formerly three young fellows—let's call them Nicholas, Peter and Alexander—worked there. Nicholas was a turner, Peter and Alexander—Sasha for short—were fitters. And they were all three seventeen years old.

That evening Nicholas was late home. His comrades were waiting for him when he arrived.

"Looks as though we'll have to go to work for the Germans," he said.

"You're crazy!" cried Sasha, waving him away in horror. "Better let's go and join the partisans before they drive us away to Germany."

"If you want to beat the Germans, you haven't very far to go. We've been told to get a job in the works, so it means that's what's wanted of us."

"Why, have we been given something special to do?" asked Peter, interested at once.

"Yes."

"Oh well, then I agree. And if

we've to die for it, we'll die like the sailors did!"

. . . A fortnight had passed since the three young fellows had been taken on at the "Bolshevik" works. It was their own works! And there was the building where the factory-and-works school had been. All three had attended it. And here the new turnery where Katia with the black eyes used to work. Nicholas had been very fond of that girl. She had disappeared long since. Some said they had seen the Germans taking her away in a car.

On Sunday Nicholas collected everything they needed for the act of sabotage they were preparing. For several days the boys brought explosives: they had decided to blow up the boiler-room first.

"Why don't you go home?" the shop chief demanded.

"The foreman's given me an urgent order to fill. I've got to finish it."

"Gut!" And the chief strode on his way through the shop.

The explosions followed one after another. When Nicholas was caught by the watchman, the lad only kicked this powerful fellow in the stomach but made no attempt to run away:

"I'm not afraid of you blackguards!"

. . . They were shot in the street, outside the works. Around them, a wall of silence, stood the people from the works' settlement and their children. The first to be put against the wall was Nicholas. He straightened himself, pushed back the mop of fair hair from his brow. The tale of his short life flashed before his eyes an instant and was gone, but he felt no fear. Nor even a touch of pity for himself. What had been done, had been done well. No one could say they had been cowards. No! Everyone knew now that youth would never evade the struggle, never!

Nicholas looked at the boys who were standing around him. They did not look at him, their heads were bent, but he saw and felt in his heart that these were strong, reliable friends; it would not be long before they too started to do the same things as he and his comrades had done today.

Four German soldiers raised their tommy-guns. Nicholas waved his hand and called out in a ringing voice:

"Learn to die as young people die!"

A bullet pierced his heart.

Then it was Sasha's turn. White with excitement, his eyes dark and dilated, he repeated Nicholas' words at the top of his voice, so that all might hear, those who stood in the street and those who were listening and watching from behind the fences.

"Learn to die as. . ."

The volley cut off his words, but he finished the sentence as he fell, clutching the air with wide-flung hands:

". . . as young people die!"

Peter took Sasha's place. Once more the words, they sounded like a vow, were repeated. Peter raised his clenched fist. A bullet went through it, a second through his throat.

". . . as young people die!"

Peter advanced on the German soldiers, on the black muzzles of the rifles. He was streaming with blood from the scarlet jet in his throat.

He was hit point-blank.

. . . The bodies of the three heroes lay for a week in the street for all the town to see. And the burning hatred of the enemy was inflamed and fanned in the hearts of the people of Kiev, a hatred that nothing will extinguish.

V. SHUMOV

"Psychotherapy Armed"

(A letter from Tbilisi)

Doctor Grigori Grigorashvili, a tall, ruddy, cheerful Georgian, started his rounds, as usual, with ward No. 1, and, as usual, he and his internes lingered by Captain Boris Yudanov's bed. This was a Leningrad man who excited the sympathy and pity of both medical staff and patients. He was a fine athletic young man of twenty-seven, intelligent and keen, but apparently incurable. His trouble was shell-shock. There was no external injury, but the concussion had affected the functioning of the brain. He had been sent here from the Kalinin front. For eight months now he had lain in bed; he had lost the use of his legs. He sometimes lost the power of speech for long periods and would carry on eager conversations with his neighbours by notes. Electrical treatment, massage, injections, physiotherapy, all had proved of no avail. There was talk of his leaving the army and entering a home for disabled army men. But the captain insisted when he could speak or write: "Cure me! I want to get well and fight those cursed Germans again!"

Today it looked as if this unwavering determination to get well had impressed Dr. Grigorashvili. He examined his patient once more, gave some instructions in Georgian and then said in Russian:

"I'm going to cure you today. I'm going to try a new method."

Half an hour later two nurses brought in a stretcher. The patient was removed to the consulting room, and treatment began.

Unlike hypnosis, when the physician tries to weaken the patient's will and enforce his own, psychotherapy requires that the patient should be fully aware of what is going on. First Dr. Grigorashvili explained carefully to the captain the nature of his ailment:

"Your brain is unaffected, and so are your legs. It's simply that the shock has caused something like a brain spasm, and we have to get the better of it!"

As an illustration, Suleiman, a Red Army man from the next ward, was called in. He had been a splendid athlete and keen on sports of all kinds. Until a week ago his arm was numb, and he was unable to utter a word. Now he was cheerful, could use his arm properly, and when questioned by the doctor, he answered smartly in broken Russian, with a sprinkling of Armenian words.

"Now you see," said the doctor, "the method helped him, and it will help you. . ."

Meantime the nurses laid Yudanov on a narrow couch. One of the internes, Nadezhda Barbakadze, switched on an electric machine connected to a small roller. This was the whole apparatus, a simple medical device. The machine transformed and weakened the usual electric current. Working with a will, Barbakadze passed the electric roller over Yudanov's legs, along the most vital muscles and nerve centres. The patient wriggled and recoiled, for the current titillated and excited him. This was necessary in order to rouse the patient out of his physical apathy, mobilize all his resources and impress the doctor's instructions on his mind.

Dr. Grigorashvili, perspiring with effort, bent and unbent the captain's legs, heedless of his agonized appeals and protests.

"That's it! Do it again! Bend the knee! Do it again!"

This "torture" lasted well over an hour. Yudanov, Barbakadze and the doctor were quite exhausted. And then the moment came when Dr. Grigorashvili might command him: "Take up thy bed and walk!"

"Get up, Captain Yudanov," he said, paraphrasing the scriptures.

Then Yudanov, pressing his hands hard on the edge of the couch, rose and set his feet to the ground. He took two or three steps unsteadily, then two strong nurses held him by the arms and supported him. He felt very bad and at the same time very happy. After eight months he had risen to his feet. His head swam, spots danced before his eyes: feeble he still was, but the main thing was achieved: he could walk. The nerve spasm had been overcome, as the doctor had promised: Yudanov gained confidence in his own strength and the hope of a complete cure.

Now he only required two or three weeks of graded exercises in walking and extra good food, and he would be well.

Dr. Grigorashvili took me aside and admitted that the "armed psychotherapy" method either works at once or fails. But the principal thing is that the patient should have the desire to get well: only then can the doctor's help be really effective.

This is the point, this is the key to an understanding of the new treatment, applied at this hospital in Tbilisi. During the last war a Russian soldier would consider himself lucky if he came out of hospital at all, even on crutches. This was the only way you could escape any more of the horrors of an unnecessary and incomprehensible war. But a quarter of a century of Soviet power has brought up a new generation of people, to whom the defence of their socialist country, their native land, was something that concerned them vitally. To these, and these only, is the method of "armed psychotherapy" applicable.

The great patriotic war has mobilized all the spiritual and creative forces of our people. Inventiveness, resourcefulness double our strength. The work carried on in the capital of Soviet Georgia by the group of doctors and psychologists headed by Academician Uznadze is an integral part of the cultural and defence work that is being done in the rear.

Uznadze and his disciples are making an exhaustive study of the new quality that is the distinguishing characteristic of the psychology of the Soviet man and fighter; from these studies they are drawing conclusions of the greatest practical use.

E. TANK

250 Days of Heroic Defence of Sevastopol

The Russian city of Sevastopol has long been known to European and American readers as the town which during the Crimean war (1853—1856) withstood a lengthy and wearing siege for 349 days. They have also read the sketches of the famous Russian novelist L. N. Tolstoy entitled *Sevastopol in December 1854, in May and August 1855.*

As they studied the life and the war activities of besieged Sevastopol as portrayed in Tolstoy's writings, many readers undoubtedly came to the same conclusion as Tolstoy drew from his studies of the history of Sevastopol's defence. They became convinced of "the utter impossibility of shaking the strength of the Russian people anywhere." Just as Tolstoy, they realized this impossibility in "the speeches, the actions and all that is known as the spirit of the defenders of Sevastopol."

Tolstoy says: "Whatever they do is done so simply, is so free from all intensity and effort, as to impress us with the feeling that they can do a hundred times more." And Tolstoy takes his reader along the streets and squares of Sevastopol and round its forts, and at every step shows him the grandeur of spirit of the defenders of Sevastopol. . . The ancient Greeks named this town "The City of Fame." The defenders of Sevastopol in 1854—1855 confirmed the justice of this ancient name.

The times of Sevastopol's heroic defence described by Tolstoy have long ago passed into the realm of history. For us Russians they have been a beautiful historic tradition for 87 years. But in 1941—1942 they again became a real fact of the present day. For 250 days, from November 1941 till the 3rd of July 1942, the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and the freedom-loving peoples of the whole world watched with bated breath the heroic fight put up by the defenders of Sevastopol against the fascist

The defence of Sevastopol. A cruiser emits a smoke screen

hordes, a gallant defence which has not only revived the glorious traditions of the Sevastopolians in the fifties of the last century but increased them many times. . . The Publishing House of the People's Commissariat of the Navy of the U.S.S.R. has published a symposium *Sevastopol*. It introduces the reader to the war life of the heroic besieged Sevastopol of our own days.

It consists of over one hundred articles, short paragraphs, reports and appeals touching on the defence of Sevastopol; sketches by the well-known Soviet novelists Alexey Tolstoy, Sergeyev-Tsensky, Ilya Ehrenburg, Leonid Sobolev, as also notes by special correspondents of the newspapers *Pravda, Izvestia, Krasnaya Zvezda, Krasny Chernomorets* and so on. Here you may read articles by the chief organizers of the defence of Sevastopol Vice-Admiral Oktiabrsky (see *International Literature* No. 10), Major-General Petrov, Major-General of Aviation Ostriakov, Divisional Commissar Chukhnov, and on the next page short notes by rank-and-file Red Army men, correspondents of Soviet newspapers. These documentary materials, just like Tolstoy's beautiful work on the defence of Sevastopol in the Crimean war, take the reader to the very heart of the war life in the besieged city. It shows the heroic defence of Sevastopol against the German fascist invaders as one of the most glorious pages of the history of the patriotic war of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. The spirit of Kornilov and Nakhimov and of their comrades-in-arms is still alive in Soviet sailors, Red Army men, commanders and political workers.

Masters of style, famous Soviet writers and journalists tell us of the valour and heroism of the defenders of Sevastopol; there are also narratives by rank-and-file fighters who themselves took part in the events described.

Here is a simple sketch by an anonymous correspondent of *Krasny Chernomorets*:

"Some fascist tanks came crawling in the direction of our naval battery. They kept on firing their guns and machine-guns till some neat volleys from our batteries disabled a number of enemy machines. The fascists retreated, but they cut off the post correcting the batteries fire. We had to rescue the commander and the two men who thus remained behind the enemy line. Corporal Zharikov and four men were sent as a relief party. The daring five saw some fascist tanks advancing and took cover. When the tanks came near they were met by hand-grenades with the result that the five fighters destroyed three fascist tanks, two armoured cars, two motor-cycles and thirty soldiers. Three men were taken prisoners. A large number of documents fell into our hands.

Fascist tanks don't frighten brave men. The five friends returned to the battery having suffered no losses."

So simply and laconically does the correspondent describe the heroic feat of the five Soviet heroes.

All the articles of the symposium tell us how Russians can fight, and die if necessary, doing their duty to their Motherland. Yet some of the stories give especially vivid instances of heroism in war. It is difficult to make a selection: there are so many of them, and they are all so splendid.

The flier Lieutenant Ryzhov, having nearly exhausted his reserves of fuel and cartridges, continued chasing a fascist reconnoissance plane a hundred miles from the shore, knowing all the time how small was his chance of returning alive. He rammed the fascist plane after using all his cartridges, and the two planes fell together into the sea. The courageous pilot kept afloat for four hours till our motor tugs rescued him.

Here is another instance. Flier Lieutenant Jacob Ivanov, Hero of the Soviet Union, rammed two planes in the course of one day. Attacking a Heinkel head on he seems to have killed the wireless operator but at the same time he found himself unable to follow up his attack as he had used all his cartridges, while the enemy plane was on the point of turning to resume its flight to the town where it would drop its load of bombs. Ivanov puts on a spurt that brings him up to the tail of the Heinkel. The air wave from the screw of the fascist plane tosses the light destroyer plane about like a small boat in a stormy sea. Two metres, one metre. . . An immense effort of the will. ... The pilot turns into a mass of concentrated energy. His arm, his foot, his eye work with the exactness of an ideal mechanism. One last burst of speed. ... the air screw cuts off the tail of the Heinkel. A turn of the wheel and the destroyer soars upward. A quick examination. . . the controls are in order. Meanwhile the Heinkel, somersaulting, rushes earthward, and explodes on his own ton of bombs.

Hardly has Ivanov landed at his aerodrome when he has to go up again to fight a group of Junkers on their way to bomb a town. Ivanov scatters them and attacks one of the Junkers which he succeeds in sending to the ground envelopped in flame. On his way back Ivanov sees a Dornier-215 approaching the town. He has no more cartridges left. "Once again the man turns into a ball of concentrated energy and his hands and eyes into an absolutely exact mechanism. This was Jacob Ivanov's second ramming. The Dornier crashed but Ivanov's destroyer also fell into the sea."

Captain Storchienko gives an impressive instance out of his note-book, in which heroism, extraordinary coolness, self-control and consciousness of duty as a soldier and a patriot merge into a single whole.

During an air raid carried out by a unit of Soviet bomber-planes upon a group of enemy tanks waiting in a valley, the Germans contrived to set fire to the plane of flier Pusanov. One of the wings began to burn; but the goal was still ahead, and Pusanov kept his place in the fighting formation. The flames crept towards the cabin. Senior Lieutenant Shcherbakov, the navigator, waited for the signal. At last the leading aeroplane dropped its load. Next to drop their bombs was the crew of the burning plane. The gunner-wireless-operator began shooting at the enemy soldiers who were running to shelter.

"The fire had already found its way to the cabin. The pilot's clothes caught alight. There was only one chance of salvation: the parachutes. . . But the enemy was on the ground below the burning plane and it was impossible to reach our own aerodrome. One of the wings was threatening to drop immediately. And this is what we behold at this moment. . . Pusanov flew his machine up to the leading plane, swaying the wings in sign of farewell. You could see the navigator Shcherbakov press his hands together above his head in a last good-bye to his friends.

Pusanov turned to the left and flew towards the structures at the roadside where enemy lorries full of infantry were halted. Next moment the pilot dived steeply. The German soldiers, mad with fright, scattered in all directions. An instant, and the burning plane crashed into the very midst of the enemy machines."

Such was the heroic death of the famous crew: Fyodor Ilyich Pusanov, Senior Lieutenant Stepan Ivanovich Shcherbakov and machine-gunner wireless-operator Corporal Pyotr Simonovich Pashkov.

It is impossible also not to mention the heroic deed of five sailors as told by the Senior Political Instructor Kogut.

A detachment of Black Sea sailors took a hill in accordance with an order of the officer commanding. The hill commanded the road to Sevastopol. The order was executed, the hill taken. The enemy drew up reserves and launched an attack, which was repulsed. The next day the Germans began a new offensive, sending seven tanks in advance. The commissar of the unit decided to stop the advance of the tanks and then to destroy the foot soldiers. To do this he appealed for volunteers. Five sailors volunteered, Filchenko, the political instructor, and the sailors Tsibulko, Parshin, Krasnoselsky and Odintsov. They took some hand-grenades, as many "fire bottles" as they could carry, and cartridges. Then they crept forward and took cover behind a low embankment.

When the fascist tanks emerged round the turning the gallant five met them with a hail of fire. Red sailor Tsibulko stopped one tank with a bullet right through the loophole. The sailor flung grenades and "fire bottles" at the other tanks and disabled two more; the remaining four turned tail.

But a few hours later the enemy returned. This time there were fifteen tanks. Not a single sailor flinched. Allowing the tanks to approach quite near, the men greeted them with grenades and machine-gun fire. A hot battle ensued. Tsibulko was badly wounded. Krasnoselsky was killed, though only after he had contrived to set two enemy tanks aflame. The remaining three sailors had used their last cartridges and bottles. They had nothing more but a few grenades.

"Filchenko, the political instructor, took some of them and attached them to his belt. His face was calm. He did not say a word to his comrades, but they at once understood his intention. Parshin and Odintsov also attached bundles of grenades to their belts.

Filchenko was the first to throw himself under a tank. Parshin and Odintsov clenched their teeth. They saw the tank blow up as it crushed the body of their brother-in-arms. The two men never faltered. Without a word they shook hands and flung themselves under the tanks. Two more detonations rent the air of the steppe."

"When the battle was over, we found Tsibulko not far from the wretched remains of the enemy tanks. He was mortally wounded and covered with blood. With the last of his fast-ebbing strength he told us of the end of his four comrades. He died in the arms of our men."

The heroism of the masses, a distinctive quality of the Russian people throughout its history, found its highest expression in this titanic defence of Sevastopol. The simplest, plainest Russian people, in no wise remarkable in peace time, turn into heroes when danger threatens their country. This is what the defence of Sevastopol taught the world.

When, Sevastopol having played its part in our strategical plans, its defenders on July 3rd left the town in obedience to the orders of the Red Army Command, the German radio sputtered in its eagerness to scream of a German victory. But as one of the Russian reviewers rightly remarked, in the eyes of the world's public opinion this "victory" made a far smaller impression than the valour of the defenders of Sevastopol.

The British Ministry of Information pointed out in its communiqué that in London one may hear expressions of admiration for the fight put up by the defenders of Sevastopol, that the English people feel grateful to the defenders of Sevastopol for this glorious resistance which cost the Germans much time and immense human and material resources.

VLADIMIR ZALEZHSKY

SAAKADZE IS FIGHTING TOGETHER WITH US

From morning to night, in the streets of Tbilisi the customary Georgian greeting "gamardjveba" is to be heard. Outside the Caucasus but few people know that the ancient word "gamardjveba" means "victory," congratulations on victory. Such a greeting can come into existence only among a people who have waged many and long wars.

And in reality this little Georgia, a country of poetry and grapes, was for centuries the stage of bloody battles, a dainty morsel for her powerful neighbours. Who has not laid waste her fields and vineyards? The Romans, Huns, Arabs, Tartars, Persians, Turks, all of them have left their bloody footmarks here. . . For fifteen hundred years this struggle has been carried on for the caravan trade-routes leading across Georgia from the north to the south and from the shores of the Black Sea to the Caspian.

In this difficult struggle for independence, the character of the Georgian people has been shaped, with its chivalrous audacity, its generous hospitality, its noble pride and immeasurable love for its Fatherland and freedom.

A. Horava as Georgi Saakadze

These national features found their most striking personification in Georgi Saakadze, the famous captain and politician of the beginning of the XVIIth century.

The Georgians know all about the wild and tragic life of the Great Mouravi ("Mouravi," a governor, somewhat similar to the "Majordomo" under the Capets). Such was the surname bestowed on Saakadze. But we must confess that for Russian readers Saakadze was "discovered" rather recently, by Anna Antonovskaya. The first volume of her capacious novel *The Great Mouravi* appeared in 1935. Five years later the second volume was published. The third volume was honoured with the Stalin prize in 1941.

Ten long years were devoted by Anna Antonovskaya to the study of material dealing with Georgian history. All kinds of sources, literary, archaeological and archival, relating to the history of the Transcaucasus in the XVIIth century, were brought to bear on the task.

From all this was produced a masterpiece which, apart from its interesting plot, is also of outstanding value as a study of Georgia. The whole life of feudal Georgia, her customs, rites, songs, hunting parties, feasts and battles, the way of life of the different parts of society are spread out before the reader. In the centre of the plot there arises the monumental figure of that popular leader, that ardent patriot and brave warrior, Georgi Saakadze.

It was natural that in the artistic circles of Tbilisi the idea should arise of putting Anna Antonovskaya's novel on the screen. She worked on the scenario together with her son Boris Tchorny who, so to say, grew up together with the novel. And though the authors, submitting to the iron laws of the cinema, condensed the plot to the utmost, taking from the novel only the principal personages and the leading episodes, still the film is being shot in two full-sized series. The first of them has already made its appearance on the screens of the Soviet Union and will soon be shown in the free part of Europe and in America.

. . . A grey fog is creeping down the Caucasian mountains. Under the rays of the southern sun nature is reviving. Georgi Saakadze, an unimportant nobleman (an asnaur), is hunting with his friends, his bodyguards, in the neighbourhood of his small estate of Noste. With his sinewy hand he pulls the bowstring. But hark! — a pro-

Peasant volunteers get ready to start on the march. A still from the film

longed wail is heard from beyond the rock. . . There lies an exhausted, dying Georgian peasant, covered with the blood that flows from his wounds. Though scarcely able to move his lips, he manages to convey to Georgi Saakadze the terrible news: the Turkish army has invaded Georgia.

But the watch-towers are silent, no alarm bell is heard, no signal fires are to be seen. Internal treachery, the treason of the feudal princes is helping the external enemy. Such is the beginning of the film.

The splendid tragic actor Akaki Horava who performs the role of Saakadze, charms and captures the spectator from the moment of his first appearance. His powerful figure, the noble grace of his movements, his romantically excited tone link this film up with the great traditions of Georgian art. Horava reminds us of Avt'handil, the hero of the immortal poem by Rust'hveli, *The Knight in the Tiger's Skin*.

In the following scenes of the film we see the busy market square of old Tbilisi, the "maidan," where, as everywhere in the East, public opinion is created. Here, among the motley crowd of artisans, gun-smelters, petty traders and neighbouring peasants, Saakadze is known and loved. His flaming appeal: "To arms and repel the enemy" is met by the maidan with unanimous approval. Quite different is the picture we see in the tsar's castle at Mtzheti. Here subtle court intrigues are being spun. The princes, who possess fortune and power, are frankly selling their fatherland. They persuade the tsar Luarsab to submit to Turkey and to let the Turkish army pass through Georgia on their way eastward, against Persia. The stupid, greedy clique is headed by Shadiman Baratashvili. He is a cunning courtier, but at the same time he is a brave warrior. He is a sly, clever and dangerous enemy of Saakadze, and on the other hand an outstanding man of his kind, but a man who has consecrated his whole life at one selfish aim: the defence of social privileges.

Such is the interpretation of Shadiman given by the distinguished artist Zahariadze, a worthy partner for Horava. The struggle between Saakadze and Shadiman for ascendance over the tsar—such is the dramatic essence of the film, which correctly reflects historic events.

At the start success is on the side of Saakadze. He obliges the tsar to consent to a campaign against the Osmans. The two armies meet to the west of Tbilisi, near a mountain pass Surami. The princes' bodyguards fight but feebly, and soon take to flight. "There is still time to come to an agreement with Osman-pasha," says Shadiman when advising the tsar. But Saakadze, at the head of his "panther-bodyguard," flings himself on the Turks, provokes a fresh battle and simulates

flight. The janizaries give chase, spreading themselves over the hills, and in this way Saakadze entices the enemy into the ravine where the peasant volunteer army, equipped with whatever comes to hand, but filled with passionate ardour to defend their own land, rush down upon them.

"Hi! Georgians! Forward!" thunders the voice of Saakadze-Horava amidst the din of the battle. The scene of the fight and the duel between Saakadze and Osman-pasha is a masterpiece of screen-fighting. It does credit to the principal stage-manager of the film, Michael Chiaureli, one of the best Soviet producers.

. . . The Turkish army is crushed. Amidst the victorious cheers of his followers, Saakadze returns to his own village. The generous and abundant Georgian soil is awaiting the ploughman. With reverence Saakadze lights the candles tied to the horns of the buffaloes and, accompanied by the sound of the peasant song "Oravely," he traces a deep furrow with his plough.

Now follows a succession of bright peaceful pictures. Saakadze is seen in the midst of his family circle. He receives the tsar in his castle. Joyous and abundant is this Georgian feast, where the tsar Luarsab falls in love with Saakadze's sister, the beautiful Tekle. Gliding gracefully through the ancient Georgian dance of the "lekuri," the tsar and Tekle appear before us. Like his contemporary, Louis XIV, Luarsab was renowned for his elegant manners and his talent in the dance.

Now comes a favourable moment for Saakadze. Tekle is already the tsarina of Georgia in spite of the discontented murmurings of the princes and courtiers. Saakadze plays the leading role in the nation. He exhorts from the tsar his consent to far-reaching reforms. Georgia must be encircled by a chain of impregnable strongholds. The princes must be converted into submissive servants of the tsar, the artisans and the poorer nobility must be granted all possible privileges. That was, on Georgian lines, the program of enlightened absolutism, a progressive regime for that epoch.

But Saakadze was in advance of his age. What was being carried out approximately at the same time by Richelieu who did his utmost in the fight against the nobility, was impossible in Georgia.

The poor people and the middle classes were not able to give Saakadze sufficient support. The princely troops, led by Shadiman, attacked Saakadze's castle. His plans and models of the projected strongholds perish in the flames. The architects, summoned from Byzantium, fall under the strokes of the traitors' swords. Saakadze and his family have a narrow escape.

Like Coriolanus, Saakadze went over to the Persian enemy and entered the service of the Shah Abbas. The military exploits of Saakadze are shortly and with much reserve but expressively outlined in the film. In Afghanistan, India, Bagdad and all over Middle Asia, the Persian arms are crowned with glory. But he himself was torn by perpetual nostalgia, by a longing for the valleys and the villages of Georgia. And at last a bold plan took form in his mind: to provoke the Persian troops against the Georgian feudal lords, and then to destroy both, supported by the Georgian peasant volunteers. Shah Abbas was willing to place an army at his disposal, but as a guarantee of his loyalty he kept Saakadze's beloved son, young Paat, as a hostage.

In a pathetic scene Saakadze and his wife Russudan take leave of the inevitably fore-doomed youth. In this way, with open eyes, Saakadze sacrifices his son for the sake of his dearly loved Fatherland. Holding aloft a shield with the blazing slogan: "Happy is he whose heart beats for his Fatherland." Saakadze sets foot on his native soil.

In the flames of the great patriotic war Soviet art has found a powerful stimulus. The general creative enthusiasm of our country has penetrated into the cinema as well. The film *Georgi Saakadze* was produced during this difficult year of war. Taking into consideration both the scale of the film in which thousands of actors and other participants are engaged, and the artistic performance, as well as the depth of the conception, this picture is undoubtedly the best that has been turned out by the Georgian cinema during the twenty years of its existence.

It is not an academic film on a historical theme, but a bridge linking the glorious past with the heroic present. Another enemy, ruthless, voracious and ignoble, is endeavouring to penetrate into sunny Georgia. But the offspring of Georgi Saakadze and his "panther-bodyguard" are watching over the mountain passes as their ancestors did three hundred years ago.

But today the Georgians are not alone, the whole united family of the Soviet peoples is with them. The great Western Powers are supporting them.

Imbued with patriotic pathos, this film calls the millions of its Soviet spectators to renewed efforts and to still nobler deeds.

EUGENE KANTOROVICH

NEWS AND VIEWS

"The cause of every Russian who fights for his home and native soil is the cause of free people and free nations in every part of the globe." These words of the Prime Minister of Great Britain Mr. Winston Churchill serve to open the first number of the weekly paper *Britansky Soyuznik (British Ally)* published by the English Ministry of Information for Soviet readers.

Several numbers of this richly illustrated publication have already appeared. Well-taken photographs and vividly-written articles acquaint Soviet citizens with the life and military operations of their ally. One does not easily forget the sketches telling of the battles in the deserts of Livia and Egypt, of the work of the English military plants, of the part played by women in the defence of England. Especially interesting are the photoes showing everyday life in the English bomber force.

In the sketch "Toilers of the Sea," we have a description of the work of special crews organized in Great Britain for salvaging aeroplanes shot down over the sea. This "peaceful" work is frequently interrupted by German raids. During one of these raids the seaman Alexander Murrey shot down a fascist "Junkers" with a light machine-gun, after which he towed it off to his native shores.

Much space is given to material full of interesting particulars about the raid on Dieppe. It is written by one of those who took part in this military operation, and so is read with especial attention. A great deal of illuminating detail is published about the English raids on Cologne. Two photoes of Cologne taken from the air before and after the raid prove better than any words that English bombs do not miss their mark. The weekly also tells about the military preparedness and operative activity of the "Commandos," under the leadership of Lord Louis Mountbatten.

The English people are fully resolved to continue the fight with Hitlerism, and admire the heroic efforts of the peoples of the Soviet Union. Permeated with feelings of solidarity are the utterances, published in one of the issues of the paper, of people prominent in the world of British culture: Sibyl Thorndyke, Henry Wood, J. B. Priestley, Jacob Epstein, Professor J. B. S. Haldane, a prominent representative of the Trade Union movement Fred Smith, and others. The same idea of friendship inspires the many photographs of English and Soviet fliers taken as they work or chat together. Their friendship is cemented by danger and daring shared, by exploits done in common.

In an article by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Anthony Eden, which is published in the first issue, we learn that the purpose of the paper is to make known to the Soviet reader "the war efforts and life of the British people," just as the weekly journal *Soviet War News*, published in London since the early days of the war, tells English readers about the heroic struggle of the Soviet people against German fascism. The aim and usefulness of such publications is clear: peoples who are joined in friendship should know more of one another. And friendship is tested in a common struggle.

The All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (V.O.K.S.) and the Cinema Committee together organized two big evenings devoted to American and English film production.

The main address was delivered by the president of the Cinema Committee Ivan Bolshakov, after which there were speeches by producers Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin, who had arrived from Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan) especially for the purpose, also by the Ukrainian producer Alexander Dovzhenko, the writer Ilya Ehrenburg and the actress Zoya Fyodorova.

The big hall of the House of Architects where these evenings were held was crowded with representatives of the literary, art and theatre world, with Soviet and foreign journalists, with representatives of social, scientific and art organizations.

S. Eisenstein in his address touched upon the question of the interplay of influence in the cinema work of the three allied countries and of the important part played by the cinema in their increasing cultural accord and mutual understanding. "Twelve years ago I was in the U.S.A.," he said, "and since then I have been an enthusiastic supporter of the idea of friendship between our peoples. Now, when Soviet cinema workers and their colleagues in England and the U.S.A. are united by one and the same ideal of struggle, the defeat of the universally hated fascism, our sympathy for each other has become still greater."

Ilya Ehrenburg devoted his address to the film *The Dictator* and to Chaplin's

British newsreel stand at the Exhibition of British and American Cinematographic Art

speech in Madison Square. Ehrenburg considers the film a phenomenon of world culture; and he particularly stressed the importance of both the film and its author in the question of the second front. "Chaplin," said Ehrenburg, "spoke with decision, directness and courage on the urgent need of creating the second front. He has remained true to himself, true to that defence of mankind to which he has devoted his whole life as an artist. The second front has become now not only a question of strategy, of policy, but a question of the salvation of human culture. It is a question of the existence of Man, not of a machine of the fascist type, but of genuine, spiritually-harmonious man. Thus it is that Chaplin, who for twenty years has had the world holding its sides with wholesome laughter, has now come forward with a stern and earnest speech urging on his people the creation of the second front."

The cinema actress Zoya Fyodorova, well-known abroad from the film *Girls from Leningrad (Natasha)*, dealt in her speech with the outstanding work of the best cinema actresses of Hollywood; in particular she dwelt on the social work carried on by the foremost actresses of the United States in furtherance of the common cause, victory over Hitlerism.

In connexion with these evenings, an Exhibition devoted to the cinema in America and England was displayed in the House of Architects. Here the visitor found materials on the cinema as developed by our allies, beginning with first essays and ending with the latest and most significant films. The excellently arranged stands presented the visitor with a wealth of material: photoes of Chaplin, Disney and ot... enlarged to life size, photographs from animated cartoons printed in colours, greatly enlarged stills from feature pictures ranging over a number of years. Great interest was aroused by a set of exhibits on the different stages of cinema work, showing the technique of the American cinema.

A number of stands were devoted to exhibits of the work of the best cinema actors and actresses of the U.S.A. and England. Stills from English and American newsreels recording episodes of the struggle of the freedom-loving peoples against hitlerite Germany, round off this interesting and varied exhibition.

In the evenings films were shown: *In Old Chicago* and *The Private Life of Henry the VIIIth*, American and English newsreels, a documentary sketch *Malta Convoy*, and the Soviet newsreel *The U.S.A., Our Ally* (producer P. Atasheva).

The Griffith stand

In view of the great interest shown in foreign cinematography, the Exhibition was transferred in its entirety to the First Art Cinema Theatre, one of the most popular in Moscow.

Gilt beads for a New Year's tree are hanging near a heavy motor-cycle, smart lace aprons are to be seen in the neighbourhood of ammunition boxes, rows of tomatoes are reddening alongside the walls where you can see warm skiing suits hung up... We are at the Exhibition of the work of Moscow schoolchildren, opened in that city in the autumn of 1942.

The war has placed great tasks before the Soviet children. They must not only study, but they have to help the grown-ups and to undertake hard work. In summer the schoolchildren work in the fields and kitchen-gardens, in winter they study in the industrial training sections which have been started by many of the schools of Moscow and other towns in the U.S.S.R. These sections are first and foremost educational. As a rule, they have at the head an experienced, tactful and considerate teacher, one who loves children. He is assisted by the heads of the workshops, skilled workers who teach the children the principles of their trade, the necessary technical habits, and instil into them a love and taste for labour.

There are 375 such workshops in Moscow, and more than 16,000 children from twelve to fifteen work there. You probably ask: "What do they do?" Everything! Anything that can be done by a worker of that age. They repair cycles, make iron stoves, stools, mould candles, knit jackets, sew overalls, prepare simple electrical equipment, prepare skis, repair shoes, embroider serviettes. . .

Innumerable quantities of most varied, carefully executed articles are to be seen at the Exhibition. The grown-up visitors shake their heads incredulously: "Is it all really done by children?" But among the stands we see the youngsters on duty, walking about with pride in their eyes. They are a living proof that everything at the Exhibition has been made by children's hands. You see, they themselves study in these workshops, and they will be delighted to initiate you into the mysteries of their trade. One of the boys on duty, thirteen-year-old Edic Reimer, told us in detail how to make candles, what percentage of wax must be added to the paraffin, why the cardboard cases must be carefully oiled, why the lower opening in the case should be stopped up with a wooden plug, and finally why the top of the candle is sometimes uneven and ugly.

Useful things are to be seen in all directions at the Exhibition, but still you may find toys there as well as other objects of amusement and recreation. Suddenly the visitor runs up against a little placard, brightly painted:

Welcome!
We come from the plaything workshop of school No. 408.

And under the placard you see, pompously seated, a lot of multicoloured stuff dolls, cotton clowns, thick plush teddy-bears.

There are fur-dressers among the young workers. They exhibit fine fur collars, warm muffs and gloves. There are shoemakers. It is a trifle for them to re-sole shoes, to mail on a broken heel. The schoolchildren of one district have organized their own collective farm, the "Pioneer." They grow cucumbers, carrots, egg-plants, turnips. Blue tomatoes are considered to be a southern plant, but the young agronomists succeed in obtaining them near Moscow. On a freshly planed wooden shelf you see some kohlrabi or turnip-cabbage. It is a kind of cabbage where all the vital sap is concentrated in the stalk, just as in the ordinary cabbage heads we find it in the leaves, or in the case of the cauliflower in the flower itself. It is the only kind of cabbage where the old Russian adage: "seven cloaks without a clasp" is absolutely inapplicable. A young girl-naturalist is gazing with loving eyes at these vegetables cultivated by her own hands. There is nothing in the world nicer than the kohlrabi, in her opinion.

The workshops have their habitual customers. The objects made by them appear on the shelves of our shops. Somebody will pay money for this knitted cap, this means that it hasn't been made so badly. And the children are doing their best. They put even more zeal and love into their work when they find out that the things prepared by them will go to the hospitals, to the ambulances and to the front. In the majority of workshops they fulfil orders connected with the defence of the country. They prepare ammunition boxes, parachute rings, signal lanterns and other petty equipment for the planes, wooden training rifles, warm underclothing, mittens, postal-envelopes. These latter are a small and simple thing, but how important to the front! And the children at the Moscow school No. 590 have prepared a million one hundred thousand such envelopes in the course of one month and a half, millions of letters to and from the front will be conveyed in these envelopes, carefully gummed by these children's hands.

There is an amusing story by Jerome K. Jerome about uncle Podger hanging up a picture. He turned the whole house upside-down, he demanded a ruler and paper for calculations, he would lose his hammer every minute, spill the nails, and finally he hurt his hand, besides disfiguring the walls with holes, but the picture itself went on hanging askew and insecurely. This could never happened if uncle Podger

had been acquainted with some of the children taking part in the Exhibition. The schoolchildren of Moscow want to know how to do everything. This knowledge will be of great use to them in the future. Even now it is very useful to themselves, to their own people, to the front, to their Fatherland.

At the entrance to the hall, the old-fashioned guns are standing criss-crossed. Thus they used to be left by Russian soldiers at their halting places or near their bivouac camp fires. Thus they stood a hundred and thirty years ago on the night before the battle of Borodino, on the 7th of September, 1812. The Exhibition that has been opened in the halls of the Historical Museum carries the spectator back to the epoch of the Patriotic War against Napoleon. Every detail here is part and parcel of history. Under the glass of the show-cases lie little balls mildewed and whitish with the passage of time. They are the bullets of Russian soldiers, found on the field of Borodino many years after the battle.

In the next show-case lie rusty bits of shrapnel. Perhaps it was one of these that caused the death of the famous General Bagration, the idol of the army, Suvorov's disciple. Mortally wounded at Borodino, he ordered that he should be placed on a gun-carriage, and, though bleeding profusely, continued to give out commands in a resonant voice.

Here is the telescope belonging to Kutuzov himself, a little toy-thing compared with modern optical instruments. Here are two of his notes to General D. Dokhturov, who relieved the wounded Bagration. Sent when the battle of Borodino was at its most furious (at 12 noon and at 2 p.m.), they are written in a calm, firm hand; Kutuzov proposes to the general that he should "hold out until I send the order to retreat. . ."

There are many military trophies in the Exhibition: weapons and uniforms of French officers and men. In one of the show-cases there is something reminiscent of a flute. On the reddish velvet wrapped tightly round the staff, embossed golden eagles shine like the keys of a flute. This is Marshall Davout's baton. Here also is Napoleon's field canteen, broad, clumsy, on two high wheels. It was captured by the Russian troops during the crossing of the Berezina. Beside it is an ordinary sleigh, narrow and uncomfortable. It was into this very sleigh that Napoleon stepped late at night on the 5th of December, 1812, and, accompanied by the diplomat Caulaincourt, was whirled away westward. Some days later the thaw set in. Napoleon abandoned the sleigh and transferred to a carriage, which succeeded in conveying the refugee to Paris. The sleigh was preserved by the local people and later found its way to the museum.

The Patriotic War of 1812 left an indelible trace on folklore and song. Right up to the present day people still sing songs about Kutuzov and his soldiers. Numerous cheap popular prints and coloured cartoons displayed in the Exhibition maliciously and caustically hold up to ridicule the ambitious plans of Napoleon. Of exceptional interest are some woodcarvings, the work of peasants of the village of Bogorodskoye (Moscow district). Whole scenes take shape out of a formless piece of wood, brought to life by the touch of the unpretentious knife of a peasant artist. Especially curious is this: with a huge broom a Russian peasant is sweeping from the Moscow Kremlin a crowd of Napoleon's soldiers, minute figurettes scattering in a panic in all directions. . .

The visitor leaves the Exhibition in the grip of a thousand crowding impressions of those great historical events. He steps out over the threshold of the Museum into his beloved capital, the stern war-time Moscow. And from revisiting in thought the heroic past every Russian draws the firm assurance of coming victory over his present-day enemy, the hated German fascism.

On the 28th of June, 1941, some days after the beginning of the Great Patriotic War against the German invaders, the news flew over the length and breadth of the Soviet Union of the heroic deed of Junior Lieutenant Peter Kharitonov, who rammed a German "Junkers-88."

Ramming is a formidable weapon in the hands of Russian fighter-pilots. It is well to recall here that the first ram ever carried out was made by a Russian pilot, Captain P. Nesterov, a fearless innovator. To him belonged the idea of the "loop of death," which to many sceptics seemed a fantastic undertaking. Nonetheless, on the 9th of September, 1913, after prolonged and persistent preparation, Nesterov succeeded in carrying out the "loop of death." Some however declared that Nesterov was not the first to achieve this dangerous stunt, and that the credit should go to the famous French flier A. Pégoud. Soon after, in 1914, the two daring pilots met. Pégoud came to Moscow and carried out a number of flights here. In a fiery speech in the Polytechnical Museum, where the Muscovites were holding a celebration in his honour, Pégoud recognized that he had been the first ever to fly upside down. As for the "loop of death," Pégoud, pointing to Nesterov who was sitting nearly, announced loudly:

"He was the first."

During the Russo-German war, Nesterov was at the head of a big unit of the Russian Air Force. On the 8th of September, 1914, the well-known Austrian flier Baron Rosenthal tried to set fire to some Russian

hangars. Nesterov, in his plane "Morand," boldly attacked the enemy. Noting that he was pursued, the Austrian's "Albatros," which was flying at a great height, began to descend so as the quicker to make good its escape from its dangerous enemy. But it was impossible to throw Nesterov off the trail. From a great height his swift plane went rushing after the enemy machine. With bated breath the Russian soldiers watching the air battle from the ground awaited the clash. At six to seven hundred metres from the earth Nesterov caught up with the heavy Austrian plane and rammed it with the wheels of his chassis. For a moment both planes hung motionless in the air, like dragons locked in combat. Then the motor of Nesterov's plane separated out and fell, and after it the plane itself began to fall. From the earth it seemed that it was descending smoothly.

"He's alive!" burst involuntarily from everyone's lips.

But their joy was premature. When quite close to the earth Nesterov fell from the plane and was dashed to death. The Austrian machine, after hovering in the air for some seconds, dropped like a stone, passing the "Morand" which was still circling in the air. The blow dealt by Nesterov had broken through the body of the enemy plane near the motor and struck straight at the fliers, who were killed.

Thus the pioneer of the air ram, P. Nesterov, ended his life; but his famous exploit has been repeated hundreds and thousands of times by Soviet fliers in the days of the Great Patriotic War with the Germans. Armed with great flying skill, sitting in the cabins of first-class planes, they send to their doom enemy machines, while preserving their own lives for further struggle in the name of their Fatherland.

The low-vaulted chambers of the Kremlin Palace. The little mica windows glimmer dimly. Boyars in heavy velvet greatcoats squeeze carefully through the narrow doorway. Seated on the throne is an old man with thin face and wispy grey beard, Tsar Ivan the Terrible. He raises his head and casts a keen penetrating glance round the company. . . The powerful Jupiter lamps go out, and the majestic Tsar, jumping down from the throne, runs lightly up to producer S. Eisenstein. In the mighty ruler those present recognize one of the best Soviet cinema actors, N. Cherkassov. . .

In the pavilions of the Central United Cinema Studios, at present in the town of Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan), a new historical picture, *Ivan the Terrible*, is being filmed.

Before the spectator of the future film will pass the whole life of this prominent statesman from early youth to advanced old age. Ivan the Terrible was not only the creator of the united Russian State:

Sergei Eisenstein rehearsing with a young actor the part of Ivan the Terrible in his youth

he was also a very clever strategist who laid the foundation of the Russian regular army. Under Ivan the Terrible, Russia finally cast off the Tartar yoke completely by annexing Kazan and Astrakhan to the Russian State. It was at this period, too, that diplomatic relations were entered into with England and began to develop successfully. It is interesting to remember that it was under Ivan the Terrible that English ships first found a way to Russia through the White Sea.

"The aim of our film," says producer S. Eisenstein, "is to give a historically true picture of the personality and statesmanship of Tsar Ivan, one of the most enlightened and advanced people of his time. We have no intention whatever of softening down or veiling the harshness of the struggle which Ivan carried on within the State and abroad for the creation and preservation of the unity of the then Russian State.

"We have no intention of turning Ivan the Terrible into 'Ivan the Amiable,' but we count it our duty in the future film to show from all angles the significance and scope of his actions."

"At sunset there's a fellow strolls slowly past my house," come women's voices, full of life and merriment, through the trumpet of the loudspeaker; and the listeners, willy-nilly, begin to smile. This is one of the most popular national collectives in the Soviet Union, the M. Pyatnitsky People's Folk Choir.

This exceptionally successful vocal ensemble was first formed in the second decade

of the present century on the initiative of the well-known musician, ethnographer and collector of genuine Russian songs, M. Pyatnitsky. As early as in 1913, Moscow writers, actors and musicians wrote to Pyatnitsky after a concert given by his choir: ". . . Today in Moscow, amidst the bustle and restlessness of a great city, there poured forth, lilted, laughed and cried the old Russian folk song. In far-away villages, which still preserve the traditions of bygone ages, you have sought out and brought together genuine artists of the folk song. They reminded us that Russian soil has given birth to great rulers and mighty men, incarnations of the people's mind, of its spiritual and physical power. . ."

After the death of its founder, the choir became a State choir; later it was given the title of Honoured Collective of the Republic. At the present time the Pyatnitsky choir is in the prime of its artistic life. Not long ago, after returning from a long tour in the country lasting over a year, the choir gave a series of concerts in Moscow.

The Pyatnitsky choir is famous for preserving old songs and gathering new ones. With exceptional love and care they cherish old folk melodies, choruses, dances and facetious sayings. They make them live again, giving an accurate and talented rendering. But they also collect all that is coming into being now in the contemporary Russian village, all the songs and topical ditties that express its life, thoughts and the changes that are taking place in it. In this lies the special merit of the choir and its leaders, P. Kazmin and V. Zakharov.

Some of the old Russian songs performed by the choir are accompanied by "action." Among them, the "mime dancing," these original theatres peculiar to the village, occupy a place all their own. In these choruses each spectator for a time turns into a performer, then again becomes a spectator, to admire how the others sing and dance.

In the programme of the most recent Moscow concerts, songs composed during the war were richly represented. The most brilliant of them is the partisan song *My Fog, o Thick Fog*. It was the first time it had ever been performed in Moscow; the effect of the song was broad, expressive and powerful. The concerts ended up with Russian folk dancing, swift and wild in tempo, vivid in colouring, full of the spirit of daring and gaiety.

In the art of the Pyatnitsky choir, as in a drop of water, is reflected the talent of the Russian people, their humour, fresh outlook and breadth of spirit.

The Russian writer N. Leskov (1831—1895) has a story called *The Left-Handed Man*. In it we hear about the wonderfully gifted craftsman of Tula, who contrived to make shoes for the feet of a mechanical flea, the size of which was no bigger than that of the living insect. But that was not all: each of the shoes was fixed on with nails, on the heads of which were engraved the initials of the craftsman!

This hero of Leskov's involuntarily comes to mind as we look over the work of old Russian craftsmen preserved in the rich collections of the Historical Museum in Moscow.

. . . In special little wooden cases stand miniature glass retorts, tightly stoppered with corks. A tiny lock is fastened to each cork. The smallest of them is no bigger than the head of a match. The key to it is so small that it is impossible to pick it up. These locks were made by famous Tula craftsmen, fellow townsmen of Leskov's Left-Handed Man. The people working in the Historical Museum wanted to try out the locks to see if there were any working mechanism in them. Perhaps they were simply curious little toys, dummies? With enormous difficulty they took the very smallest key in tweezers, inserted it into the keyhole of the littlest lock and turned. Immediately the lock flew open. Inside this tiny miniature thing was a mechanism in perfect working order!

The Tula craftsmen produced such wares by the way and rarely: their main business was weapons. Amongst the most valuable exhibits in the Historical Museum are the guns made by the famous Tula armourer Ivan Lyalin. Their metal parts are covered with the most intricate and delicate ornamental patterns, while the gun-stock is made of carved ivory. Now the Tula craftsmen make the most complicated guns in modern military technique. But the purpose of these formidable steel monsters, as of the light handsome guns of yore, remains one and the same: the defence of the Fatherland against the enemy.

The visitor lingers long at one of the show-cases of the Museum. Here there is exhibited the war helmet of the Great Prince Yaroslav, father of Alexander Nevsky who defeated the Teuton knights on the ice of Lake Chudskoye in 1242. This helmet is a perfect work of art.

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