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CZECHOSLOVAKS ON THE SOVIET-GERMAN FRONT

The Hitlerites succeeded in temporarily capturing Czechoslovakia. But although humiliated, disarmed and abandoned to the mercy of the nazi brigands, our people has never reconciled itself to slavery. The traditions of its forebears, who for centuries had selflessly defended their country against German aggression, are deeply ingrained in the Czech people. The people has preserved the traditions of the glorious Hussites who drove the powerful hordes of German crusaders from Czechia. And when this very people has fallen into the hands of the accursed Hitler, it has not yielded, has not lost heart. The Czechs and Slovaks have been and are fighting the Hitler invaders wherever possible and with every means at their disposal. They are fighting the hated enemy at home and abroad. Czechoslovak airmen have been known to take part in many an RAF raid on Germany. They marked the anniversary of the occupation of Prague by a raid on Berlin, and once more their bombs brought home to Hitler the fact that the Czech people has not laid down arms, that it is fighting on and will continue to fight until victory is won.

However, the Czechs know that it is on the Soviet-German front that the decisive struggle against Hitler is in progress. It is here that the fate of Europe and of Czechoslovakia will be decided. Therefore the dream of the Czechs was to fight on the Soviet front in fraternal cooperation with the heroic Red Army. This formed an essential point in the agreement between the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia of July 18th, 1941, which provided for the formation of Czechoslovak units on the territory of the U.S.S.R. The dream of the Czechs had come true. Immediately after the conclusion of the agreement the formation of the Czechoslovak unit began.

When the formation and training of this unit had been completed, its command, on behalf of the entire personnel, addressed a request to Supreme Commander in Chief of the Red Army, Marshal of the Soviet Union J. Stalin, asking for an opportunity to fight against the German-fascist hordes. "Our heroic and long-suffering people at home," wrote Colonel Svoboda, "demands of the Czechoslovaks abroad that they avenge by armed action all the suffering and crimes perpetrated by the Germans against our people and against other peoples of the world. We want to fulfil and must fulfil this demand of our people with honour. This is dictated by our sense of duty to our country and by the recognition of the interests of all progressive peoples. The alliance and friendship between the Soviet and Czechoslovak peoples will become even firmer when they are sealed with blood shed in the common struggle side by side with the Red Army. Please do not refuse my request."

This is how the Czechoslovaks went to the front: they asked to be given an opportunity to fight against the hated German fascist enslavers. They are not regular soldiers, they are volunteers in the highest sense of this word. In Czechia they are called "fighters for truth and country," thereby emphasizing the undying sacred traditions of our ancestors, of "God's fighters" of John Hus. This army of patriots, united by love for their country that is tormented by the Hitlerites and by hatred for the enemy, is headed by Colonel Ludvik Svoboda. Svoboda is an experienced soldier, skilled in the art of warfare. He fought against the Germans in the ranks of the Russian army during the First World War, and was decorated for valour. A Czech patriot, who holds his native land, the interests of his people above everything else, Colonel Svoboda has always enjoyed the sincere respect and affection of his subordinates. He is greatly loved here too by the soldiers of the Czechoslovak unit formed on the territory of the Soviet Union. Colonel Svoboda is more than a com-

mander to them, he is a father to them.

Some time ago the world had occasion to learn from the communiqué of the Soviet Information Bureau about the brave, gallant struggle of the Czechoslovaks against the hated Hitlerites on the Soviet-German front. The services of the Czechoslovak warriors in battle have already won official recognition, and what recognition! For exemplary fulfilment of assignments of the command on the field of battle against the German invaders and for valour and heroism displayed, Senior Lieutenant Ottokar Jaroš was honoured with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, with the Order of Lenin and the Gold Star Medal. Commander of the Czechoslovak unit, Colonel L. Svoboda was decorated with the Order of Lenin; 15 men of the Czechoslovak unit received the Order of the Red Banner, 21— the Order of the Patriotic War, 22— the Order of the Red Star, and 26— the "For Valour" Medal. The highest decorations of the great Soviet State were a worthy reward for the gallantry of the soldiers and officers of the Czechoslovak unit in the U.S.S.R., who side by side with the men of the Red Army are fighting the dark forces of German fascist barbarism.

Words are inadequate to express what I felt when I read the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. awarding orders and medals to soldiers and officers of the Czechoslovak unit in the U.S.S.R.

We, the sons of beautiful and proud Czechia, were confident that our soldiers would do their duty on the field of battle against the German fascist barbarians. But what they did has truly surpassed our expectations. The first foreign soldier to receive the title of Hero of the Soviet Union is a son of the Czechoslovak people! Senior Lieutenant Jaroš' action has made his name immortal. He was ordered to keep the Germans off the river, and together with the sub-unit under his command he carried out this order despite the heavy odds.

The Germans began by sending twelve panzers to attack the position held by Senior Lieutenant Jaroš' sub-unit, but well-aimed fire sent the fascist reeling back. A few hours later the enemy brought up sixty tanks and a battalion of motorized tommy-gunners to storm the village. The tanks were armed with flame-throwers, and the village was soon ablaze. The Germans greatly outnumbered the Czechs; the battle raged with growing tension, but the Czechoslovaks never once wavered. Again and again at the order of their commander they made into bayonet charges. Allowing the tanks to pass, the Czechoslovaks cut off the German tommy-gunners and twice counter-attacked them. Abandoning their dead and wounded in the village streets, the Germans fled before the onslaught of the Czech soldiers, and only their returning panzers were able to rescue them. The Germans tried to crush the resistance of the Czechoslovaks with fire and tanks, but the Czechoslovaks preferred death to retreat. Throughout the battle Jaroš fought in the front ranks. Twice wounded, blood pouring from his throat, he continued to fire at the Germans, to urge his men forward. He died a hero's death, crushed under the treads of an enemy tank, but he had stuck to his post and held the line.

Other Czechoslovak soldiers and officers fought the enemy with equal courage. Taking cover behind a crumbled wall, Corporal Josef Černy sent well-aimed bullets into the German tommy-gunners. Seven Germans had already met death at his hand when a tank approached hauling a carrier with thirty more Germans. The tankman barely looked out of the hatch when he was knocked out by a Černy's bullet. A tank grenade thrown by Černy destroyed most of the Hitlerites. Only when his ammunition gave out, did Černy return to his comrades. By Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. Corporal Josef Černy was awarded the Order of the Red Banner.

Another to be decorated with the Order of the Red Banner was Junior Lieutenant František Král. Wounded in battle, he continued to fight the enemy, and refused to go to hospital until ordered to do so by Colonel Svoboda. It was later discovered however that Král never reached the hospital. En route he passed an inhabited point where a fierce battle was in progress. Král immediately reported to the head-

quarters of the nearest Red Army unit, volunteering his services. News of the courage of the Czechoslovaks had already reached the Soviet commanders, and Král was placed in command of a Red Army company. A few days later Junior Lieutenant Král returned to his own unit with a certificate of merit in battle for having destroyed fifteen German tommy-gunners.

One of the most splendid features of the fighting operations of the Czechoslovak unit on the Soviet-German front, a feature which is a source of special joy to us, is its firm friendship with Red Army units. Accounts of the battles and stories told by officers reveal that at every step they are meeting comradely aid and understanding on the part of all Red Army commanders and soldiers.

The heroism of the Czechoslovak soldiers in battle against the Germans on the Soviet-German front will have considerable repercussions abroad, and primarily in Czechoslovakia. There is no doubt that when they learn of the exploits of our soldiers, the Czechoslovaks at home will do their utmost to become brothers worthy of these heroes. The Czechoslovak unit in Great Britain has already declared its determination to fight the Hitler gangs just as the Czechoslovaks are fighting them on the Soviet front. Following the first report of the Soviet Information Bureau to this effect, Czechoslovaks in the United States of America have launched a mass drive for funds to purchase armaments for the Czechoslovak unit in the U.S.S.R.

The first results of the operations of the Czechoslovak unit in the U.S.S.R. lend added confirmation to the fact that the peoples enslaved and oppressed by Hitler have no greater friend than the Soviet Union. If all the forces are united for struggle against Hitler, the enemy will be smashed and all the oppressed peoples will regain their freedom. Just as Lidice and Ležaky have become to the whole world a symbol of the suffering of European peoples enslaved by Hitler, so too will the name of Hero of the Soviet Union Senior Lieutenant Jaroš become a symbol of victory over the accursed enemy of the Czechoslovak people and of all other freedom-loving peoples of the world.

Professor ZDENEK NEJEDLY
Vice-Chairman of the All-Slav Committee

The Czechoslovak formation in the U.S.S.R.

THE HATED ENEMY OF ARMENIA

Even the most thorough-going scoundrel, the most brazen liar may sometimes, as an exception, speak a true word, if there is no way of avoiding it. Though even, in such cases, the lying scoundrel will not tell the whole truth, he tries to twist and obscure it, so as to present matters in a light more favourable for himself.

This is just what Göring did in his notorious "Green folder," the colour of which cannot conceal its poisonous brown character. While making the fantastic demand that his creatures stir up dissension between the peoples of the Soviet Union and bring them under German rule, he at the same time advises them to take note of the "especial unfriendliness" of the Armenians to the Germans.

Here we have both truth and lies. Göring knows very well indeed that the word to use is not "unfriendliness," but deadly hatred and loathing. And it is indeed an especial loathing.

The account the Armenians have to settle with the Germans does not commence with the latter's present crimes in the Soviet regions they have temporarily occupied. The Armenians have not forgotten their old scores with German imperialism, they remember past sufferings of their country, they remember Armenian blood shed in the days of old.

Göring gave the game away with that one word "especial"; he knows very well whom western Armenia has to thank for its sufferings of the past century.

Twenty-two years have passed since Armenia, with the fraternal aid of the Russian people and the Red Army, freed itself from its enemies, both foreign enemies and those born on its soil but false and treacherous at heart—the Dashnaks. On November 29th, 1920, the new Soviet life dispersed the heavy clouds of ancient sorrow; this was a life quickened and warmed by free, creative labour. And rejoicing in their new-found happiness, the Armenian people saw the ever-growing fertility of their fields and gardens, saw their prosperous towns and villages, and heard the measured, cheerful beat of machines where previously the air had resounded only to the groans of miserable, tormented people.

Many are the songs which have come into being among the people of Armenia during these twenty-two years, songs full of victory and happiness. The younger people do not even know the old sad songs. But they are still remembered by their parents, these old sorrowful laments, songs in which an unhappy people told of their sons and daughters killed at the end of the last century, dark memories of wild savagery, dark deeds committed at the will of the inspirer of German imperialism—Wilhelm II.

But it was not only the groans of a suffering people that sounded in the old songs of Armenia, not only appeals for aid and the hopes of liberation. They called for vengeance, vengeance against the real instigators of the savagery of the nineties and of the foul deeds planned with German method in Berlin before the beginning of the first world war.

Possibly some people may still have had doubts, before the beginning of the Patriotic War, as to where and how the plans for old wrongs were worked out, whence came the butchers, skilled in the mass slaughter of Armenians. But now, when these modern vandals are destroying the historical treasures of the Russian and Ukrainian people, when they blow up the Novgorod Kremlin and the St. Sofia Cathedral, when they consign the Peterhof Palaces to flames, the Armenian people have understood once and for all who inspired the destruction of treasures of Armenian culture, the wonderful gems of Armenian art. And the Armenian people will never forget what they owe the Germans, will never forget how the cultural treasures of their brother peoples, those with whom they have united in life and labour, have been plundered and destroyed.

In the regions of the Soviet land temporarily seized by the enemy, the Hitlerites are excelling themselves in their evildoing. They are slaughtering old people, women and children by hundreds and thousands, they are violating girls, torturing prisoners. The Armenians are well able to recognize the mark of the beast which rent them too in days gone by. They have good cause to

know that the Hitlerites are experienced torturers.

And now the hatred of the Armenian people for the Germans, which Göring calls "especial unfriendliness," is redoubled: to the memory of former sufferings is added a thirst for vengeance on the hitlerite bandits for the death and destruction they have brought now to the Soviet land. This thirst they share with their brothers, all the sons of the great family of Soviet peoples. And with the approach of the day of reckoning for all that the Huns have wrecked and burned, for all those whom they have tortured and killed, the people of Armenia are fired with a fresh ardour and impetus in their fight against the accursed enemy. For they know that tremendous efforts and sacrifices are yet needed for the final victory over the German-fascist invaders.

They also know that the sun of freedom will once more shine over our fields and cities. Again the gardens will blossom and the fields whiten with the harvest over the bones of the defeated enemy. And in Armenia, preserved in the days of war from the hitlerite hordes, life will continue to unfold and expand in peace still more brightly, the valleys of Ararat will bring forth their fruits ten- and twentyfold, new towns will rise, healthy and merry children will grow up, sturdy and strong, ready to take their places in the ranks of those building a happy life, both for themselves and for others.

All the friendly family of Soviet peoples are combining their efforts to bring back this happy life: Russians and Uzbeks, Ukrainians and Turkmenians, Tajiks and Byelorussians. All the Caucasian mountaineers are prepared to double and redouble their efforts, to live up to the ancient Armenian saying: "When you've killed the snake, cut off its head and bury it separately, so that it may never again unite with the body and bite you."

Academician I. ORBELI

The time is approaching when the Red Army, in conjunction with the armies of our Allies, will break the back of the fascist beast.

(From Order of the Day of J. Stalin, May 1st, 1943)

Drawn by Kukryniksy

LEONID LEONOV

INVASION

A Play in Four Acts

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

TALANOV, Ivan Tikhonovich, doctor.
ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA, his wife.
FYODOR, their son.
OLGA, their daughter.
DEMIDYEVNA, an old servant, one of the family.
ANISKA, her granddaughter.
KOLESNIKOV, chairman of the district executive committee.
FAIYUNIN, Nikolai Sergeyevich, risen from the dead.
KOKORYSHKIN, Semyon Ilyich, a rising star.
YEGOROV, TATAROV } men from Andrei's group.
MOSSALSKY, a former Russian,
WIBBEL, town commendant.
SPURRE, a Gestapo dragon.
KUNTZ, Wibbel's adjutant.
AN OLD MAN.
PROKOFI, a boy.
A YOUNG FELLOW in a military greatcoat.

Partisans, officers, a woman in a man's greatcoat, a waiter, a madman, soldiers of a convoy, and others.

The action takes place in a small Russian town, in our own times.

ACT I

A low-ceilinged room in an old stone house, Dr. Talanov's apartment, furnished in the style at the beginning of the century, when the doctor started practice. Double doors, the top half of ground glass, lead to neighbouring rooms. In a corner, a girl's bed and dressing table, simple and plain, behind a screen. A large collection of framed photographs, dominated by a huge portrait of a tall, thin boy in a sailor suit. The broad central window opens onto a street of a provincial Russian town, with a church tower visible on a distant height. Dusk is falling. Anna Nikolayevna is finishing a letter, on a corner of the table. At the other end of it, Demidyevna is laying dinner.

DEMIDYEVNA: And all the cockroaches left the kitchen during the night. (*Anna Nikolayevna makes an impatient gesture.*) They're running away from the Germans. You should just hear what's going on outside.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: You bring everything home with you. If it isn't an old broken horseshoe, then it's bad news. (*A knock at the door.*)

DEMIDYEVNA: Come in. Who's it now?

KOKORYSHKIN (*peering round the door*): It's me, excuse me, please, it's Kokoryshkin. I can't find Ivan Tikhonovich anywhere.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: This is his operation day. He'll be back soon. Come in and wait.

KOKORYSHKIN: Don't trouble yourself. I'll wait out here. (*Closes the door.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Kokoryshkin! Foolish fellow!

(*She goes out and brings him in. Kokoryshkin is a short-sighted man of uncertain age, wearing an overcoat which once belonged to somebody else.*)

KOKORYSHKIN: Then allow me to keep my coat on, I'm not dressed for company. I came on business, just to have some papers signed.

DEMIDYEVNA: Find yourself somewhere to sit and keep quiet, we're writing a letter to Fyodor Ivanovich. (*Kokoryshkin sits down, coughs and remains motionless, holding his folder on his knee.*) You'd think they'd all taken leave of their senses. Borovkov took the whole houseful away with him, and the auntie atop of the cart nursing the samovar. Everyone's going, can't you see?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Nobody's going anywhere. Ask Kokoryshkin there, he knows everything.

KOKORYSHKIN (*half-rising*): Quite right. They're going.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Kolesnikov rang up just now and he said nothing about it. And as chairman of the district executive committee, he'd know if there was anything of the sort.

KOKORYSHKIN: He's going, too.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Well, let them go, then. (*Bending over her letter:*) And do stop grumbling, Demidyevna.

DEMIDYEVNA: It's not for me to grumble... But you should bury your things before the ground's hard, anyone'll tell you that. (*To Kokoryshkin:*) They took three of Aniska's shifts. And there was a hair ribbon on top, an old one, it'd been washed time and again, they couldn't even keep their thieving fingers off that.

KOKORYSHKIN: Who's Aniska?

DEMIDYEVNA: It's my granddaughter who used to live over in Lomtyevo, she ran away here from the Germans. Forty versts on foot. Looks like it's a fine life with them, that does. (*Kokoryshkin clucks sympathetically, and again sits motionless.*) We gave her hot tea, but we couldn't seem to get any warmth into her. She just sat there shaking like a leaf. I've sent her off now to get some sugar. She's right fond of me, that she is, it's granny here and granny there... (*To Anna Nikolayevna:*) I've made her up a bed on the trunks. She'll help us wash the floors, and can do some bits of washing, too.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Of course, let her stay with us and rest a little. (*Finishing the letter:*) Lomtyevo! That's where Ivan Tikhonovich started to practise. Fyodor was born there, and used to come home there for his holidays when he was studying How everything has changed!

DEMIDYEVNA: Write to him, write to him. Pour out your mother's heart, your mother's tears. (*With an indignant glance at the boy's portrait:*) Maybe he'll send a postcard at least!

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*sticking down the envelope*): This is my last letter! If he doesn't answer this time, I've done with him. (*In an embarrassed tone, struggling with her tears:*) Excuse us, please. But we're so used to you, Kokoryshkin.

KOKORYSHKIN: I feel for you. (*With emotion:*) Although I myself couldn't have children because of my health, still, in my dreams, you understand, I've had everything, enjoyed everything, yes, and forgiven myself everything. (*Furtively touching his eyes:*) I never met your Fyodor Ivanovich.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: He's away from home... Shut the windows, Demidyevna, the aeroplanes will come soon.

KOKORYSHKIN: And has he been away from home long?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Three years already... and eight days. Today is the ninth.

DEMIDYEVNA: He's an ill-chanced lad, that of ours.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: He was always sickly, it was only thanks to his nurse that reared him. But a good, kind boy he was, only quick-tempered... (*Rising:*) I think Ivan Tikhonovich is here.

(*Demidyevna fixes plywood shutters over the windows and switches on the light. Olga comes in from work. She is wearing an autumn coat and a plain hat, and carries a portfolio. For a moment she screws up her eyes, dazzled by the light of the lamp, then says quietly:* "Good evening, Mum," *and goes behind the screen. After taking off her outer clothes, she stands for a moment thinking of nothing in particular, her hands clasped behind her back.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Shall I warm anything up for you, or will you wait for Father?

OLGA: I had lunch at school, thanks.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*glancing at*

Olga): Has something upset you, Olga?

OLGA: No, nothing, it's just your fancy. (*Taking a pile of exercise books from her portfolio:*) I'm tired, and I've still got these exercises to correct.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: And why doesn't my Olga look at me?

OLGA: Oh, well! . . Our troops came past the school this evening. Silently. A retreat. The children sat there as quiet as mice. And then all at once everything seemed kind of empty. . . even the dogs stopped barking. (*With stern emphasis:*) Things are bad at the front, Mum.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: When. . . did it happen?

OLGA: Last night. They struck the Pyzhovsky centre on the flank with the tanks and came out in a wedge at Medvedikha. I looked in at Kolesnikov's on the way home; they're busy burning papers and documents.

KOKORYSHKIN: Smuts are flying like a black snowstorm. It's a sad sight!

OLGA: Excuse me, I didn't see you there, Kokoryshkin.

KOKORYSHKIN (*ferociously*): They should put them behind barbed wire and then turn the guns on them and wipe them out, that's what!

OLGA: It's easy for us back here to talk about the war. But out there. . .

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: And what else has happened, Olga, my dear? (*Olga is silent.*) You haven't had dinner, have you, Kokoryshkin? Go along to the kitchen. (*Calling through the door:*) Demidyevna, give Kokoryshkin something to eat.

KOKORYSHKIN: You're too good, Anna Nikolayevna. I'll be getting fat!

(*He goes out. The mother looks expectantly at her daughter.*)

OLGA: Only don't be frightened, Mummy dear. . . He's alive and well. And everything's all right. I've just seen Fedya.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Where, where?

OLGA: On the square . . . There was a big pool of water, rippling in the breeze. And he was standing there, peering into the darkness, alone. . .

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: And I suppose he was in ragged clothes, terrible to look at, and cut-down boots, eh?

OLGA: No. . . He's much thinner. I only knew him by his cough.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Has he been here long?

OLGA: I didn't speak to him, I saw him through the gate. Then I rushed home to warn you.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Why are we standing about doing nothing? Demidyevna, Demidyevna! (*Demidyevna comes running in.*) Demidyevna, Fyodor's come! Lay the table, and get the liqueur out of the sideboard cupboard. He'll be chilled, it'll warm him. I'll just put something on, and I'll run and fetch him. Otherwise he'll disappear again for dear knows how long. . .

DEMIDYEVNA: You're quick to forget all the grief your son's brought you, Anna Nikolayevna.

OLGA (*holding her mother's arm to detain her*): You're not going anywhere. We warned him against that woman. He left us of his own free will, let him come back the same way. (*Listening intently:*) There's someone in our shed. (*All listen. Sound of metal clinking.*) Someone's bumped into the washtub. I expect it's a patient looking for Father, and missed his way in the darkness.

DEMIDYEVNA (*going in to the passage*): The doors aren't locked again.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: You go, I'll fasten up.

(*She leaves the room, then a faint, moaning cry is heard. Only a mother can cry out like that. Then a man's deep voice, saying in a condescending tone:* "All right, all right, stop whimpering, Mother! My limbs are whole, I've got my head here under my arm. Everything's all in order!")

DEMIDYEVNA: So this is the grand day his mother waited for so long!

(*Mother and son appear on the threshold. She looks very small beside him and is holding him by the elbow, evidently much to his distaste. Fyodor is a tall man with a high forehead like his father, but with a look of alert audacity in his sunken eyes. His dandified, thin line of moustache does not suit him. His leather coat is rubbed from hard wear, the shoulder is soiled with plaster, his topboots are dirty. He is smoking.*)

FYODOR (*ridding himself of his mother's clinging hands*): Hello, sister! You aren't too fine to shake hands?

OLGA (*coming towards him uncertainly*): Fyodor! Fedka, dear. . . (*He recoils, confused by her outburst of emotion.*)

FYODOR: I've got a cold. . . caught it on the way. Don't be in too much of a hurry. (*He is suddenly shaken by a vio-*

lent fit of coughing. His cigarette falls to the ground. Olga picks it up absent-mindedly and puts it in the ashtray. He holds a handkerchief to his mouth for a moment and then with an accustomed movement hides it in his sleeve.) There, you see, that's what I'm like now.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Come and warm up at the stove, Fedenka. It's nice and hot. Take off that leather coat of yours, give it to me, I'll hang it up.

FYODOR: All right, never mind, I'll do it myself. (*Impatiently:*) Leave it to me, I tell you! (*She shrinks back, looking smaller than ever. He stands the leather coat up vertically on the floor by the door.*) It's not fine enough for a hanger, let it stand like that. (*Threatening it with his finger, like a dog:*) Stand up! (*And only now, instead of the usual greeting, he says:*) Ah, you've got old, Nurse. Not kicked the bucket yet? (*Not a muscle quivers on Demidyevna's face.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Olga dear, you talk to Fyodor. . . I'll get him something to eat. (*To Fyodor, timidly:*) We shan't let you go without having some supper.

OLGA: Demidyevna'll prepare it, Mummy.

DEMIDYEVNA: Let her alone, let her have something to do.

(*Anna Nikolayevna hurries out, biting her lips.*)

OLGA: It looks as if your love for that woman you shot has swallowed up everything else in you, Fyodor. Even affection for your mother. You might be a little kinder to her. She's been a good mother to us. It was for our sakes, yours and mine, that she left the Conservatoire, and what a wonderful career she gave up!

FYODOR: I feel awkward, can't you understand? I've been wandering about the streets for three days, afraid to come in, anything not to hear that. . . funeral sobbing. (*He walks about the room, touching one familiar object after the other, inquisitively.*) Everything's just the same; in the same places. . . I recognize everything. . . (*Opens the piano, touches the keys.*) Does Mother still play?

OLGA: Very rarely. You never wrote her, not even once. Ashamed?

FYODOR: No, it just happened that way. Busy. (*He glances at the portrait, and for a moment his pose corresponds to that of the boy depicted there.*) We've all been children at one time, and then this is what the children turn out to be. (*To his old nurse, over his shoulder, without looking round:*) What are you gawking at, old girl? I can feel your eyes through my back.

DEMIDYEVNA: Just admiring you, Fedenka. A fine fellow you've grown, to be sure!

OLGA: And your sentence is finished? Everything is all right, is it?

FYODOR: Yes, I haven't run away. . . don't worry, I shan't get you into the soup.

OLGA (*offended*): Why do you take me the wrong way? You sit and talk to him, Demidyevna. I'll go and help Mummy. (*Goes out, with her head down.*)

DEMIDYEVNA: Well, so you've managed to drive both of them out. Now it seems to be my turn. Let's see what we make of each other. Limber up your joints. . . (*She sits down on a chair in the centre, nearer to him. Fyodor quails before her, and tries to pull down his sleeves which are too short for him.*) Tell your old nurse the fine tale of how you settled accounts with a woman for not prizing such a handsome fellow as you. (*He gives her a swift look of anger.*) None of your black looks! Save your strength. Your father'll be home soon.

FYODOR: That'll do, Nurse, that's enough. Lay off me!

DEMIDYEVNA: I've prayed to God in secret that he'd deliver you from sin, miserable, worthless boy that you are. . . but no! (*With a short, stern laugh:*) Yet when I prayed for a coat for my nephew, I got it at once, but my prayers for you never came to God's ear somehow. (*Fyodor listens to her, standing by the table, supporting himself with a hand on the letter, which rustles under his palm.*) People don't spare their lives, they are fighting and suffering. And all you can do is to look into your own hard heart. What are you going to do?

FYODOR (*looking at the floor*): I don't know. I can't go on living the old way any more.

DEMIDYEVNA: It's your conscience pricking you. . . or can you still feel the shadow of the bars?

FYODOR (*surrendering*): Stop it, Nurse! I'm chilled through with my life.

DEMIDYEVNA: So you should be chilled through. The best thing you could do, you poor shivering creature, would be to get into any kind of a sol-

dier's coat that'll fit you. That'll warm you better than any fur! And then headlong into the thick of the fight!

FYODOR: They won't take me. (*Very softly, looking round first:*) My chest's bad.

DEMIDYEVNA: Have a try, keep at them, get round them somehow. (*Aniska glances in. She is fifteen years old, and wears a bright flowered frock and thick striped woolen stockings. She is abashed at the sight of a strange man.*) Come in, come in, my girl, don't be afraid. Nobody's going to bite you.

ANISKA: I've brought the sugar, Granny.

DEMIDYEVNA: There's a good girl. Put it on the sideboard. Don't snuffle, and don't clump about with your boots, to make me ashamed of you. (*Aniska tiptoes across the room, carrying the parcel in her outstretched hand. Her eyes are so bright and her cheeks so red with cold, and there is such a timid freshness in all her manner, that one cannot look at her without smiling with pleasure. Fyodor's face softens.*) Don't you know her?

FYODOR: A prize beauty! Who is she?

DEMIDYEVNA: Remember the little humming-top in the courtyard at Lomtyevo that used to keep you awake? That's her, Aniska. See how she's shot up! Ran away from the Germans. (*To Aniska:*) Come and say how do you do, this is Fyodor Ivanovich, the master's son. He's come home from his travels.

(*Aniska makes a little bow and passes her tongue over her lips. Fyodor does not move.*)

FYODOR: What are you laughing at, Saucy?

ANISKA: I'm not laughing. I've got that kind of face.

DEMIDYEVNA: You talk to her a bit, she's got a lively tongue in her head.

FYODOR (*not quite knowing how to begin*): Well, and what were the Germans like there?

ANISKA: And what about them? They're there, that's all.

FYODOR: And what are they like to talk to, are they polite?

ANISKA: All right, they're polite enough. Even when they're taking all you've got they say please and thank you in a foreign language.

FYODOR (*to Demidyevna*): All the boys in Lomtyevo were friends of mine. That tall fellow, Tabakov, I suppose he has children of his own now. Has he many?

ANISKA: Three, the youngest was a year old. (*To Demidyevna, in a more lively tone:*) I forgot to tell you, Granny. . . When they were taking him and his wife to the gallows, their dog bit a German in the hand. A nice little dog it was. So then they hanged the dog side by side with its master and mistress. . . (*With a shiver:*) Looks as though even the dogs are fighting in the war now.

FYODOR (*gruffly*): We-ell. . . And Peter Statnov?

ANISKA: He went to the woods right from the start. Steamed himself out in the bath-house for the last time, then burned it all down, and cleared out. And he took his boy with him, in the sixth form at school he was. Proshka they called him. (*Fyodor smiles at her country singsong. Aniska is annoyed.*) And what are you laughing at, Traveller?

FYODOR: I can't help it when I look at you; you're such a quaint kid. If only everyone were like that!

(*Olga opens the door a crack and utters one word:* "Father!" *General movement. Demidyevna places the chairs, Aniska disappears. Visibly agitated, Fyodor tucks in the ends of the grey scarf round his neck.*)

DEMIDYEVNA: Now don't answer your father back. Let him shout a bit, and you keep quiet, you stiff-necked, stubborn boy!

(*Fyodor withdraws to the window. Enter Talanov, small, clean-shaven, brisk. Evidently he does not know of his son's return.*)

TALANOV: I don't want any dinner. Bring me some tea in the study, and make it strong. Demidyevna, sew the hanger on my coat, there's a good soul, I've been asking you for three days now. (*Noticing his son, speaks to him as though he had seen him only the previous day.*) Ah, Fyodor! So you've come back to your father's house? Splendid! (*Fyodor prepares to reply, but is stopped by a dull, tormenting cough. Talanov listens and awaits the end of the spasm with almost professional interest, head a little on one side.*) Splendid! . . (*Demidyevna carries out his great-coat, and Fyodor puts away his handkerchief.*) Been in town long?

FYODOR: Came yesterday. (*Monotonously, as one repeating a prepared speech:*) I have given you and mother a lot of trouble. Please forgive me.

TALANOV: It's partly our fault, Fyodor. You were our eldest. We were too eager to keep you from any unhappiness. . . and you thought that the whole world was made for you. (*Fyodor wriggles uneasily.*) That woman. . , did she die?

FYODOR: No. I wanted to do myself in too, but I hadn't time.

TALANOV: Why did you. . . do that to her?

FYODOR: I loved her. Not worth it.

TALANOV: And now? (*Fyodor is silent.*) You've come for a rest? Well, all right, stay and look around you.

FYODOR: No, thanks. Everybody would stare at me, preach at me. I've come to you as to a doctor, to be healed.

TALANOV: Splendid. The only thing is, I don't see so well now in the evenings. Sit down here, where it's light, and let me have a look at you.

(*Fyodor sits down obediently nearer to the lamp, even raising the edge of the shade a little. The light falls across his forehead. Talanov looks into his son's face, supporting on Fyodor's hand lying across the table. Fyodor jerks his arm away.*)

FYODOR: Well, have you made your diagnosis?

TALANOV: Yes. I don't like that cough of yours. . . and your eyes are feverish, and your hands hot and damp.

FYODOR: That's nothing. I was meaning something else.

TALANOV: And there's something else, too. You are at a loss. All that brusqueness comes from confusion. And that moustache, too. You are looking for an outlet. Well, that's all to the good. (*Speaking in the tone one uses to a child that has been naughty:*) Look around you, Fyodor. The trouble that's creeping over our country. The many sufferings of the Russian woman weeping by the campfire in the forest. . . and her children by her side still smelling of the smoke of burning homes, a smell that will never leave their souls. Do you know how many of these poor little battered chickens have passed through my hands? Yesterday, for instance. . . (*He gestures with his hand.*) Aye, one's head swims with pain and wrath, pain and wrath! But yours is a sickness that can be cured, Fyodor.

FYODOR: All the better. Sit down and write me a prescription.

TALANOV: It's already written, Fyodor. It's doing right by people.

FYODOR: Doing right? (*With gloomy fire:*) And you, do they do right by you, who have tended and healed them for thirty years? You were the first to perform heart operations, when it was a thing unknown. And it was you who founded the clinic on your hard-earned money. You have become part of the town's property, a public utility, like the fire hose. . .

TALANOV (*listening with half-closed eyes*): Very well said indeed; do go on.

FYODOR: And now the Nibelungs are moving eastwards, destroying everything in their path. People are clearing out, taking their pots and pans, their goods and chattels, and their deaf and dumb old women. How have they come to forget you, the old doctor, eh? Go out and stand at the crossroads, hang on to a trunk with someone else's rubbish inside, and maybe they'll give you a lift on a cart. (*Another fit of coughing shakes him.*) Aye, everything's torn and raw inside me. . . and it burns, burns!

TALANOV: What's burning you there isn't so bad as the evil that is consuming you. (*Olga opens the door.*) Don't disturb us, Olga.

OLGA: Excuse me, Dad. . . but Kolesnikov's come. It's absolutely essential that he see you.

TALANOV (*vexed*): Yes, I remember, he rang me up at the clinic. Ask him to come in. (*To his son:*) It will only take a moment. You go and smoke a cigarette there in the corner, out of the way.

FYODOR: I'm not particularly keen on meeting him. Is your back door nailed up?

OLGA: Go behind the screen for the time being. He's in a hurry, it won't be for long. (*Fyodor goes behind the screen, and Olga opens the door.*) Dad says will you please come in, Comrade Kolesnikov.

(*Enter Kolesnikov. He is wearing a fur jacket and already has a holster at his belt. He is tall, with a high forehead, and bears a certain resemblance to Fyodor who listens to the following conversation from behind the screen.*)

KOLESNIKOV: I've come for you, Ivan Tikhonovich. The car is at the gate, and the two places I promised are there for you. (*Looking round:*) Have you many things to take?

TALANOV: I haven't changed my

mind. I'm not going anywhere, my dear Kolesnikov. I shall be more needed here.

KOLESNIKOV: I knew you'd say that, Ivan Tikhonovich.

OLGA (*quietly, not looking at anyone in particular*): Time's getting short. It's a clear night, there'll soon be a raid.

TALANOV (*to Kolesnikov*): Hurry, or you'll not have time to get across the bridge. Well. . . we'd better say good-bye! (*Kolesnikov does not take his profered hand.*) You're going too, aren't you?

KOLESNIKOV (*slowly*): Nobody can hear us? Nobody from the neighbouring apartment?

TALANOV: It's a bakery next door. (*Olga turns to go.*)

KOLESNIKOV: You don't disturb us, Olga. (*To Talanov:*) It's just that. . . I'm staying in town myself. . . for some time. I'm a Party member, and as long as I'm alive. . .

TALANOV: There, you see! (*In the same tone as Kolesnikov:*) And I'm not a bundle of cloth, myself, or a work of art. I was born in this town, I've become a necessary part of its property (*for Fyodor's benefit:*). . . like the fire hose. And I feel it an especial honour that I am as necessary as this. In the past thirty odd years I've seen half the people in the town born and held them in my arms. . .

KOLESNIKOV (*smiling*): Including myself!

TALANOV: You too. I remember the time when your father was yardman for the late merchant Faiyunin. (*Ironically:*) Not so young as you were then, I don't mind telling you. You don't do enough skiing.

KOLESNIKOV (*glancing at Olga*): Well, there'll be chance enough now for skiing. (*Fyodor knocks Olga's comb off the dressing-table. Kolesnikov is immediately on the alert.*) Somebody's listening to us, Ivan Tikhonovich.

TALANOV: No. . . nobody.

(*Kolesnikov notices Fyodor's overcoat and, without speaking, raises his eyes to Talanov. At that moment Fyodor comes out from behind the screen.*)

FYODOR: Nobody—that's me, evidently. The spectre of a middle-aged man emerged from the wall, as the novels say. Guten Abend, Boyars!

TALANOV (*confused*): Do you know each other? This is Fyodor. My son.

FYODOR: I have had the pleasure of meeting citizen Kolesnikov before. We even had quite a few fights as kids. Remember?

KOLESNIKOV: That's right. In our trade-school we hadn't much use for the high-school. (*To Talanov, reproachfully:*) Only I don't understand. . . what's wrong in a son's visiting his father. . . after such a long absence. . .

FYODOR: Well, in the first place, this is a son with a stain on his character. He's branded! And in the second place, this is a front-line area. Maybe he left the train without a pass a hundred kilometres away and came here through the swamps. . . for some ends of his own?

OLGA: Why do you jeer at us, Fyodor?

KOLESNIKOV: There's no sense in slandering yourself like that. You went wrong, it's true. . . but if you've been released, that means that you're trusted again.

FYODOR: You think so? Aha! Then. . . You've just let slip that you're stopping in the town. That means, of course, with a group of trusted people. The idea being: welcome, German friends, the Russian bear-spear is waiting for you. Piff-paff! Well, wouldn't you like to take into your ranks such a. . . reformed character? True, he has not any very respectable recommendation, but. . . . (*Firmly, looking Kolesnikov straight in his eyes:*) he's ready to carry out anything. And he's not afraid of death: he's been on close terms with it for three years now. (*An awkward silence.*) Not suitable?

KOLESNIKOV: I'm only staying until tomorrow. I'm leaving the town too.

FYODOR: I understand. (*Smoothing his moustache:*) I suppose that's why you're so keen on Dad's clearing out?

TALANOV: I must ask you to be polite to my friends, Fyodor.

KOLESNIKOV: I shall answer him. Ivan Tikhonovich has given himself wholly to the people, they come to him even from neighbouring districts. We wanted to preserve him from danger. There'll be a good deal of disturbance here, too, all sorts of things that were dead will come to life again. Even now snakes are creeping out from underground.

FYODOR: What about my sister here, will all this disturbance be good for her?

OLGA: I shall stay with the school, Fyodor.

FYODOR (*thrusting his hands in his pockets and rocking to and fro on his*

heels): And isn't it all much simpler? The Germans will demand prominent people for various posts. . .

OLGA (*significantly and curtly*): I'm afraid they've found them already, Fyodor.

KOLESNIKOV: Finish what you were saying. My mother's waiting for me in the car.

FYODOR: Isn't it that you're afraid that Dad here may do something foolish when he's not under your eye?

KOLESNIKOV: You're angry and bitter, but you've only yourself to blame for your misfortunes. Anyhow, I've no time now to investigate these soul vibrations of yours. Another time. Au revoir, Ivan Tikhonovich! (*They embrace. Kolesnikov looks at Olga.*)

OLGA (*looking down*): I'll see you to the car.

KOLESNIKOV (*to Fyodor*): I hope with all my heart that you'll find yourself a place in life.

FYODOR (*in a falsetto*): Merci-i! (*Olga follows Kolesnikov out.*)

TALANOV: Run after him and apologize, Fyodor.

FYODOR: Doctor Talanov never whipped his children. Have the years brought changes in his educational views?

(*Talanov's eyelids droop, wearily. Olga returns. She is cold, hugging her shoulders with her arms.*)

OLGA: What stars, what stars! . . And it looks as though they're flying already.

FYODOR (*to his father, half-guiltily*): Listen, are you really still afraid of him? So far as I understand things, that dog's teeth are drawn now.

TALANOV: Now I know the name of your sickness. It is spiritual gangrene, Fyodor. (*Suddenly feeling faint, he clutches at the hem of the table-cloth, then drops into the arm-chair. Olga rushes over to him.*)

OLGA: Are you ill, Dad? . . Dad, shall I get you some water? (*Demidyevna brings supper and hastens to assist her.*) Only be very quiet, so that Mum won't hear. (*They have just given him water and placed a cushion under his head when Anna Nikolayevna enters.*) He's better already, Mummy. You are feeling better, aren't you, Dad?

TALANOV: These are hard days come on us. It's all the children, the children. . .

DEMIDYEVNA (*to Fyodor*): You go away for the present, you hardened creature. . . Come and knock at the door later. . . (*Very quietly:*) I'll let you in.

(*Over the old nurse's shoulder Fyodor continues to look at his father and the women fussing around him. Apparently he finds it hard to realize that such trifles can have such results.*)

OLGA (*going up to Fyodor*): Yes, really, it would be better if you went now. Father has to get up early. . . he has so much work, he gets very tired.

FYODOR (*taking up his coat*): I didn't know, Olga, that he was. . . your fiancé. Forgive me!

OLGA (*bitterly*): And is that all that you've learned to understand in the whole evening, Fyodor?

(*From far off, increasing in tone and height, comes the air alert. Fyodor raises his head and listens, then goes out. No one goes to door with him. Silence. Olga sits down at the table and starts correcting exercise-books, pressing her hands to her ears.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*to her husband*): Kokoryshkin has brought some papers for you. Call him in, Demidyevna.

DEMIDYEVNA (*calling to the kitchen*): Come in here, office-paper! You must be dried up to a cinder, sitting there by the stove.

(*She goes out, and in her place Kokoryshkin appears, pulling an ink-bottle out of his pocket as he approaches.*)

TALANOV: I've kept you waiting, Kokoryshkin.

KOKORYSHKIN: It doesn't matter. I just sat there and dreamed a bit.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: And what did you dream of? (*With pain in her voice:*) Not about a son?

KOKORYSHKIN: My dreams are more in the farming line. (*Rummaging in his portfolio:*) Caesar Diocletian left all State matters to go and grow cabbages. In Illyria. (*Raising his finger:*) And huge heads he grew. (*Handing over a paper:*) Here's something on the defence measures adopted.

TALANOV: This is about the course for nurses? (*Signing:*) There was a day, Anya, when all we dreamed of lay ahead of us, too. And you passed your examination, and you wore your spring frock. And you used to play. . . I'm beginning to forget, how did it go? (*Anna Nikolayevna goes to the piano, and with one hand,*

standing, plays a well-known musical phrase.) Go on, further on! There's a part where wind and hope burst in!

(*She sits down and plays with all she has in her. Kokoryshkin silently hands papers to Talanov, who signs them.*)

KOKORYSHKIN: And here's the last, Ivan Tikhonovich.

(*Sound of a bomb explosion, then a second, nearer. The music continues. This is a struggle of two opposing forces. When the heroic melody fills the whole room, there is a third explosion, quite near, then the sound of falling glass and a crash. The light goes out. Anna Nikolayevna hurries over the last two chords. Then silence falls.*)

KOKORYSHKIN: Don't overturn the ink-bottle, Ivan Tikhonovich. Wait a moment, I'll light a match.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Light the lamp, Olga. It was standing on the window-sill.

(*A match lares up. Olga is already at the window. Huge shadows waver over the walls. A short burst of firing and confused noises outside. The lamp burns badly. All are standing. Fyodor's portrait is lying on the floor, and it seems as though this is already another evening in another world. Demidyevna comes in from the kitchen with a candle-end.*)

OLGA: Bring a broom, Demidyevna, and sweep up the glass. Fedya's fallen down.

(*Exit Demidyevna. There is a faint rustle at the door. Only now the Talanovs notice a stranger, an old man, sitting on a chair near the entrance, holding a gnarled stick between his knees. He smiles and nods his bald head, it may be in greeting, or it may be that he is begging for alms and shelter.*)

TALANOV (*keeping a respectful distance*): How did you come here, old man?

OLD MAN: Fear swept me in, master. The heavens are falling.

(*Olga brings the lamp closer. The visitor is wearing dirty quilted trousers and jacket; a beggar's bag and an ancient cap lie by his feet. Kokoryshkin examines the old man from all sides, like a dog sniffing round a strange object.*)

OLGA: Where have you come from, old man?

OLD MAN: I'm a ghost, walking like Lazarus. . . in the winding-sheet I was buried in, and lo!—my gravestone still watches me! (*And tapping his stick on the ugrond, stares into the corner so fixedly that everybody involuntarily glances in the same direction.*) Wherefore openest thou thy loins, o Tomb, widow of stone?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*under her breath*): He must be a sick man. . . they've brought him to you.

TALANOV (*in his professional tone*): And have you been "walking" long, grandad?

OLD MAN: It's this way: the greedy, unmerciful mind whispers: it's only a year, a year, but the weary feet groan: it's three hundred, three hundred! And so I go wandering, driven by two whips.

OLGA: You've wandered the wrong way, grandad.

OLD MAN: Isn't this Faiyunin's house?

TALANOV: This was once Faiyunin's house, but you probably want the one across the square now. I don't remember the number, but there's another house there that belonged to Faiyunin. And there's a doctor living there, too,—something like myself, with a beard. He's a specialist in ghosts. You'd better go to him.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Let him wait till the raid's over.

OLD MAN: Thank you, Anna Nikolayevna, for having pity on me.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*startled*): How do you know me?

OLD MAN: Perhaps we met by chance in a dream. See that arm-chair there, the upholstered one. . . I dreamed of that arm-chair many a time. It still has a scorched spot underneath.

OLGA: You're quite mistaken, it hasn't any scorched spots on it.

OLD MAN: Yes, there is, my daughter, there is. This was my dream: a ring fell off and rolled on the floor, and the yardman crawled under the chair with a candle to look for it, and nearly set the place on fire.

TALANOV: I don't remember anything of the kind.

OLD MAN: Then let's have a look, Ivan Tikhonovich. Hold my stick, Ma'am. (*To Kokoryshkin:*) Help me, you rickety insect!

(*He and Kokoryshkin turn the arm-chair over on its side. On the canvas covering the bottom a large scorched patch is plainly visible. The Talanovs exchange glances.*)

OLD MAN: You weren't born, my daughter, when this chair was standing in Nikolai Sergeyevich Faiyunin's office.

(*There is a definite change in the atmosphere. Kokoryshkin bows humbly and respectfully to the old man.*)

KOKORYSHKIN: Welcome, Nikolai Sergeyevich! A weary while we've waited for you. So it's come to pass, then? . .

OLD MAN: Be patient, we will find out directly. (*Stiff in his manner now and somehow younger, he goes over to the old-fashioned telephone and turns the handle for a long time.*) Central. . . central. . . (*Authoritatively:*) What do you mean by not answering before? This is the mayor, Faiyunin, speaking. Now don't shiver, I'm not going to bite you. Give me the police. (*Again turning the handle:*) Police, police. . . Dear, dear, nothing to be heard of the authorities!

KOKORYSHKIN (*bowing and fawning round Faiyunin*): Maybe they've crawled into the inkwell in fright, Nikolai Sergeyevich, he-he!

(*Faiyunin replaces the receiver and crosses himself sternly.*)

FAIYUNIN: And bless these, our new days, o Lord! (*Even through the thick walls of the house, the rattle of machine-guns, intermingled with shouts and screams and the clank of iron, can be heard.*) Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen. . .

(*His monotonous mumbling is drowned in the crash of splintering glass. The window frame is smashed in from outside by rifle butts. The plywood shutter falls. Framed in the rectangle of the night-black window, helmeted men with faces distorted by the fierceness of the battle and lit from one side by the glare of the conflagration, look in through the drifting smoke. They are Germans.*)

End of act I

ACT II

Scene I

In the little town the sky is now overcast with the menace of invasion. The same room, but with something irretrievably gone from it: it has become in some way dimmed and cramped. The photograph of Fyodor is no longer there, only the path on the wallpaper of a slightly different colour, ringed with spider webs and topped by a nail, seems a symbol of disgrace. Furniture is displaced, and used dishes still stand on the table. It is morning. Through the central window there is a view of the snowy street with its church tower now cut in half on the hill. The next window, smashed in on that memorable night, is mended with plywood and a blanket. Somewhere above, a man's voice is singing in a dreary, bored kind of way, evidently for want of something better to do. Olga, in winter clothes, is about to go out. Anna Nikolayevna is holding the latch of the door.

OLGA: Mum, I haven't a minute to spare. . . Mum!

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: I shan't let you go, Olga, I shan't let you.

OLGA: But don't you understand, the children will be coming. . . even if there are only three out of sixty. What will happen to them?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Sit down and talk sensibly: what kind of lessons can there be today? And what mother would be such a lunatic as to send her child to school? (*Two shots, one after the other.*) Come away from the window, Olga.

OLGA (*moving away*): Some of them live with old people, deaf, who wouldn't hear an earthquake if it came. . . I must go, I've got to go. It's what I'm paid for, Mum!

TALANOV (*from the neighbouring room*): Give her a chance to get some work done, Anna.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Do you want to lose your daughter as well? She's all we have now, Ivan! (*To Demidyevna, who has entered from the kitchen:*) What's that they're singing up there? It's like a dirge. . .

DEMIDYEVNA: They've taken the rooms upstairs, and they're in the wing, wherever you look there's soldiers hanging around, drat them! (*Confidentially:*) They found four more Germans bayonetted to death today. And they all had the same bit of writing on top.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: And what did it say?

DEMIDYEVNA: They say all the bits of paper had "Welcome!" written on them. Now you should see the people they're taking off! And there's blue paper pasted up on our house, offering a big reward for anyone who'll tell them anything. They're hunting everywhere. . .

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Who are they hunting for?

DEMIDYEVNA: Goodness only knows, some Andrei or other. They could find thirty Andreis in our town, as I know of.

OLGA: Well, that doesn't concern us, Demidyevna. We're civilians. And the best thing you can do is to mind your own business.

DEMIDYEVNA: Am I to turn German, or what? (*In an offended tone:*) Our potatoes are in the shed, we'll have to go past the Germans. Shall I send Aniska? She'll slip through like the wind.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Nobody leaves the house till things quieten down. Send her in here to clear the table. (*To Olga, after Demidyevna has gone out:*) You just ask her the sort of things that happened in Lomtyevo! (*Without taking off her outer things, Olga sits down patiently at the table. Enter Aniska.*)

ANISKA: Granny sent me here. What am I to do?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Clear away the dishes, Aniska, and be careful not to break anything. (*Breathing heavily with the sense of her own importance, Aniska begins clearing the table.*) Here's Olga saying that you ran away from Lomtyevo all for nothing.

ANISKA (*judiciously*): Why do you think it was nothing? They ran wild, Anna Nikolayevna. They'd make our women heat the houses, and then they drag out young women and dear knows what they didn't do to them. They just went to the rampage everywhere. I had a friend, she and I set at the same desk at school. Well, she got away from them, stark naked she was, and threw herself into the water, and it was all over ice. (*Wiping her eyes with the corner of her kerchief, country fashion:*) You mind our pond, don't you?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Do you remember the Lomtyevo pond, Olga? With the old willows round it. . . remember? (*Olga looks indifferently out the window.*)

ANISKA: There was one officer, worse than all the rest. He had fair hair, light as smoke, and he limped. He'd rape a girl and then stamp her back with sealing wax. What do you think he did that for, Anna Nikolayevna? A girl's not a letter you have to put a seal on.

OLGA (*rising in a resolute manner*): Well, Mummy, I'm off. If I wait any longer, I shall be late.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Throw a torn shawl over you, then, and walk like a bent old woman. They won't be so likely to notice ragged people or hunchbacks!

(*Olga opens the door and immediately closes it again. Sound of a quarrel, Demidyevna's deep grumbling voice and Faiyunin's familiar tenor.*)

OLGA (*calling to her father in the neighbouring room*): Father, you're wanted. The joyous life's starting. Here's a visit from the powers that be. I'll go out the back way. (*Turning:*) Don't worry, Mum. . . I'll soon be back.

(*Exit Olga. Enter Demidyevna, defending herself against the advancing visitor. Faiyunin is wearing a loosely-fitting summer suit, creased from lying packed away. His top boots, high collar and bald head shine as though they had been beeswaxed. His whole appearance and manner is reminiscent of a pre-revolutionary secret informer.*)

FAIYUNIN: Now, don't be frisky, my dear, I'm an old man. Keep your hands to yourself and don't be frisky.

DEMIDYEVNA: I don't care how much you're Lazarus. Next time we'll bury you deeper, so that you don't get out.

FAIYUNIN: Dear, dear, what a foolish woman! Now go away and don't make me angry, go away!

TALANOV (*approaching Faiyunin*): Yes, that's right, go along, Demidyevna. (*Grumbling and looking askance, she moves aside.*)

FAIYUNIN: Now, just fancy saying such things in front of peo le and when there's enough bother to try a saint, and to me, of all people! Ah, you foolish, foolish woman! (*To everybody:*) Congratulations, my dear people! The dawn is come, the sun is rising. (*All are silent. He waits in vain for a reply.*) Come, hadn't you better meet me half-way, dear friends. I've not come to you for the rent! I have come to you in peace, I have come alone. I might have descended upon you in force, but I have come alone. Let that tell you everything.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Why do you try to frighten us, Faiyunin?

FAIYUNIN: And how could a stray driven bird like me frighten you, Ma'am? Your house is like a cup filled to overflowing, but where is my nest? Where is my glory now? Where is my firm? One Paris paper wrote that Faiyunin's flax was softer than Ninon de Lenclos' curls. . . Gone, all gone! Where is my nestling, the joy of my heart? Sleeping below the sod.

DEMIDYEVNA: And what else should

they have done with him, the snake? He was starting to spit venom already.

FAIYUNIN (*turning his head sharply, his high collar cutting into his neck*): What's that? Take care! The stray, driven bird is growing fangs, see that it doesn't bite you, old woman!

TALANOV: Demidyevna, you've never sewn that hanger on my coat, yet. Take it into the study, and let Anna Nikolayevna do it. (*Both women understand him and go out.*) I suppose you have business with me, Mr. Faiyunin?

FAIYUNIN: Quite correct. For two days now I have been wishing for a confidential chat with you, Ivan Tikhonovich. (*To Aniska, who is sweeping the floor and purposely raising dust around Faiyunin:*) Go and wait at the entrance, my dear, and tell me when the car comes. Be off with you! (*Aniska runs out.*) Let us sit down, Ivan Tikhonovich. Here we are, two old men standing facing each other as if we were preparing to fight a duel.

TALANOV: At your service.

FAIYUNIN: In some places slowly, in some swiftly, a glorious day is dawning. Soon, very soon now we shall be able to bare our heads at the sacred Spassky gates, and enter the very Archangel Cathedral. And we shall fall to our knees on the flagstones and weep for the paradise from which we were driven. (*Casually:*) Is it long since you were in the Kremlin?

TALANOV: Yes, it's a long time.

FAIYUNIN: I could never find an opportunity either. (*Ironically, referring to imprisonment:*) First, you see, I roamed the land, then sighed in solitude, then toiled on construction in far-off Siberia. . . (*Noticing a sudden movement of Talanov's:*) Yes? You wanted to say. . .

TALANOV: I do not understand. . . why you are making me these confidences.

FAIYUNIN: It is the similarity of our destinies. Neither of us have any special favour for which to thank those who have gone, and both our sons, it may be, slept in the same cell. Besides. . . (*Snaps open his watch and clucks with his tongue.*) Dear, dear, how late it is! Let us come to the point. This house with everything in it has been selected for the commendant's office. First of all they thought of the school, where your Olga worked, but as it had been burned down, and you know what repairs mean nowadays. . . In a word, Wibbel's adjutant, the commendant, and Mr. Mossalsky are coming here to examine everything. And that would mean turning you and your wife out on the streets in your old age. But. . . (*In a friendly whisper, almost in Talanov's ear.*) God is great! They say that Wibbel, who hunts tigers, is like Peter the Great in mortal fear of mice. What if we get round him with them, eh?

TALANOV: Come to the point, I'm quick enough at understanding people.

FAIYUNIN: As you wish. (*In a business-like tone:*) This morning another four were found, all with the same trade mark. And with notes. . . So it means there's a jester of that kind still left in the town. Andrei, he's called, Andrei. Now whoever could that be, I wonder? If I could only find a photograph, just to see what such a bold fellow is like.

TALANOV: I don't go in for photography. And I know nobody called Andrei. Most of my friends are called Ivan. My name is Ivan, too.

FAIYUNIN: And now innocent people will suffer. Wibbel's quick-tempered, but it soon passes. But Spurre's behind him all the time. And that Spurre. . . You know what the devil is like? Well, if Spurre got the devil there in the commendant's office, he'd wipe up the floor with him, squeeze him out and hang him up to dry. Ye-es! And this Andrei thinks he can snap his fingers at him! Mozhaisk has fallen, and through binoculars they can already see the sparrows on the Archangel Cathedral. . . (*Looking Talanov straight in the eye:*) If you would talk with him yourself, persuade him to withhold his hand from sin, not to bring strife into our town!

TALANOV: Who is it I am to persuade? Spurre, the devil, or the Archangel Cathedral itself?

FAIYUNIN (*almost childishly*): No, that Andrei.

TALANOV: And how do you propose that I should do it? Go out on the square and shout till he hears?

FAIYUNIN: As though you could call him that way! . . Send him a letter, write that you need to see him on urgent business. According to Kokoryshkin, you surely know his address. And then you will meet him.

(*He strokes Talanov's sleeve affection-*

ately. The latter rises, pushing his chair noisily aside.)

TALANOV: You've come to the wrong house again, Faiyunin. That's a post I've never occupied yet.

FAIYUNIN (*also rising*): What post do you mean?

TALANOV: Executioner. It would be too much for me, I haven't the strength for such work. You have to be able to soap the rope, and then drag the body off on your shoulders. . .

FAIYUNIN: Well, it's a pity, a pity. I'm afraid. . . Kokoryshkin is sniffing about everywhere. He's thick as thieves with Mossalsky already, and they may get in first. . . (*Hopefully:*) There's no hurry: if you can't do it at once, maybe tomorrow, eh? (*Aniska flies in from the entrance, evidently scared.*) Well, what's the matter now?

ANISKA: There's a general come! (*She fusses around, then slips unnoticed behind a curtain.*)

(*Faiyunin looks out of the window.*)

FAIYUNIN: Seize fortune by the skirts, Ivan Tikhonovich. Wibbel himself has come. (*He stiffens in a bow.*)

(*Enter Mossalsky, one of a generation brought up in emigration, wearing a Caucasian cowl, formerly his father's, and an officer's jacket. He stands aside to allow the Adjutant Kuntz to pass. Kuntz limps, and has flaxen hair light as smoke.*)

KUNTZ: Achtung! [1]

(*Enter Wibbel, a tall, elderly officer in a greatcoat, rubbing his frozen ears. Faiyunin hurries eagerly to meet him.*)

FAIYUNIN (*gabbling*): It gives me great happiness to greet you in my own house, where I spent so much of my life, where my son was born, who fell in the glorious struggle against communism. Faiyunin, the mayor, Faijunin!

KUNTZ: Zurück! [2]

WIBBEL (*to Kuntz, slowly and smoothly, like one reading an exercise*): I have already issued an order that in this country my officers should talk Russian. (*Half turning:*) Sklave?

MOSSALSKY (*translating into his ear*): Slave.

WIBBEL: A slave may be ignorant of his master's language, aber [3] the master must know the language of the slave.

KUNTZ (*reddening, with an effort*): It's ter-r-ribly difficult, Herr Major!

WIBBEL (*angry*): But I myself talk Russian. (*Pointing to Talanov:*) Who is that?

FAIYUNIN (*officiously*): Talanov, a local disciple of Aesculapius, if I may put it that way.

(*Wibbel turns his head to Mossalsky.*)

MOSSALSKY (*in his ear*): Arzt! [1]

WIBBEL: Why does he stand there saying nothing?

FAIYUNIN: Dr. Talanov is overcome by the honour of Herr Wibbel's visit.

MOSSALSKY: It would be more becoming on your part, Faiyunin, if you referred to the Herr Commendant as the Herr Major.

WIBBEL: It's of no consequence. (*To Talanov:*) You had better find your tongue again, my friend.

FAIYUNIN: Dr. Talanov's son is known to us as a fighter against the Soviet authorities.

TALANOV (*heatedly and ashamed*): That's not true. . . it's a lie, it's not true!

FAIYUNIN: That is only modesty! . . Dr. Talanov's son, together with my son Gavrila who died so heroically. . .

(*Wibbel frowns.*)

MOSSALSKY: If you din that into our ears for the tenth time, Faiyunin, we'll send you for a lengthy visit to that son of yours. (*To Talanov:*) Answer my questions. How many rooms and entrances are there here?

TALANOV: When you were born, young man, I had already been serving my country faithfully for ten years. (*He is silent for a moment.*) Three rooms and a kitchen. Two entrances.

MOSSALSKY (*lowering his eyes*): Is there a cellar? (*Talanov shakes his head.*) Would Herr Major care to examine the rooms?

FAIYUNIN (*running ahead of them*): This is the study, if you would be so good as to look round. It has one drawback: however you arrange things, the desk has to be opposite a window. Of course, if you place an extra sentry. . .

(*Mossalsky takes him by the shoulder and stops him.*)

MOSSALSKY: You stay here, Faiyunin.

TALANOV: Have I your permission to go now?

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[1] Attention!
[2] Back!
[3] But.

---

[1] Doctor.

(*Nobody answers him. Wibbel glances at Kuntz, who stays behind. Exit Mossalsky and Wibbel.*)

FAIYUNIN (*irritably*): If you don't care about your own interests, Ivan Tikhonovich, at least don't get in my way. They'll soak everything here with blood!

TALANOV: Oh, let me alone, Faiyunin!

(*The curtain shakes at the window where Kuntz is standing. Interested, he draws it aside. Aniska presses against the frame in terrified silence. Kuntz recognizes his escaped victim.*)

KUNTZ: Ah, du mein feiner Käfer! [1]

(*He reaches out to chuck her under the chin. With a shriek Aniska takes to her heels. Kuntz hastens after her, saying:* "Komm mal her, komm mal her, Lieblein!" [2] *Wibbel re-enters, alarmed, accompanied by Mossalsky.*)

MOSSALSKY: Who was that screaming in here?

FAIYUNIN (*throwing up his hands*): A tempest in a teapot! A mouse ran right up the girl's skirts. . .

WIBBEL (*softly*): What's a mouse?

MOSSALSKY (*in his ear*): The same, Maus.

FAIYUNIN: In the old days the place was overrun with them, too. It's because of the bakery next door. Sometimes there would be swarms of them rustling behind the wallpaper. (*Wibbel looks uneasily under his feet. Kuntz returns, laughing apologetically.*) But they're quite tame, Herr Major, as tame as canaries. . .

WIBBEL (*shuddering*): Ach, no! This is a bad house. There is no. . . no. . . kein Raum für die Wachtmannschaft! [3]

MOSSALSKY: The bodyguard.

WIBBEL: Yes, yes. Wir müssen ins alte Loch zurück. [4]

(*Touching the peak of his cap with one finger and again peering into the corners, he turns towards the exit. Faiyunin decides to oppose him, in order to make assurance doubly sure.*)

FAIYUNIN: But there's no harm in them, Herr Major, in the mice. (*Accompanying his words with demonstrative gestures:*) You just get one into a corner, catch it, squeeze its throat with your fingers—so—and then out of the window with it. Salto mortale, and that's the end of it!

(*Wibbel hastens his steps. Faiyunin runs after him, insistent.*)

MOSSALSKY (*politely now*): Tell me, doctor. . . I haven't too much faith in that old baldhead. Did any mice really come here?

TALANOV (*right in his face*): Yes, and rats, captain.

(*There is not a trace of mockery in Talanov's eyes. Mossalsky reluctantly grasps the catch of the door. Faiyunin returns and steps aside, licking his lips, to let him pass.*)

FAIYUNIN: You see, I made him fly like a champagne cork! You can give three cheers now, Ivan Tikhonovich, I shall live here with you myself. (*In his joy he even tries to embrace Talanov.*) You'll just have to crowd up a wee little bit. . . I'll take the study. Just for the time being! For, of course, a large firm can only be in Moscow. And by the way, I invited him to a house-warming. It's a quarter of a century since I've celebrated a birthday. . . now I'll make up for them all, new style. I don't expect any presents, but you must be sure to come, and bring your wife.

TALANOV: I'm afraid we can't, our health doesn't permit. . .

FAIYUNIN: Now no excuses: Spurre himself is coming. It'll be worth your while! And about Andrei, you think it over. Although. . .. (*mysteriously:*) we may see him ourselves this evening, still it is politically important that it should be you it comes from. It's a clever idea, that "welcome" pinned on. Spurre breathes fire and fury as soon as he hears the word.

TALANOV: I'm tired, sick and tired of you, Faiyunin.

FAIYUNIN: I must fly! I've still got to go to the manager, then to the burial of the Germans who were killed, then to a residents' meeting. . . up to my ears in business! Meanwhile you can be taking your things out, and in the evening I'll move in. Auf Wiedersehen, that means, good-bye for the present, disciple of Aesculapius! (*With a pirouette like a ballet dancer he hurries out.*)

(*For a moment Talanov stands in the centre of the room, repeating:* "Apes, apes!" *Then he begins taking down the photographs from ther walls. Anna Nikolayevna comes in while he is thus occupied.*)

[1] Ah, it's you, is it, little beetle?
[2] Come here, come here, sweetheart!
[3] No accommodation for the guards.
[4] We'll have to go back to the old hole.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: What are you doing, Ivan?

TALANOV: Clearing the place, Anya. There's going to be a monkey-house set up here. (*Anna Nikolayevna wraps a woolen shawl round her head.*) Are you going far?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*annoyed*): I said nobody was to leave the house. Soldiers are roistering about the town everywhere, and the sober ones are worse than the drunk. . . . Aniska's lost, Ivan. (*Olga enters through the back door and goes behind her screen.*) Here's Olga back, at least, thank Heaven! (*Loudly:*) Olga, there's somebody or other come to see you; they're from the school.

OLGA: Never mind, let them wait. (*Exit Anna Nikolayevna.*)

TALANOV: How are things at school, Olga?

OLGA (*almost indifferently*): Mother was right as usual. Not one of the children turned up. (*Comes out from behind the screen and takes a piece of bread from the table.*) I'm ravenously hungry.

TALANOV: And what did you do at school?

OLGA: I looked through the classrooms. Empty, untidy. . . only the wind stirring the map of Africa on the wall. The window's broken.

TALANOV: One window broken. . . or several? (*Letting her hand with the bread fall, Olga fixe s her eyes on her father.*) We've always been good friends, Olga, you and I. There've never been any secrets between us. And now that trials have come on us, you invent a broken window. . . and a whole Africa, like a gravestone on our friendship. You are preoccupied. You never even noticed, Olga, that the school has been burned down.

OLGA (*seizing her father's hand*): Dad dear, I couldn't help it, I can't do otherwise. I have no right. You yourself. . . want me to fight them. . . you want it in your heart. Who can we send? Fyodor? There? (*Grieved and tender:*) I don't belong to you any more, Dad. And if you begin to pity me, I'll go right away. (*Through her tears, a note new to Talanov rings in her voice.*) Ah, how I hate them. . . the way they walk, the way they talk, everything! We'll give them a lesson, we'll make them sing small! And if there aren't guns, and they tear out my nails, then may my blood poison whoever walks in it!

TALANOV: And so this is how my little girl's grown up! And who's blaming you or dissuading you, Olga, my little Olga?

OLGA: And don't fear for me. I'm strong. . . and now I'm terrible. I shall pity nobody's else's hardships, but there'll be no whining from me either.

TALANOV: Dry your eyes, Mother'll see you've been crying. I'll just see what she's doing, while you attend to your visitors. (*On the way out, without turning:*) Faiyunin let slip that they're planning a grand round-up for tonight. So if you're intending to go to the school. . .

OLGA (*without any expression in her voice*): Thanks. I'll be careful.

(*Her father goes out. Olga opens the door into the kitchen. She says nothing, and Yegorov and Tatarov enter without speaking. Yegorov is pock-marked, and wears a peasant's coat. Tatarov is thin, with lively black eyes; he wears an army coat cut down for him. They talk swiftly, softly, without emphasis and without sitting down.*)

OLGA: Which one of you had the grand idea of calling yourselves people connected with the school! Just look at yourselves! And it never occurred to you that there's a doctor in this house and you could have come separately as his patients?

TATAROV: That's true. We're not much good at this business yet, Olga Ivanovna. But we're learning.

YEGOROV: Don't worry. Hatred's a good teacher. The peasants are like powder: they only need a spark. (*Handing over a bundle wrapped in sacking:*) Old Sharapov gave me some pork for Ivan Tikhonovich; he attended his wife. . . Have you seen Andrei?

OLGA: Yes. He's very displeased. At Prudki they smashed the agricultural machines with axes. What for? Would they be taken off to Germany? Can one fire out of threshers? That's just panic. And at Ratny they burned the seed. They should have hidden it.

YEGOROV: They hadn't time, Olga Ivanovna.

TATAROV (*angrily*): They'd time for their own things!

OLGA: And everyone forgets the need for continual action. They must feel conscious of us every minute, every

second. If one falls out, another, with the same name, must take his place at once. A partisan never dies. This is the wrath of the people!

(*The door swings wide open. At first nothing can be clearly distinguished: there is a noise, weeping, and somebody's high-pitched laughter. Anna Nikolayevna runs in without noticing that there are strangers present.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA. Quick, give me something warm. . . a skirt or a blanket, never mind what!

OLGA: What's happened? . . Is it Dad? You're shaking all over, Mum!

(*With a strength unusual in a woman, Anna Nikolayevna drags Olga's suitcase from under the bed and hastily pulls some things out. Olga looks into the passage.*)

OLGA: Has she been run over, Mum?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*hurrying out with a pile of clothing*): Put on the samovar. . . and bring the tub in here from the shed!

OLGA (*to the visitors*): Go to the kitchen. . . we'll finish talking there.

(*Exit Yegorov and Olga. Tatarov lingers. He can see into the passage, and by the way his face hardens one can judge of what he sees there.*)

TALANOV'S VOICE: I'll hold her up under the arms while you. . . Clear the couch in there, Demidyevna!

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA'S VOICE: It's all right, deary, it's all right! There aren't any of them here. . . there, there, dear!

(*Demidyevna appears, stumbling, never taking her eyes from Aniska, who is being helped into the room.*)

DEMIDYEVNA (*wailing*): My wee sunbeam, what have they done, the black-hearted devils! (*Her lamentations go on endlessly.*)

End of scene I

Scene II

The removal has taken place. The Talanovs' home is now limited to one room partitioned off, and littered with things not yet sorted out. Beds have been placed hastily along one wall, and one is evidently hidden behind a screen. A bright gingham curtain is hung between cupboard and the plywood-covered window. A coat-rack, not yet nailed up, stands in a corner along with all kinds of household utensils, such as a broom and a samovar; Fyodor's portrait, the glass smashed, stands upside down. It is late, according to war-time habits. In Faiyunin's room, furniture is being dragged about and the floor polished. Everything is being hastily put in order, to be ready before night. The family have just finished having supper in their new abode. Anna Nikolayevna is sitting on a big bundle beside the table, washing the cups. Talanov is bending over a bound magazine folio.

TALANOV (*laying aside his book*): And so here we have a new field of medicine: children's field surgery!

(*From Faiyunin's rooms comes the sound of Kokoryshkin's shrill voice:* "Edgeways, get it in edgeways! Mind the chandelier, the chandelier! Look where you're going!" *There is a sound of furniture creaking, the tinkle of chandelier crystal, something falls and rolls along the floor.* "That was worth a million, you louts!" *Some huge object is dragged past the open door. Kokoryshkin dashes in; he is in his shirtsleeves, his face is distorted and he fans himself with a piece of cardboard, ejaculates:* "I'm worn to a frazzle today! I'm quitting. I'm quitting. . . I'll go and plant cabbages!" *and disappears. Talanov closes the door, but the round of cursing and scraping furniture still penetrates. It seems as if infernal powers are dragging the very walls about, silhouettes appear and disappear against the ground glass of the door, gesticulating like phantoms busy conjuring up a home for Faiyunin.*)

TALANOV: Mark my words: our Kokoryshkin will devour Faiyunin, hair and hide. He's going to climb! . . Well, it's getting late, Anya, bed-time.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: We must wait for Olga. (*Suddenly:*) Why do you think Fedya came here?

TALANOV: Don't let's talk about him, Anya. He died to us three years ago, we buried him then.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*in her usual tone*): Isn't it time for the medicine?

TALANOV: In ten minutes.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: In ten minutes it'll be too late to be out, and Olga's not home yet. . . .

TALANOV: Leave the door unfastened, just in case.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: She has her

key. (*The kitchen door bangs.*) Talk of angels. . .

(*Olga flings open the door and enters, covered with snow. Standing behind her parents, she brushes down her coat in the entrance. In this way she manages to hide the fact that she is breathless from running.*)

OLGA (*hardly able to get her breath*): I'm afraid. . . I'm late for supper again.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: The tea's still hot. Have some. What's it like outside?

OLGA: It's snowing. . . a blizzard. I had to feel my way through the courtyard. (*Kokoryshkin's silhouette shows on the ground glass, then he enters and looks fixedly at Olga, who pretends not to see him.*) I pity sentries on such a night! . . Do you need anything, Semyon Ilyich?

KOKORYSHKIN: Yon haven't a broom by any chance? Just to sweep up.

OLGA: Of course. (*She gives him a brush.*) And in general, if you need anything. . . Are you settling in?

KOKORYSHKIN: We're getting fixed up. I've found all Faiyunin's things. I got the desk from the district executive committee, and grabbed the sideboard from the creche. . . You're not afraid to be out so late, Olga Ivanovna?

OLGA: Oh, I still had seven minutes to spare, Semyon Ilyich!

(*Faiyunin's voice:* "Se-myon!")

KOKORYSHKIN: Co-ming! . . (*Significantly and with emphasis:*) Well, dream of your sweetheart in your new home!

(*Exit Kokoryshkin. Olga closes the door after him.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: I never even knew that he was called Semyon Ilyich. . . What are you standing there for? Sit down and have tea, now you've come.

OLGA (*uncertainly*): Well, you see. . . I've brought someone with me. It was by chance, you understand. I was just coming into the yard, when I happened to see him running. . .

TALANOV: Who was running?

OLGA: Why, that. . . what's his name? Kolesnikov! And a patrol was coming round the corner. I let him in. . . (*Her parents avoid each other's eyes; each of them is afraid to show that they know about Olga.*) He'll go away, if you like. He'll go in about five minutes. . . or ten.

TALANOV: Well, why don't you call him in? Where is he, anyway?

OLGA: Well, you see. . . he's wounded. . . slightly. A stray bullet grazed his shoulder, but it's nothing serious. . . (*Talanov goes quickly out into the kitchen.*) Mummy, it's all right, nothing will happen. Dad'll bandage him, and then he'll go. . . home. I told him that straight out. . . He understands.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Look at me, Olga. (*She places her hand under her daughter's chin and raises her drooping head.*) You're a brave and honourable girl, but you're our last. Fyodor won't come back. Father's getting old. Any new grief would kill him.

(*Olga kisses her impulsively on the forehead. Talanov brings in Kolesnikov; he is wearing the same fur jacket, now already rubbed and worn; he is unshaven, unarmed, his wounded arm hanging helplessly.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: What's wrong with him?

TALANOV: I'm just going to examine him. Olga, water and a basin. Behind the screen. Stand by the door, Anna. (*A silent, business-like activity. They all take their places.*) Come here, onto the bed.

KOLESNIKOV (*going behind the screen*): How badly everything has turned out! You can't go to sleep because of me, and they may come and catch me here. If only the snow doesn't give me away!

TALANOV: We'll think of something. Take off your vest. (*The stage is deserted; voices are heard from behind the screen and the sound of water being poured out and splashing as Talanov washes his hands.*) Take it off. Help him, Olga. Don't be in a hurry, stretch out your arm. . . (*Sound of tearing material.*) Does it hurt here?

KOLESNIKOV: A little. . . No. . . not there, either, it just aches. How strange all this is, Ivan Tikhonovich! (*His voice changes according to the degree of pain as the wound is dressed and bandaged.*) I say, how strange it is: for eight years we worked together. I cut down your hospital estimates, I didn't give you all the firewood you wanted, we used to have some pretty warm arguments at meetings. We were neighbours. . . (*He is silent. A pair of scissors falls.*)

TALANOV: Spirit. Stick it, I'll be done in a minute. Higher, higher! Bandages.

(*Silence, then Kolesnikov's voice again.*)

KOLESNIKOV: And all this time, we never had a real talk to each other. Though

we've plenty to discuss. No, it doesn't hurt now... And how many people there are like that in our country, who were friends and never realized it. We were too harsh, we forgot what the word "tenderness" meant.

TALANOV: We can talk about tenderness later. That's all for the present. We'll see what it looks like in the morning. Where can we put him sleep, Anya?

(*Before she has a chance to answer, there is an imperative top at the window. Consternation. Kolesnikov emerges first from behind the screen, pulling on his jacket with difficulty.*)

KOLESNIKOV: That's for me. Now I've got you into trouble. (*Goes towards the exit.*) I'll meet them in the yard. Put out the light at once and go to bed.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Stay here.

KOLESNIKOV: They'll start firing... And for that matter, I shan't give in without a struggle.

(*Anna Nikolayevna goes out, signing to them to keep silence. Endless minutes pass. From Faiyunin's room the sound of light music from a musical box. Voices from the kitchen. Kolesnikov retires behind the screen. Anna Nikolayevna, weak with the tension, although the danger has passed, brings Fyodor into the room. He screws up his eyes, coming in from the darkness; he is incomprehensible, obscure, gloomy, difficult. His moustache is shaved off. Later, he gives the impression of being slightly intoxicated.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: We were just thinking of going to bed, Fedya.

FYODOR: I only looked in as I was passing. Time for me to go bye-bye, too. I'm fagged out. (*He sits down, stretches himself, not noticing that everyone is standing, patiently waiting for him to go*). All the villages round about are in flames. The flying snow's ro-ose-coloured, and the patrols probe and search it with their bayonets. (*Yawning:*) A general search! (*Winking at Olga:*) And I know who they're after... and I can just see them getting him, too! He'll be peering through a crack somewhere and laughing at them. A fine chap, I'd like to team up with one like that.

OLGA: And how did you get through? Have you a night pass?

FYODOR: I've got a pass in every fence. (*In a quarrelsome tone:*) If they start firing, I've got a little friend too. (*Smacking his pocket:*) Bullet for bullet, head for head.

TALANOV: Did they issue you... a gun?

FYODOR: Dug it up. A comrade left it me in his will. (*Observing for the first time the expectant silence around him, he rises.*) But, what I really came for was... have you anything to drink? I'm frozen to the bone.

TALANOV: That's funny, Fyodor. Here are Russian villages ablaze all round you, and yet you're cold. You should go and warm yourself at the fires... (*Sharply:*) We have no vodka, Fyodor.

FYODOR: No spirit in a doctor's house... Funny!

OLGA (*conciliatingly*): I was paid the other day. (*Everything falls out of her handbag in her haste.*) Here, take this, get yourself some... only not here, go somewhere else...

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Pick up your money, Olga. (*With a sudden break in her voice:*) Miserable boy! You should be ashamed of yourself! Wolves, murderers have broken into your home, they are violating girls, hanging old people from the rafters... and you come to your father as drunk as a lord! So you're frightened, frightened of them already, you homeless tramp? (*To her husband:*) He's a coward, a coward...

TALANOV (*to his daughter*): Take her into the kitchen. Faiyunin'll hear.

OLGA: Mum, come with me, Mummy dear. There, behind the stove you can have a good cry. (*Taking her arm:*) He'll go now. Surely he has some feeling left, he'll go...

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: God will punish him... may God punish him!

(*Olga leads her away, weeping. Fyodor meets his father's accusing gaze.*)

FYODOR: Everything gone wrong again. For three days I've been roaming about the town... and can't get things straight in my own mind. First I seem to have the hang of it, then I lose it. I'm chilled... Give me a medicine that'll burn me inside... Give it me, Father!

TALANOV (*after a short pause*): All right, I'll give you a medicine, the strongest there is on earth.

FYODOR (*hoarsely*): Give it me, quick!

TALANOV: I'll give it you at once. Drink it off in a gulp, if you can.

(*He impatiently drags aside the bright-coloured curtain. At first it is difficult to see what is going on. Demidyevna is crouching, huddled, stroking somebody lying on the bed, completely covered, with hardly the head visible. Two burning pupils shine like pin-points from under the coverlet.*)

TALANOV: May we come in, Demidyevna? . . She hasn't dozed off?

DEMIDYEVNA: She can't. (*With words of endearment and tenderness from the countryside:*) Sleep, my little darling, sleep, my wild apple blossom, sleep. . .

TALANOV: Here is your medicine, Fyodor. It is compounded of human blood.

FYODOR (*almost calmly*): Who's that?

TALANOV: You saw her here. Remember that funny little Aniska? Here she is. She's fifteen. There was a crowd of them. . . those burly, ruthless brutes. Your mother found her on the woodpile, in the shed. Full of splinters.

DEMIDYEVNA: Funny she was, once, but there's no bit of fun left to her now.

ANISKA (*freeing her head, and with a trembling, feverish voice*): Tell me a fairy tale, Granny, do! Where are you, where are you?

DEMIDYEVNA: Here I am, here I am, my little apple-blossom! (*In a sing-song, melancholy voice:*) Well, my pet, he'd hardly had time to finish what he was saying, and just fancy, four mighty men came striding across the fields to him. They came hand in hand, and their heads were in the clouds. One was wearing a grey coat, another a striped coat, the third was in white, and the fourth in black. They were the masters of the wind, rain, frost. . .

ANISKA (*with a gleam of understanding*): And who was the one in the black coat, Granny?

DEMIDYEVNA: The one in the black coat was the sunshine. He wore black so as not to scorch anyone by accident. Sometimes it came open, and you could see the fire. (*Aniska smiles with pleasure and raises herself on her elbow. Demidyevna brushes the hair from her forehead.*) And they all set to work together. The wind blew and swept the roads clean, the rain washed the grove, and the sun hung a rainbow over the gate with the ti-iniest little nails. . .

FYODOR (*gruffly, touching Demidyevna on the shoulder*): Here, let me sit by her, Nurse.

(*Demidyevna looks at Talanov, who nods.*)

TALANOV (*under his breath*): Raise her a little.

DEMIDYEVNA: Sit up a bit, my baby! This way. Don't be afraid of him. This is the master's son, Fyodor Ivanovich. He'll bring you some sweeties.

(*Supporting his elbow on his knee, Fyodor gazes fixedly into Aniska's burning eyes.*)

FYODOR: Has she any relations?

DEMIDYEVNA: She had once. She had brothers, fine boys! One was killed, he was in a parachute unit. And other's fighting day and night. He's in the tanks, he's near Moscow. I'm all she has here. And what can I do to protect her, an old bag of bones like me?

FYODOR (*looking her straight in the eyes*): Greetings, Aniska.

(*A look of terror comes into her face.*)

ANISKA: Oh, run, run! . . they'll get you, they'll hang you by the neck! Run!

(*She falls back weakly against the wall. Fyodor rises, pulls himself together.*)

FYODOR: I think I've had about enough. It's scorching me. . .

DEMIDYEVNA (*to Talanov*): Shall I show him her back? Her whole back's blistered with sealing wax. (*To Aniska, decisively:*) Come, take off your chemise, my pet. Let Fyodor Ivanovich see. He's been away, he doesn't know. . .

(*She pulls up the pink embroidered slip—Olga's—that Aniska is wearing, but Talanov stops her, and Fyodor has already moved away.*)

TALANOV (*over the curtain, which has again been drawn*): Time for her medicine, Demidyevna. . . And that's all, Fyodor. Well, we have nowhere for you to sleep, and it's dark outside already.

FYODOR (*looking at his own portrait*): Listen. . . you have no one here?

TALANOV: There's Faiyunin in the other room, but there's no one in here. Why?

FYODOR: Kiss me, Father. On the forehead. Kiss me now for the present, for the future, for everything at once. . . Can you?

(*Talanov meets his son's incomprehensible request with a wry chuckle. Olga returns on tiptoe. And suddenly, without realizing it, they find they are staring all at the same thing: a basin with bandages stained bright red from the dressing. Olga makes an involuntary movement to snatch*

away the basin, and thus betrays the secret. A cunning expression comes over Fyodor's face, but he restrains himself. Moving aside, he suddenly folds up the screen like a concertina, and Kolesnikov stands exposed.)

FYODOR: Why, you've a regular hospital here. Complete with everything. . . Well, is it pleasant standing behind the screen?

OLGA: It was this way, he happened to dislocate his arm, and. . .

FYODOR (*mockingly*): Why make a secret of it. . . when such a famous person comes to the doctor for treatment? (*Speaking directly to Kolesnikov:*) There's a large prize offered for you, citizen Kolesnikov.

KOLESNIKOV: I'm well aware of that, citizen Talanov.

FYODOR: All the same, for you it's too little. I'd have offered ten times as much. (*Very distinctly, and in challenging tone:*) Now, my friend, you can investigate into my soul vibrations. I'm leaving this house now before I'm turned out. There isn't anything you want me to do, is there?. . Maybe pass some message on to your friends?

KOLESNIKOV: Well, you see. . . there isn't any message I want to send. . . and nobody to send it to.

FYODOR: I see-ee. It's perfectly clear. "He slunk out, away with his head hanging," as the novels put it. Came for nothing just to see what he could find out. (*Bending down to look at his feet:*) What are you doing here in a respectable family? Out with you!

(*And there is actually an impression as though those shamed legs were hastening to carry him out of the house. All follow him with their eyes, uneasily. What decision does this jesting hide? Olga, unable to contain herself, dashes after him.*) .

OLGA: He's still brooding over that old love affair, the silly fool!

(*He turns at this slap in the face, and raising one eyebrow, glances around them all with eyes that hold something very like a laugh. Then, turning sharply, flings open the door. Something falls in the kitchen, silence follows.*).

OLGA: . . . that old affair. . .

TALANOV: You shouldn't have done that, Olga. I'm afraid you'll have to get away from here quickly now, Andrei Petrovich.

(*Kolesnikov moves towards the exit. On the threshold he is stopped by Anna Nikolayevna.*)

TALANOV: Let Andrei Petrovich out.

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*in a whisper*): He can't go. There's somebody standing in the yard. In a hat. He keeps making a queer noise and shaking all over.

TALANOV: Maybe it's a patient looking for me?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: What patients are likely to come now? He can't be.

OLGA: How did Fyodor get away, then?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: It's evidently not Fyodor that he's wanting.

(*The double doors swing solemnly open. Faiyunin enters, in shirtsleeves, beaming on them, in the seventh heaven at the greatness he has attained. Kokoryshkin minces behind him, carrying a tray of brimming wine-glasses which clink as he moves. This solemn procession is accompanied by a burst of lively music.*)

FAIYUNIN: Allow me. I wanted to have a first little house-warming night away. . . But you have visitors here, I see?

(*There is no way out. Anna Nikolayevna steps forward, as though taking a plunge.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Yes, visitors and joy, Nikolai Sergeyich. Our son has just come home.

TALANOV: Got through the front. And you see,—a bullet came with him.

OLGA: Allow me to introduce you. Fyodor Talanov. And this is our mayor, Faiyunin.

(*Both bow ceremoniously. Kokoryshkin looks aside, shortsightedly and indifferently.*)

KOLESNIKOV: Forgive me, but I can't very well shake hands.

FAIYUNIN: I have heard a lot about you, when you were far away. Come and join us!

(*They all lift their wine-glasses. Kokoryshkin's hands shake so that the glasses ring.*)

FAIYUNIN: Take a glass, you insignificant fly, and drink to the health of the young man who's just come back.

(*Kokoryshkin unhurriedly places the tray on the table, and chooses the glass which is fullest.*)

KOKORYSHKIN: Welcome, Fyodor Ivanovich. . . welcome!

(*All are taken aback. Kokoryshkin him-*

self realizes that he has used the word usually written in notes left on dead Germans; but he giggles and wriggles and fawns. Perhaps after all this is only a dance of his secret triumph.)

OLGA: You'd better forget that word, Semyon Ilyich. You'll be getting into trouble!

(*All laugh at Kokoryshkin's confusion.*)

FAIYUNIN: He's raving about it day and night—how to discover the secret. . . (*Raising his glass:*) Well, happy days!

End of act II

ACT III

The same room as in Act I, but improved and furnished up according to the taste of its new occupant: there are carpets, palms, a musical box and solid-looking furniture which has returned with its former owner. A long table, already laid, stands across the stage diagonally, with numerous chairs placed ready, according to the number of guests expected. In the foreground is a high arm-chair for Wibbel, with its back to the footlights. A squinting, hairy waiter, in white, is putting the last touches to the preparations for the house-warming. Faiyunin himself, who wears gold-rimmed spectacles and puffs at a cigar, is at the table signing the papers Kokoryshkin hands him. The latter is already shaved, dressed, wears a stand-up collar like Faiyunin's, and even looks a little plumper. In the place where Fyodor's portrait used to hang, there is a picture, somewhat smaller, of a man with a damp cow-lick across his forehead. Everybody looks at it frequently as they talk.

KOKORYSHKIN: Just one more, Nikolai Sergeyich.

FAIYUNIN: You're making my head spin with all your papers, my friend.

KOKORYSHKIN: State business is tiring only when you're not used to it. It's nothing as soon as you get into the swing of it. (*Handing him the next paper:*) About concealing from the German authorities property they can utilize. Don't be alarmed, Spurre himself made out the order! (*Faiyunin signs.*) And the last, Nikolai Sergeyich. (*With malicious pleasure:*) I saw Fedotov, the chief constable, leaving Spurre. He was crimson in the face, and mopping it with his handkerchief. Looked as though he'd been getting a personal reprimand. From Herr Spurre himself. . . It's no joke, trying to catch that Andrei! (*Handing a paper:*) On the death penalty for concealment of persons connected with the partisans.

FAIYUNIN (*taking the paper*): How is the search going on?

KOKORYSHKIN: They've got eighteen and a half: one's a boy. They think that two of them are in touch with the aforementioned Andrei's band.

FAIYUNIN: If we could only get our hands on the fellow himself!

KOKORYSHKIN (*softly but distinctly*): That can be done, Nikolai Sergeyich.

(*Letting the paper fall onto his knee, Faiyunin stares at him over his glasses. Kokoryshkin looks significantly at the waiter.*)

FAIYUNIN: Just go and see how the veal is getting on, my friend. Perhaps it's ready.

(*The waiter goes into the Talanovs' part of the house.*)

KOKORYSHKIN: I have a friend. . . but he wants a good deal.

FAIYUNIN: Well!

KOKORYSHKIN: You'll laugh at him! . . Even before the war he had a bent for political work, and a gift for nosing around and finding out things. In a word, as Mr. Fedotov is being sacked for incapacity. . .

FAIYUNIN (*comprehending*): Your friend wants to be chief constable? Is he crazy? That means putting his head right into the mouth of the dragon. Wibbel himself is scared stiff of that one. Have you ever seen Spurre? Even once?

KOKORYSHKIN (*sighing reverently*): He's beyond me! What strength!

FAIYUNIN: There's money offered, insect!

KOKORYSHKIN: I've tried every way to talk him round, but he won't hear of it. He says that money is a generally accepted symbol belonging to peace-time. Now you can't buy anything with it anyway, and after Moscow is taken there'll be other money issued.

FAIYUNIN: Yes, but when will that be? Beyond Moscow there is still the Volga, and beyond that the Urals under their cloaks of snow. And still further there's Siberia, with its rivers and forests. And beyond that who can say how much more! Only wandering lights. . . Russia, my friend, is that kind of cake: the more you eat, the more there's left to eat! (*Kokoryshkin shrugs his shoulders as though*

saying: it's none of my affair.) Get the address out of him, and then let him whistle for his reward.

KOKORYSHKIN: Eh, Nikolai Sergeyich! There were three more soldiers "welcomed" today. Maybe they're preparing another batch for tomorrow at this very moment. And the mayor will have to answer for it all. . . They'll say: "Have you done nothing but smoke cigars?" (*Faiyunin superstitiously replaces his cigar.*) In a little while things may be cheap again.

(*He places his papers in a portfolio. Faiyunin is angry. Demidyevna brings in a dish with the veal. She is wearing a severe, sinister-looking black dress and is accompanied by the waiter.*)

DEMIDYEVNA (*almost majestically*): Where do you want the offal put, you vultures?

KOKORYSHKIN: Take care, don't go too far. Why are you in such a hurry? You'll die soon enough, anyway.

DEMIDYEVNA: Aye, I didn't see what you were, Semyon Ilyich.

KOKORYSHKIN: You'll be coming to me one of these days asking for a job in my kitchen. And I'll drive you off, I'll drive you off! . .

FAIYUNIN (*silencing Kokoryshkin*): Here, put it in the centre, old woman. Let me see, is it well done? (*Cutting off a piece:*) Here, you chew it, see if it's tough?

DEMIDYEVNA: Porridge would be too tough for my teeth.

FAIYUNIN: Try it all the same, old woman.

(*Smiling scornfully at his fears, Demidyevna eats the meat. After that Faiyunin plucks up courage and tries a smaller piece.*)

FAIYUNIN: Dear, dear, it seems to have a slight taste—evidently scorched a little. And there's nothing to laugh about. Have you seen the notice on the wall? They're looking for someone, Andrei he's called. (*Winking at her:*) Now what if you should find a way of getting that nice little nest-egg, for a rainy day, eh?

DEMIDYEVNA: And what do I want with all that? You can't take a nice little nest-egg into the grave. Now if they were to give it in food. . .

FAIYUNIN: I dare say, that could be managed too.

DEMIDYEVNA: But what kind of food? Cereals or tinned food?

FAIYUNIN: As you wish. Soap and cereals will keep for ever.

KOKORYSHKIN: They found a mummy in Egypt, and there was millet and a piece of soap buried with it, and all as fresh as if they'd been put in the day before!

DEMIDYEVNA: And how'll you settle up, you old snake? Do you pay by the fellow's weight, dressed or naked, pound for pound? Supposing he's bombs in his pocket? They're heavy.

(*Tactfully turning his back, Kokoryshkin laughs silently. His shoulders shake. The waiter does the same, hiding his mouth with his napkin.*)

FAIYUNIN: Don't cloud my celebration, old woman. This is my birthday. Eschew evil, eschew it!

(*He looks around. The waiter is busily polishing the bottles. Demidyevna goes out, slowly. Faiyunin nudges Kokoryshkin in the side.*)

KOKORYSHKIN: Let me have my laugh out, Nikolai Sergeyich. There's nothing worse than a laugh half done!

FAIYUNIN: That'll do, that'll do, don't try my patience!

KOKORYSHKIN: Eh, why can't you let me alone? I tell you, Mossalsky would give more. I only need to give him the wink.

FAIYUNIN: Can he be trusted, this friend of yours?

KOKORYSHKIN: Lord bless you! (*With all the conviction of which he is capable:*) He's the son of a poor district overseer. There's nothing against him in the past. On the contrary, he was sentenced for misappropriation of the public funds. A hundred and forty-two roubles.

FAIYUNIN: Was he afraid to take more?

KOKORYSHKIN: He wasn't trusted with more, Nikolai Sergeyich.

FAIYUNIN: It was you?

KOKORYSHKIN: At your service! (*Both laugh.*)

FAIYUNIN: Well, where are your goods. . . quick, before the guests come.

KOKORYSHKIN: No, no! I've been waiting an age for this sort of chance, myself, till my very soul was weary.

FAIYUNIN: Well, give me a clue, at least. Maybe you're just fooling me?

KOKORYSHKIN: If it's only a clue you want. . .

(*With a meaning glance at Talanov's door, he whispers the two words:* "Olga

Ivan'na!" *and recoils. Faiyunin gives a long-drawn-out thoughtful* "M-m-m-m!")

FAIYUNIN: And he himself, is he far from here?

KOKORYSHKIN: About twenty-seven minutes, if you walk slowly.

FAIYUNIN: He won't get away from you?

KOKORYSKHIN: As soon as I found out, I put a fellow to watch in the yard. He'll see and hear everything (*giggling:*) in spite of his frozen ears. Our man. Won't show his nose outside, for fear of giving his own people away. . . It's all as easy as pie.

FAIYUNIN: Well, insect, you'll be an elephant yet. Take away the papers, and put some perfume on. . . put plenty on, you don't smell too good! And then come back. I'll let you in to Spurre, and then you can show him your zeal yourself.

(*On the threshold Kokoryshkin looks round, fearing for his secret:* "Don't scare him, Nikolai Sergeyich!" *As soon as he is alone, Faiyunin goes straight to Talanov's door. Twice he prepares to knock and stops again, and before he can make up his mind Talanov's silhouette appears against the ground glass and taps. Faiyunin darts over to the opposite corner and starts turning the handle of the telephone in a business-like manner.*)

FAIYUNIN: Commendant's office. Faiyunin. All right, I'll wait. (*The knock is repeated.*) Come in.

(*Enter Talanov. He is very much at a loss in his new role of applicant.*)

FAIYUNIN: Dear me, dear me, and you left your wife in the kitchen? Now is that gentlemanly?

TALANOV: I haven't come as a guest, I've come on business, Nikolai Sergeyich.

FAIYUNIN (*much less expansively*): Personal business?

TALANOV: Not altogether.

FAIYUNIN: Please sit down. (*Into the telephone:*) Still engaged? I'll wait. (*Thoughtfully, looking at the table:*) For a quarter of a century I hibernated, and always with the hope that some day I would awake. . . and it would all be over, come and gone like rain in the night, and the sun would shine, and the apple-tree look in through the window. And my eyes were opened and behold, a heavenly banquet is spread before me, yet within me my spirit is heavy, as though it were my own funeral feast I saw. What is that sickness called, doctor?

TALANOV: Premonition, Nikolai Sergeyich.

FAIYUNIN: Premonition. . . (*Into the telephone:*) Thank you, my dear. Bitte, I want die vierte Nummer. Danke. (*Obsequiously:*) Is that Herr Spurre's assistant? This is Faiyunin. Yes, it's about the house-warming again. They promised. What? . . I can't hear, what's that? (*He shakes the receiver and blows down it.*) The commendant promised, too. . . to show he supports the mayor's authority. Yes, some have come already. What? . . I can't hear, I can't hear, what's that? (*To Talanov:*) There's a kind of whistling. And somebody's screaming, you listen!

TALANOV (*raising the telephone to his ear*): That's a woman screaming.

FAIYUNIN: They're interrogating somebody. . . Dear, dear, and the voice seemed familiar! (*Concerned:*) Your Olga Ivanovna's at home, isn't she?

TALANOV (*startling*): She was. . . why?

FAIYUNIN: Well, thank God for it. (*Carefully hanging up the telephone:*) We'll not disturb him. Well, now I'm ready for you, Ivan Tikhonovich.

(*Talanov pulls himself together with an effort. Faiyunin listens to him, leaning back, closing his eyes and playing with his watch-chain.*)

TALANOV: I have come to express my serious dissatisfaction.

FAIYUNIN: What exactly is the trouble?

TALANOV: You are aware that my son has come home. For the time being he is living with me. Yesterday he wanted to go to the bath-house and have a wash after his journey. . .

FAIYUNIN: With a bullet wound in his arm? Dear, dear, how careless these young people are! . . Excuse me, I interrupted you.

TALANOV (*deciding to go straight to the point after this slip*): And then it appeared that some sort of scarecrow has been stationed to watch my door. . . in a hat, and with frozen ears.

(*Faiyunin opens one eye, looking as though something had pecked him, and again sits motionless. Only his fingers betray his excitement.*)

TALANOV (*continuing*): Of course, Fyodor was annoyed and returned home.

(*Firmly, and with heat:*) Listen, Faiyunin. I'm sixty years of age. Nobody has ever interferred with me. And I must ask these conquerors to leave my family in peace now too!

(*He brings his palm down heavily on the table. Faiyunin catches his arm.*)

FAIYUNIN: But don't get so excited, calm down, Ivan Tikhonovich! My dear fellow, pull yourself together, calm down! Lord, who wants to annoy you? But there's nobody. . . there's only Kokoryshkin and myself to look after the whole town. You wouldn't agree to stand at somebody's gate, for instance, would you? There you are, you see! And so they take any tramp. (*Indignant:*) And with frozen ears, too! . . Dear, dear, dear! Spoiling the view, and bringing infection as well. I'll give orders, I'll certainly give orders for someone else to be sent instead. (*The cuckoo clock in the next room is heard muffled by the wall, striking six. Darkness has fallen.*) And my guests not here yet! There's German punctuality for you!

(*Faiyunin sits deliberately silent, but Talanov does not go. He is tormented by the suspicion that Faiyunin knows something.*)

FAIYUNIN: Oh, and by the way, what did you decide about that letter?

TALANOV: What letter?

FAIYUNIN: You could write it, as I said, and your daughter, Olga Ivanovna, could deliver it, she still meets him. That Andrei! . . Ah, here are my guests at last. . .

(*A tall gentleman glides in through some crack. His hair is very much on end and his dress-coat creased with lying folded away. If horses could be artistic, he might be called artistic looking. He bows to no one in particular and sits down, crossing his legs. Then a fat little man with a university badge in a Russian blouse, such as Tolstoy wore, darts in, arm in arm with a fussy, fluttering affected doll of a woman covered with little bows of ribbon. They pause by the table, and when they move away, an old woman in a ball dress, with clumsily-mended felt boots showing beneath it, is fanning herself at the spot where they stood. Guests drift in by twos and threes, like balloons which appear first in one place, then in another, under a conjurer's hat. Kokoryshkin is already moving about among them, beaming and even dandified. Talanov takes his leave and Faiyunin sees him out.*)

FAIYUNIN: I'll apply for a pass for Fyodor Ivanych. Let him go to the baths at night if he wants to. . . (*Hearing some disturbance in the passage, he glances in that direction.*) I'll just go and tell him myself, I think. (*Going out with Talanov:*) You look after my guests for me, Semyon Ilyich!

(*Kokoryshkin switches on the light. Now other guests appear, like cardboard figures with the limited movement of puppets. A voice speaking a foreign tongue is heard from the passage. Kokoryshkin looks out and even seems to shrink.*)

KOKORYSHKIN (*devoutly*): Attention, ladies and gentlemen. . . Spurre!

(*All eyes are turned to the door. Mossalsky enters quickly.*)

MOSSALSKY (*confidentially*): Ladies and gentlemen. . . I must warn you that Walter Walterovich has come here straight from work. Walter Walterovich has not slept all night. And so it would be better not to irritate him. . . with loud talk in Russian. (*A scared silence. Somebody starts for the door.*) No, why should you go? . . Go on with your conversation, be quite at your ease. Walter Walterovich himself likes good company.

(*All hold their breath. With small steps, as though he is being wheeled on castors, there enters a stout man, almost a cube in shape, yellow-faced, wearing a tight-fitting purplish suit. Apparently, he can only turn his head together with the whole trunk. The left breast of his jacket is decorated with the Iron Cross, first degree. He stands still and looks around. Kokoryshkin approaches with graceful movements of his wrists, as though swimming.*)

KOKORYSHKIN (*brightly*): Welcome, Herr Spurre, welcome, wel. . . (*The word is like a cannon shot. The be-ribboned doll gasps. The centre of the stage empties. Spurre's red brush of a moustache makes a perpendicular line to his lips, his face changes colour. He utters a queer whistling sound. Kokoryshkin shuffles back, deadly pale.*)

KOKORYSHKIN: Excuse me. . . no. . . no. . .

SPURRE (*walking into him as though he were not there*): Ach, Himmelsarsch! [1]

[1] A curse.

(*Kokoryshkin presses himself against the table behind him, and the bottles on it fall. His face is frozen in a kind of ghastly admiration. Spurre slips his palm behind the man's stand-up collar.*)

SPURRE: Kolesnikoff?

(*As easily as though Kokoryshkin were a feather, Spurre swings him round with his back towards the door and moves him out at the end of his outstretched arm. They march out in step, eye to eye. Kokoryshkin makes no resistance, he is only terribly afraid of stepping on Spurre's toe. He is about 35 per cent dead already. At the exit a tall sergeant-major on guard receives him like a child. Then the course of Semyon Ilyich's career moves swiftly to its close. Through the wall from somewhere comes his suppressed and above all surprised yelp of* "Nikolai Sergeyich!" *Then all is quiet. Even the shot that follows resembles a hollow cough in the street outside. At that same moment Faiyunin returns, thoughtfully chewing his moustache. He grasps the situation at first glance.*)

FAIYUNIN (*searching around with his eyes*): There was a little old man here. Where's he got to?

HORSE-GUEST (*in a bass*): There's no more little old man.

MOSSALSKY (*cracking his finger-joints nervously*): Can't we have a little music, ladies and gentlemen?

(*Somebody sets the musical box going. Hiccoughing and missing beats where the machinery is worn, it plays a polka. Spurre returns.*)

SPURRE: Ufff! (*And in some strange fashion, seems to emit smoke.*) He's. . . gone. . . gone home. (*Humorously:*) Just a little way!

MOSSALSKY (*softly*): Das war eine alte russische Redensart! [1]

(*For a moment Spurre preserves an ox-like silence, then shakes with a huge laugh. Then everyone begins to laugh at Kokoryshkin's glaring faux pas.*)

SPURRE: Redensart? Ha, Trottel! [2]

(*Enter three German officers. Faiyunin applauds, the guests follow his example. A venomous smile twists the lips of the leading officer.*)

1st OFFICER: Das ist ja das reinste Paradies! [3]

2nd OFFICER: So fern's im Paradies Bordelle gibt. [1]

3rd OFFICER (*distinctly the worse for drink*): Aber wir sind, scheint's, in die Abteilung für Pferde geraten! [2]

(*They burst into a regular volley of metallical laughter. Spurre looks askance at them.*)

SPURRE (*growling*): Hier hängt das Bild des Führers, meine Herren! [3]

(*Quailing, the officers move aside. They are attracted by the be-ribboned woman, much to the dissatisfaction of the fat man. Mossalsky beckons Faiyunin.*)

MOSSALSKY: Are you personally acquainted with all this menagerie?

FAIYUNIN: Consider, Alexander Mitrofanovich, these are industrialists, legal lights! There's even a bass among them, only he hasn't time to make his name.

MOSSALSKY: You will be responsible for everything going well. Is there any champagne in the house?

FAIYUNIN: It's on the table. Why, are you expecting a victory? Or is someone special coming?

MOSSALSKY: I'll tell you. The commendant will be here in a quarter of an hour. Announce dinner.

FAIYUNIN: Please do me the honour of accepting what my poor table can provide.

(*The crowd moves towards the table. Spurre takes his place on the left of the arm-chair intended for Wibbel. There is a very obvious vacant space all around him. Mossalsky places a watch in front of him and taps a wine-glass with a knife for silence. He has to repeat this, as one officer is telling another a story over the table:* "Ach, übrigens. . . Kennen Sie schon den neuen Witz? Also, zu einem Mädchen kommt ein Jude. . ." [4] *The listener is already laughing.*)

MOSSALSKY: Our host requests you to fill your glasses. (*The sound of wine being poured is heard in the hush.*) The Herr Kommendant, who is already on his way to join us, has authorized me to make this speech. We are short of time, ladies and gentlemen, so I will be brief. (*To Spurre:*) Have I your per-

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[1] An old Russian expression.

[2] Expression? Ha, idiot!

[3] But this is a real paradise!

[1] If there are brothels there.

[2] But we've evidently got into the part for horses!

[3] Gentlemen, you are in the presence of the Führer's portrait!

[4] By the way, have you heard the latest joke? A Jew came to a girl. . .

mission to speak Russian? (*The latter nods, monumentally.*) At this moment, ladies and gentlemen, when we are spending our time so pleasantly with our genial host, the last scene of an act of historic justice is being played out. The German race, bottled up by the Slavs in the old, cramped Europe, has blown out the cork and flowed irresistibly eastward, bringing the new order and the ruling will. At this moment we are expecting a telephone report of colossal importance. . .

SPURRE: Zeit![1] (*In a deep silence he goes directly to the telephone and lays his hand expectantly on the receiver.*)

MOSSALSKY (*in a ringing voice*): The rusty lock which has been hanging for a thousand years on the gates of the East has been smashed. Gentlemen. . . Moscow is now taken!

(*Faiyunin crosses himself surreptitiously. The horselike artist wipes his forehead with an enormous handkerchief. All stand and lift their glasses. The telephone rings. Spurre snatches the receiver.*)

SPURRE: Hier Hauptmann Spurre. Wer dort? (*And suddenly, almost falling over the instrument:*) Ermordet. . . wen? Uff! Wer noch? Lorenz, Pfau, Mülle...Ja![2]

(*Pushing their chairs aside, the officers gather around Spurre.*)

FAIYUNIN (*nudging Mossalsky*): What is it, what's happened? Ask him, ask him if the Moscow cathedrals are still standing?

MOSSALSKY (*translating Spurre's ejaculations*): Silence! . . Wibbel's been killed. And three other with him, from the staff. On the way here.

(*Faiyunin clutches his head.*)

SPURRE: Wer ist der Mörder? (*Furiously:*) Antworten Sie auf meine Frage und stottern Sie doch nicht so, Waschlappen! Einer? Jawohl. Ha, sechs Schüsse![3]

MOSSALSKY (*to Faiyunin*): One person fired. Six shots. . . The devil's in it!

(*Faiyunin jerks his hand from Mossalsky's elbow. At the same moment the horse-like artist takes advantage of the confusion to raise his glass to his lips. Mossalsky strikes down his hand.*)

MOSSALSKY: What are you drinking to, you swine?

HORSE-LIKE ARTIST (*offended*): How am I to take that word? . . figuratively or literally?

MOSSALSKY (*through his teeth*): Literally. Take it.

HORSE-LIKE ARTIST (*brushing the drops from his coat, retreating*): Oh, well. . . in that case. . .

(*Spurre hisses at them. He looks terrible, his collar seems to be too tight. The guests shrink to half their number, fade out as unobtrusively as they appeared.*)

SPURRE: Haben Sie ihn geschnappt? So, richtig. Ich bleibe hier. Bringen Sie ihn her![1] (*He replaces the receiver and sinks onto the nearest chair, standing alone in the centre. The officers are standing up, hastily fortifying themselves at the table, eating with their fingers.*) Raus mit der Bande da![2]

MOSSALSKY (*to the guests, crowding round the doors*): The interrogation will take place here, milords. You will see the next act on the square. Good night, ladies and gentlemen!

(*He himself accompanies the guests to the door. Spurre sits motionless. Somebody knocks at the door. And then, all unsuspecting what has happened, the belated guests, Talanov and his wife, appear in the doorway.*)

TALANOV: Are we too late, Nikolai Sergeyich?

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Fyodor will be here soon. He is having his wound dressed.

(*Faiyunin slips over to them, finger on lip.*)

FAIYUNIN: Here's a pretty kettle of fish, have you heard the news? They've shot Wibbel. And never a sound. And six others with him. Their number's up!

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Impossible! This is terrible!

FAIYUNIN: Ten bullets, one after the other, without stopping.

TALANOV: Who shot him?

FAIYUNIN: It must be that. . . Well, he's not called Alexei nor yet Alexander. Dear, dear me, I'm sorry about Wibbel! And his proclamations still hanging on the walls in Amsterdam!

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[1] Time!

[2] This is Colonel Spurre. Who is that? Murdered? . . Who? Uff! Who else? Lorenz, Pfau, Mülle. . . Yes!

[3] Who did it? Answer my questions and don't stutter, you dishrag! One? Certainly. Six shots!

---

[1] Have you got him? Good. I shall stay here. Bring him along.

[2] Clear all this gang out!

What made him stick his fingers into the Russian pie!

TALANOV (*reaching out for the door handle*): Perhaps, then, we'd better. . .

FAIYUNIN (*detaining him*): On the contrary, the most interesting part's just beginning. They're bringing him here now. (*Nodding at Spurre, sitting with his back to them:*) I'm all agog myself to see what sort of a bird this is. Sit down quietly in the corner.

SPURRE: Tisch! Papier! [1]

(*He sits immobile, looking like a sack of flour flung across the chair. A card-table is placed in front of him, an ink-well, paper, carafe and glass arranged on it, and chairs are placed for those participating in the interrogation.*)

SPURRE: Nehmen Sie Plätze, meine Herren! [2]

(*The officers come to life and sit down. Noise of boots and scraping chairs. Mossalsky returns, looking business-like.*)

MOSSALSKY (*to Spurre*): He's here. Shall we bring him in?

(*The latter makes a movement with his index finger. Mossalsky bows and goes out. Soldiers take up their positions at the entrance. A word of command is heard, then a familiar, hacking cough. Anna Nikolayevna starts up at the sound, and Talanov barely has time to check her. At the moment Fyodor enters briskly. He is bareheaded, but wears an overcoat, and with his habitual gesture tucks his handkerchief into his sleeve. He seems taller and sterner. With a kind of heightened interest his eyes take in the room where he spent his childhood. The officer in charge of him lays Fyodor's revolver before Spurre and whispers some additional report in his ear. A solemn silence reigns as though Mass were about to begin. Spurre walks all round his victim, flicks an invisible speck of dust from Fyodor's shoulder, then takes his place in ominous silence.*)

SPURRE (*to Mossalsky*): Verhören Sie ihn! [3]

MOSSALSKY (*with emphatic and vindictive politeness*): Kindly stand further off, please.

FYODOR: Don't be alarmed. They've taken everything from me.

MOSSALSKY: Stand further off. (*Fyodor takes a step back, rubbing his hands as though chilly.*) You'd better speak the truth. It'll be quicker and less painful. Was it you who fired at the German commendant?

FYODOR: First of all may I request that the room be cleared of outsiders? This isn't a theatre. . . with one actor.

(*Following the direction of his gaze, Mossalsky notices the Talanovs.*)

MOSSALSKY: Why are these people here?

FAIYUNIN (*rising slightly*): As witnesses. To identify the creature.

MOSSALSKY: They have my permission to remain. Please come closer, Madam. And you too. . . (*indicating Talanov:*) here! (*To Fyodor:*) First and second name?

FYODOR: I want a smoke.

(*Mossalsky glances at Spurre for permission. The latter makes an affirmative gesture with his finger. Mossalsky hands Fyodor a cigarette, holding it by the tobacco end* [1].)

FYODOR: Matches!

(*Spurre laughs. Mossalsky hands Fyodor a match. They look one another in the eye. The fire burns their fingers, but their mutual hatred burns more fiercely. Mossalsky turns away when the burned match end falls.*)

FAIYUNIN (*with great animation*): This gentleman wasn't born yesterday!

SPURRE: Wer ist der Mann? [2]

MOSSALSKY: Well, who are you?

FYODOR: I'm called Andrei. My surname is Kolesnikov.

(*General animation, arising from the very sound of this famous name. Anna Nikolayevna raises her hand as though to check the course of her son's fate:* "No. . . no. . ." *Spurre turns his whole body round in her direction interrogatively, but she already has herself well in hand.*)

FYODOR: Write it down, I shan't say it again.

MOSSALSKY (*dubiously*): Is that really. . . your name?

FYODOR: Do you think I'm anxious to steal the honour of swinging on the gallows for it? That's surely too high an honour for a usurper!

MOSSALSKY (*to the officer*): Bitte,

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[1] Table. Paper.
[2] Take your places, gentlemen!
[3] Interrogate him.

[1] Russian cigarettes have a cardboard mouthpiece.
[2] Who is this man?

schreiben Sie auf![1] (*To Fyodor:*) Your rank and profession?

FYODOR: I'm a Russian. I defend my country.

MOSSALSKY: I understand, but. . . we must have your most recent occupation. (*Silence.*)

FAIYUNIN: Allow me to explain. Chairman of the Soviet district authorities.

(*In a low voice Mossalsky dictates to the officer, who writes down the reply.*)

FAIYUNIN: Quite correct. You can ask Mr. Talanov there. He's a doctor, he knows everybody in the town.

MOSSALSKY: Do you confirm this?

TALANOV (*rather uncertainly*): Yes. . . we have seen each other at meetings.

FAIYUNIN: You can ask the lady as well.

(*Mossalsky looks at Anna Nikolayevna.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*without taking her eyes from Fyodor*): Yes. And although I think it's ten years since I last met him, I recognize him. May I go?

MOSSALSKY: Just a moment more, Madam. (*The Talanovs seat themselves.*)

SPURRE: Wieviel Mann hat er gehabt?[2]

MOSSALSKY: How many men were there. . .

FYODOR: I understood the question, sir. We were five.

(*Spurre screws up his eyes in a laugh.*)

MOSSALSKY (*almost stealthily*): Are you sure you're not making a mistake, Mr. Kolesnikov?

FYODOR (*in the same tone*): Certainly not. I was always good at arithmetic.

(*All laugh shortly.*)

MOSSALSKY: But your people acted simultaneously in ten places. We reckoned that there must be at least thirty or forty of you.

FYODOR: That's because we worked so well that it seemed like forty. (*With restraint:*) You wait, when there are four of us left, they'll seem like a thousand to you.

(*Faiyunin nudges Talanov indignantly as much as to say: "What infernal impudence!"*)

MOSSALSKY (*restraining his anger*): If you don't stop trying to be funny, you son-of-a-bitch, I'll wipe the laugh off your blasted mug myself. . .

FYODOR (*in the same low even tones, his face darkening*): Is that the way your mother taught you to talk Russian abroad?

(*Spurre thumps his fist on the table, making the glass ring against the carafe. Not a trace is left of Mossalsky's former elegant coolness. Ejaculating:* "Looking for a quick death are you, you devil?" *he rises as though jerked up by a spring, and seizing the revolver from the table, flings himself on the prisoner. With an accustomed movement, two soldiers jerk Fyodor upright from behind. Knitting her brows, Anna Nikolayevna gazes fixedly into her son's face.*)

FAIYUNIN (*catching Mossalsky by the elbow*): Not here, not here, Alexander Mitrofanovich, for the love of heaven, my dear fellow,—not here! There's food about, and you'll splash all the furniture. We've a nice quiet little shed behind the house. . . Alexander Mitrofanovich!

(*Spurre also indicates with a gesture that it would be better done out there. Fyodor is led out.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: If I may not go. . . then may I turn aside, Captain? I don't care much for these gendarmes' amusements.

MOSSALSKY (*confused*): You are at liberty to go. Thank you, Madam!

(*He hastens to overtake those who have just gone out.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: I feel dizzy. Help me out, Ivan. (*She sees Fyodor's handkerchief which has fallen down. She pauses, picks it up. In the centre there is a large red spot. . . Everybody is looking. She drops the handkerchief again.*) Blood on this, too. How much blood in the world!

(*Faiyunin politely accompanies the Talanovs to the door. Anna Nikolayevna goes out first.*)

FAIYUNIN: Your wife has a will of iron, doctor. You will be weaker than her.

(*And shuts the door suddenly behind him. Spurre is walking about the room; he glances under his brows at the telephone and suddenly changes his direction. He even takes up the receiver, whistles, taps the box as though striving to awaken the voice of victory. Then Mossalsky, highly agitated, brings in a motor-cyclist. Salutes. Spurre draws a very small slip of paper bearing a few words from a huge*

[1] Write that down, please.

[2] How many men had he?

staff envelope. He turns it over and over in his hands. Mossalsky glances furtively over Spurre's shoulder, and his face expresses consternation.)

SPURRE: Verhör vertagen! [1]

(*Exit motor-cyclist. The officers leave. The officer in charge of the guard orders:* "Guard, dismiss!" *Spurre reads the letter again.*)

FAIYUNIN: Is there any news, my dear fellow?

MOSSALSKY (*hastily fastening up his cuff link*): It looks as though your house-warming will be in a ditch, Faiyunin. Things are going badly at Moscow.

FAIYUNIN (*ominously*): That means they're on the run, my dear fellow. . . And what about us?

(*Mossalsky goes out. Spurre is still standing motionless. Very cautiously, Faiyunin approaches him with a glass of wine in the hope of finding out how things stand.*)

FAIYUNIN: Allow me to offer you a glass of wine. . . to keep up your strength?

(*Spurre slowly looks him up and down, as though not recognizing him, then suddenly seizes him by the shoulder, venting his rage on him. Both Spurre and Faiyunin, who is shaken to and fro in his paws, are muttering something. The wine is splashed about. Spurre hurls the mayor into an arm-chair. His own panting breath is the only sound that breaks the silence. Then Spurre leaves his hospitable host. For a long time Faiyunin sits there, his face contorted and eyes closed; he has not forgotten Kokoryshkin's fate. When he opens his eyes again, Kolesnikov is standing before him with one arm in the sleeve of his fur jacket, the other one bandaged, looking at him curiously.*)

KOLESNIKOV: Did he hurt your neck? (*Faiyunin looks at him with eyes screwed up.*) I'd have come earlier, but I saw you were busy with your guest. . . (*With a gesture shows how.*) I didn't want to disturb you.

FAIYUNIN (*sarcastically*): Just going to the bath, sonny?

KOLESNIKOV: It's time for me to be away; I hadn't noticed how time flew, sitting there at home.

FAIYUNIN: Then stay and sit with an old man for a little while longer. . . Fyodor Ivanych.

(*Kolesnikov sits down; what he wants to do is worth the loss of time.*)

FAIYUNIN: Sit a bit nearer to me.

KOLESNIKOV: I hear they've caught the criminal. Why aren't you looking happy?

FAIYUNIN: I've been thinking, Fyodor Ivanych. . . When the Reds retreated, I was standing by the roadside. It was so quiet, you'd be afraid to cough. And they kept on marching past. . . And there was a sound, you couldn't say whether it was the snow crunching under the skis or the gnashing of teeth. Then a young fellow in a soldier's coat darted up to me, quite young he was, and embraced me, his breath scorched my face. "Don't be downhearted, Grandad," he said. "The Russians'll come back. The Russians always come back. . ." (*Seeming to shrink:*) What do you think, will that young fellow keep his word?

KOLESNIKOV: You can tell that better than I, Nikolai Sergeyich. It wasn't me that the lad embraced.

FAIYUNIN: And I've remembered something else, how I used to go into the porter's lodge, to your father, and say: "Harness the roan, Petrukha, and have Gamayun and Serbyanka at the sides!" He'd throw on his driving coat, and the girdle would be red as flame around his waist. . . and then we'd be off into the wind over the meadows. . . Aye! (*There is no alteration in Kolesnikov's pose nor in Faiyunin's face as he shows his hand.*) And we treated Peter Kolesnikov well. Gave him clothes for the holidays, and sweets for his kid. (*Tapping Kolesnikov's knee:*) Have you forgotten Faiyunin's biscuits?

KOLESNIKOV: Who do you think you're talking to, Nikolai Sergeyich? I don't understand you.

FAIYUNIN (*sternly*): God saved you today. God and Faiyunin. It was we who saved you from the noose. (*Two loud chords on the piano from Talanovs' half, then music almost dying away at intervals.*) It's the iron-willed old lady playing. Trying to show me that she isn't sorry for her own son. . . (*Softly:*) Better give in, Andrei Petrovich. I have you in my hand.

(*Kolesnikov starts up and looks around him. A helmeted shadow holding a bayonet*

[1] The interrogation has to be postponed!

pauses in the moonbeam shining through the frosted window and then recommences its pacing to and fro. He sits down again and lights a cigarette.)

KOLESNIKOV: Why give in? You've got me in your web in any case. Tell me, why did you send for me?

FAIYUNIN: It's a wild stormy night that we've met. What trees the wind's felling, look around you! And you and I will crash down in each other's arms in the midst of the storm. . . But perhaps we can part in peace and loving kindness?

KOLESNIKOV: You'll not let me go, polecat!

FAIYUNIN: I'll open the door for you myself, my dear fellow. . . And when the young chap in the soldier's coat returns, you'll succour my old age too. I'm no longer dreaming of my firm, or of flax like Ninon Lenclos' curls; sons are falling in the places where their fathers laid their bones! Even if it's only to work in the stables or as a watchman. . . Close an eye and go! (*After a moment's silence with double meaning:*) The way out is only by this door. There you can't pass!

KOLESNIKOV: That means that they're thrashing your lot at Moscow. . . the Russians are?

FAIYUNIN: Everything is before you. . . life. . . spring-time. Smell it, sonny, how good it smells, eh? Grab it, hide it, I'm giving it to you for nothing. . . it's night, night, nobody can hear us. (*Kolesnikov draws on his cigarette, taking deep breaths, filling his lungs.*) Take the rope from Olga Ivanovna's tender neck. . . before it chafes!

(*He falls back into the arm-chair. Kolesnikov extinguishes the stump of his cigarette on his heel.*)

KOLESNIKOV: Yes, your young fellow will return, Nikolai Sergeyich. And the bullet for you is already in the breach. Traitors are not taken prisoner. At first I thought you wished to satisty your grudge in the Russian conflagration. A proud man will give his life three times over for the right to revenge. But you have already forgiven everything. You no longer exist, Faiyunin. The wind of war has whirled you up like a dust-cloud. . . You think that in this town you are master, but it is I who am the master. Here I stand—unarmed, your prisoner. My shoulder hurts. . . . And nevertheless, you're afraid of me. Even when he's the stronger, a coward hopes most of all for mercy from his enemy. See, now I am going. . . and you dare not even shout to the German sentry to shoot me in the back. When we are dead, we are still more terrible, Faiyunin. (*He finds difficulty in fastening up his jacket with his left hand alone.*) Well, time for me to be going. Spent too much time talking to you. They're waiting for me. (*Exit.*)

(*Motionless, looking suddenly much older and smaller, Faiyunin sits looking after him. The cuckoo-clock strikes. A howl bursts from Faiyunin's lips. He jumps up and darts to the telephone.*)

FAIYUNIN: Commendant's office! Free the line! This is Faiyunin! (*Turning the handle:*) You lie, my knife is sharper than yours, you lie! . . (*Into the receiver:*) Zwei. Is that Spurre? This is Faiyunin. Send me some men here quick. . . I have a little present for you. . . Good! (*Hanging up the receiver:*) You'll come back for her all right, my boy! Aye, the night's young yet, don't be in such a hurry with your answer!

End of act III

ACT IV

An underground storehouse, adapted as a temporary prison. There are two semi-circular windows under the heavy vaulted ceiling, one of them is nailed up and has a boarded chute, formerly used to slide bales down; the other is bright, edged with snowflakes from a recent storm, stained pink in the sun. It is a bright sunny day, rare for December. Flecks of sunlight, quivering a little as though in the breeze, dance across the words: "Lukoyanov, 1907" on the white-washed brick wall, and below: "No smoking, penalty 1 rouble." Lower down, in the shadow, a door with grille, like a church, with the German sentry visible on the other side; hanging on a hook beside it, an oil-burning lantern. This is one part of the cellar; the other, beyond a low archway to the right, is in semi-darkness. People are sitting and lying on pallets made of boards from packing cases of various sizes and matting, people who are to spend the last day of their lives here. There is an old man in a leather jacket, and

a lad in bark sandals dozing against his shoulder; the pock-marked Yegorov, tall and restless, paces to and fro as though seeking some way out of the common grave; Tatarov is standing on a box by the wall, his fingers wrapped in a piece of cloth, shaking them swiftly and angrily from time to time. Olga, wearing a fur jacket, is eagerly trying to convince a woman in a man's overcoat of something, evidently without much success; the latter is shivering with cold; there is also a madman with frozen ears and a battered hat. . . Other people are lying motionless on the pallets. There is an uneven humming from somewhere overhead, and the madman stretches himself out on the matting by the wall and repeats this clear, almost musical note endlessly, exasperatingly. On the background of these two merging sounds, an old trench song is heard from the other side of the door:

Steh ich in finstrer Mitternacht
So einsam auf der stillen Wacht,
So denk' ich an mein teures Lieb
Ob sie mir treu und hold verblieb...[1]

TATAROV (*raising both hands into the sun's rays overhead, palms up*): Pleasant the sun is, it tickles as it goes right through. Maybe if I could hold my hands in the sun for a year, day and night, my fingers would get right again. . . eh?

OLGA: Don't think about them, Tatarov. Then they won't hurt so much. Go on with what you were telling us.

TATAROV (*tormented by the continual pain*): Well, then he let fly at me in German with all the cusswords he knew. "It was you, Tatarov," he yelled, "you, you son-of-a-bitch, who helped Kolesnikov wreck the train?" "Maybe I would have wrecked it," I answered, "but I hadn't time. You can't do everything at once! And Kolesnikov," I asked, "who's that?" "Well," he said, laughing, "we'll show you what he's like. Bring him in." And got down to business again. And suddenly started talking so polite. . .

YEGOROV: A cultured nation. They make a fuss if anybody drops a cigarette end—seven kopeks' fine at once.

TATAROV: That's right! "Lay your hand on the table. Stretch out the fingers." And queer, I didn't seem to feel any more pain then. Have they really roped him, I thought. . . . And before they'd got as far as the third finger, I heard him being brought along. I could see out of the corner of my eyes someone who could hardly drag one foot after the other, but I didn't dare look up. . . scared, all the stiffening gone suddenly. And then I pulled myself together and looked up and sa-aw. . . a d my heart seemed to stand still. . .

YEGOROV (*hopefully*): It wasn't him?

(*Tatarov glances at the madman, who has suddenly stopped his humming and rocking to and fro. All turn their heads towards him, and he begins again with redoubled energy.*)

OLGA: That's not very interesting, Tatarov. It isn't, is it?

YEGOROV (*impatiently, not understanding her caution*): It seems to me, Olga Ivanovna, that it's even absorbing!

(*Silence.*)

TATAROV (*looking at his bandaged hands*): Clever little fellows they were; they could do anything. They'd make you a pair of felt boots, or bridle you a horse, or play you a dance on the accordion. . . They could shoot, too. (*Dreamily:*) Aye, if only one quiet, still night, when the flowers go bye-bye, I could meet that wild boar in a quiet valley, alone. I wouldn't need anything, neither your sharp little knife. . .

YEGOROV: No? Anything else you'd like?

TATAROV (*apologetically*): Yes, just have one last plate of Russian cabbage soup.

YEGOROV: Anything more? Come on, hand in your orders, don't be shy.

TATAROV: And I'd very much like to see what's happening outside, in the world.

(*Yegorov raises his head and looks at the window.*)

YEGOROV: We can manage that all right. We'll have the news for you in a minute. (*He piles the boxes one on top of the other.*)

OLD MAN: Then you'd better let that lad of mine get up there: he's lighter.

YEGOROV: It's a shame to wake him. He's sleeping so soundly.

OLD MAN: Don't worry, he's used to it. (*Shaking the boy:*) Prokofi, Prokofi! . . You've been dreaming of your

[1] When in the midnight darkness
Lonely I stand on guard,
I think of my beloved,
Is she still pure and true?

skates long enough. Why, your nose is frozen! Wake up! (*The boy rubs his eyes.*) Here, son, we all want you to climb up there and get us the news. Up you go!

(*The angle of the wall prevents the sentry from seeing the boy climbing up to the window. The old man stands below, helping him to balance.*)

PROKOFI: Uh, how the snow's piled up!

YEGOROV: You keep your eyes for what matters. Are there any sentries standing about?

PROKOFI: I can't see. There's a great lout warming his feet here. (*Through the window, two cold German feet wrapped up in all kinds of rags can be seen, stamping silently, beside the butt of a grounded rifle.*) Go on dancing, go on dancing, we'll wait.

(*He even begins humming a Russian folk-dance tune. The stamping feet keep perfect time to the song, much to everybody's amusement.*)

OLD MAN: Careful with your tricks, lad! They'll hear you.

(*At last the feet disappear.*)

PROKOFI (*surprised*): There's something like a swing, Grandad.

TATAROV (*with quiet, restrained anger*): You're not looking in the right place. Look up: whose are those planes. . . ours or theirs?

(*Muffled sound of anti-aircraft guns.*)

PROKOFI: That's a daft question! Would they be shooting at their own lot, d'you think? (*To the old man:*) There's nothing more, Grandad. Only lots of sparrows flying everywhere.

OLD MAN: Get down, they may shoot.

(*The boy gets down just in time. Footsteps are heard from the stairs, the clanking of keys. Tatarov says in a low voice:* "That's right, there should always be keys clanking in a prison. I've read about that in books." *All but the madman have fixed their eyes on the door. Olga looks out, up the stairs.*)

OLGA: It's all right, comrades, don't be alarmed. They're bringing Kolesnikov back from his interrogation.

(*The bolt grates. The guards bring Fyodor in. Apart from his torn shirt, there is no injury visible. His jacket is thrown over his shoulders, his head hanging sideways. The guards prop him up against the wall, make sure that he is steady, and go out.*)

OLGA: Comrades, some of you help to get him to a bed.

(*Nobody looks at Fyodor, Olga goes up to him alone.*)

YEGOROV (*under his breath*): Is it that one?

TATAROV: Yes, that one.

YEGOROV (*ironically*): H-m, Andrei Petrovich has changed a bit, then. I'd never know him.

OLGA (*as though trying to wake someone who is asleep*): Andrei, Andrei. . . Look at me. It's me, Olga. Well, what happened, what happened there? You seemed to be gone for a year.

FYODOR (*glancing at his sister*): It was. . . quite a long talk.

OLGA (*unable to bear his gaze*): Come, I'll get you to bed.

(*There is a deep silence as Olga leads him to his place near the wall. She helps him stretch his legs now grown heavy along the pallet, and seats herself beside him. All watch them furtively.*)

OLGA: Lie still, you'll have to lie down for a while now. I'll be mending your jacket.

FYODOR: Such luxuries don't matter now, Olga.

OLGA: Kolesnikov should always be tidy. Even today. Even there. We mustn't let anyone see how hard it is . . . to be Kolesnikov. Give me your jacket. . . (*She takes off her own jacket and throws it over him.*) No, you must lie there, awhile. It's necessary.

YEGOROV (*to Tatarov*): Fine chap you are. Don't you see what she's doing?

(*Tatarov swiftly takes off his greatcoat and stands there just in his stoker's vest.*)

TATAROV: Better cover him with this, Olga Ivanovna. You'll catch cold!

OLGA: Thanks, Tatarov. But what about you?

TATAROV: Oh, I'm warm enough, you could light a cigarette from me! (*Going up to the pallet:*) How do, Comrade Kolesnikov? Have you forgotten your friends? After our racing after death together?

OLGA: Leave him alone, Tatarov. . . for a while. (*Covering Fyodor with the greatcoat:*) Would you like a drink? We can get you some snow.

FYODOR: No, I'm quite all right. I've even stopped coughing. (*Smiling:*) Looks as though I'm getting better. Cover my head as well.

OLGA: Why?

FYODOR (*mimicking her*): It's necessary.

(*She does as he wishes.*)

OLGA (*to the woman*): You said you had a needle. Lend it me. . . oh, and some thread!

(*She sets to work. Yegorov approaches.*)

YEGOROV (*glancing down at her busy hands*): You've some game on with us, Olga Ivan'na. I've known Kolesnikov ever since I was a kid. . . and his Ma, and his Grandad, too.

OLGA (*lowering her voice*): This man will be the first to die today.

TATAROV (*proudly*): Well, and what if he will? That's a great honour to die as Kolesnikov.

OLGA: Go into the corner over there and call the others as well. I'll come and join you directly.

THE WOMAN: Go along, Olga. I'll finish the mending I've got to be doing something, doing something, doing something. . . all the time.

(*Olga hands the work over to her. People gather in the corner under the window. The madman shows signs of uneasiness. The meeting begins. The sentry again commences his song:*

Als ich zur Fahne fortgemüst,
Hat sie noch einmal mich geküsst,
Mit Blumen meinen Hut geschmückt
Und liebend mich ans Herz gedrückt.[1]

Prokofi opens his eyes.)

PROKOFI (*without turning his head*): Grandad. . . Grandad. . .

OLD MAN: Why aren't you asleep, lad?

PROKOFI: Grandad. . . will it hurt?

OLD MAN: Not for long, my lad! (*With stern tenderness:*) And remember, you'll be just like all great men you've heard tell of. Didn't they teach you at school about Kuzma Minin and Ivan Sussanin? (*Screwing up his eyes, Prokofi stares straight ahead.*) They were like great oaks, what winds broke against them. You're only a sapling, but you're doing the same as they did. Yes, you too, you've fought for Russia just like they did. Here you sit, you can't sleep, and you'll never go skating on the lake again. But Stalin knows all about you. Only he can't tell us, because he has to mind great affairs. There's ambassadors waiting to see him, armies waiting, generals coming for orders. . . All sorts of great men who know the world, and all on their dignity. You can't blink an eyelash when it's like that. . . But inside he's all the time thinking that in Lukoyanov's cellar there's Prokofi Statnov, a Russian soldier thirteen years old, waiting to be executed by the German hangman. . .

PROKOFI (*all animation*): Grandad. . . will they let him know by telephone or by radio? Radio's quicker, isn't it?

OLD MAN: No, lad, this goes by direct line, from heart to heart.

(*The meeting comes to an end. The boy closes his eyes again.*)

YEGOROV (*passing the old man*): Your grandson, isn't he?

OLD MAN: He's dearer than that, lad. He was my grandson even before all this.

TATAROV: In war-time we're all brothers.

YEGOROV: How did they get you and the kid?

OLD MAN: They got us by mistake. (*Winking in the direction of the madman, who has again paused in his exercises:*) You see, our dog was hungry. So we went to the river to get some mushrooms for him. And when we looked, there was a spy there, a dirty bit of carrion. . .

YEGOROV (*loudly*): You should have fed the carrion to your dog!

(*The madman renews his rocking to and fro with renewed energy. Yegorov seats himself beside Fyodor. He talks to him without uncovering his face.*)

YEGOROV: Well, how goes it, comrade: very bad?

FYODOR: Better now, I'm warmer.

YEGOROV: Don't be afraid to say it hurts. It always hurts when they beat you. Ask anyone, we've all been through it. Didn't they beat you up, Tatarov?

TATAROV: Not on the body. They just. . . gave me this. . . manicure.

YEGOROV: You hear? And they didn't spare Katerina Petrovna. . . though they should have done, in her condition. And it'll soon be Olga Ivan'na's turn, too. (*His eyes roam round the cell, till they rest on the madman.*) And they've used that chap so that he's gone off his chump. See how he sways about. . . Hey, you in the hat, did they beat you up, too?

MADMAN (*wailing*): Yes, they beat me, they beat me. . .

[1] When the standards led me forth,
She kissed me once, a long farewell,
Decked my hat with flowers sweet,
Tenderly nestled on my breast.

YEGOROV (*winking at his comrades*): Did they lay it on thick or just tickle you up?

(*The madman has already realized that he slipped up by replying. Yegorov sticks a wisp of hay behind his ear, in imitation of the cock's feather in the madman's hatband, and squats down beside him.*)

YEGOROV: What kind are you. . . quiet, or violent, like me? (*Sternly:*) I don't like it when people refuse to answer me. Is it long since you went off your chump?

MADMAN: It'll be two months come Tuesday.

YEGOROV: O-o-oh! What a long time! I haven't been off my head so long, I'm just an amateur, as you might say. But to make up for that, I sometimes have such frenzies, I can just bash some swine on the head. . . and he'll remember it all his life long. (*Holding his fist before the madman's eyes:*) Pretty, isn't it? (*Rising, in another tone:*) We've got to have a meeting here. You sit over there by the door and whine for all you're worth, to amuse the sentry. Come along, all of you! (*In a second the madman has moved over with his sacking to the place indicated.*) And you can sing yourself some song or other, or say your prayers. . . (*To the others:*) Shall we begin, comrades?

OLGA (*uncovering Fyodor's face*): You aren't asleep, Fedya? Your friends want to talk to you. (*She helps him to put on his jacket.*) You can stay lying down, Fyodor.

FYODOR: No, I want to sit up. Help me.

(*He swings his legs down. Tatarov puts on his overcoat again.*)

YEGOROV (*grimly*): We won't bother with a presidium, eh? Let our presidium be those who gave their lives before us, in the black days of the retreat. . . for what is dearest on earth. Here's another wanting to be one of us, comrades. Olga Ivan'na has told you about him.

(*The sudden roar of aircraft, flying low. A round of machine-gun fire. Everyone gives a sigh, and suddenly the woman bursts into a loud sobbing cry, and tears at her kerchief.*)

WOMAN: Avenge us, avenge us! . . Kill the murderers, kill them!

(*General movement, except for the boy, who looks at the frantic woman sternly from beneath lowered lids. Sounds from the other side of the door, a rifle bolt snaps to, the sentry appears beyond the grating. Olga hastily leads the woman over to the side of the room. Gradually things calm down. The boy closes his eyes.*)

TATAROV (*gruffly*): Order, order, comrades!

YEGOROV (*calmly*): This man applied to Andrei twice to be accepted in our partisan group. Andrei showed the caution necessary for all of us. Left to himself, this man did well. (*Raising his voice slightly:*) He killed the murderers who have broken into our home. When Andrei left, he assumed his name. . .

OLGA: And did not dishonour it!

YEGOROV: And did not dishonour it. Though it cost him a great deal, Andrei accepted this sacrifice for the common cause. We must be quick because we may be interrupted at any moment. Any questions to ask the new comrade?

TATAROV: I've a question. (*To Fyodor:*) She said that when you left your father's house at night, that fellow, in the hat, with the feather, was standing at the door. And you guessed what was in the wind, and decided to give Andrei time to get away. Is that right?

YEGOROV (*to Fyodor*): Will you answer him?

FYODOR: Yes. . . That's not correct. It was just that everything was seething in me. . . After Aniska. I was beside myself, that's all.

TATAROV: And it wasn't out of stubbornness, anger that you made yourself Kolesnikov? Not with the feeling of, if you won't have me alive, I'll make you take me dead? Let them take a good look at me through the windows, and see me, strung up instead of you! . . Because those sort of people are no good to us!

OLGA: Tell them, Fyodor, why you took Andrei's name.

FYODOR: It seemed to me (*and his smile is suddenly reminiscent of the boy Fyodor in the smashed portrait*) that it would scare them more than ever if Kolesnikov suddenly jumped out on them again, when they thought they'd killed him. (*A fit of coughing shakes him, but he gasps.*) He's probably up and doing now, up and doing. . . (*Silence.*) I've offered you my life. . . I'm not asking for a receipt.

YEGOROV: Don't be angry, comrade. A partisan has a right to ask any ques-

tions. (*To the man lying under some matting:*) You, Pasha, have you anything to say? (*Silence.*) If our conscience itself is silent, then everything's clear. Let's vote on it. Whoever is against accepting this man into our exterminators' detachment? . . let him raise his hand.

OLD MAN: Nobody asks to be made a hero. . . it comes of itself.

YEGOROV: And you, Pasha?

(*Silence. Yegorov raises the matting from his face. He is lying there with open eyes.*)

YFGOROV: Pasha. . . Pavel! . . what's the matter with you? Don't you hear me, Pasha?

(*Silence. Yegorov again covers the face of the dead man.*)

YEGOROV: Then. . . that's unanimous. Shake hands, our new Kolesnikov!

TATAROV (*angrily and insistently*): And see you give him a good grip!

(*Yegorov and Fyodor shake hands. Noise and voices from somewhere higher up the stairs. A command:* "Ganzer Zug halt! Links um! Richt euch!"[1] *Dropping his pretence and rising to his full height, the madman presses himself in terror against the wall.*)

YEGOROV: Get ready, comrades!

(*All except Fyodor huddle down stage right.*)

OLGA: March in step, look cheerful, bright. Those who will take our places tonight are watching us. We must make a good showing, a good showing, comrades! . . (*To Fyodor:*) Get up, Fedya. It's time. . .

(*Fyodor joins the others. Figures show beyond the door.*)

TATAROV: They used to have a roll of drums for this. I've read about it. But I can't hear any. . .

(*The boy searches on the bed for his cap.*)

OLD MAN: Never mind your cap, Prokofi. It's not far.

(*The door opens. Enter soldiers, Spurre and Mossalsky. An officer has a camera slung on a strap.*)

TATAROV: Look, they're going to make pictures of it, for a souvenir. A nice birthday present for their mothers!

SPURRE (*indicating the exit and almost grinding out the word*): We-elcome!

(*All move forward at once. The officer holds up three fingers.*)

YEGOROV: That means, three at a time. . .

(*A little confusion, none look each other in the face. Yegorov picks out the first three with his eyes.*)

YEGOROV: Well, I'll go. (*To Fyodor:*) And you, of course, and. . .

TATAROV: . . . and I. Let's go, let's go. I'll show them, I'll show them, the dirty swine, how our sort can die! (*To Fyodor:*) You hold onto my shoulder, Andrei. My shoulder's strong for the present.

FYODOR: It's all right, I can manage by myself. (*To Olga:*) If you see Mother, tell her. . . I wasn't drunk that night, the night before I was taken. I just hadn't slept for two nights. I had nowhere. . .

(*The soldiers surround them and lead them out. Mossalsky is the last to leave the cellar.*)

OLGA: Listen, Captain. . . Do you speak Russian? (*Mossalsky nods.*) There's a pregnant woman here.

MOSSALSKY (*screwing up his eyes at these words*): The rope will bear, Mademoiselle.

OLGA (*her voice sinking*): . . . and children!

MOSSALSKY: You are detaining me, Mademoiselle. (*To Prokofi:*) How old are you, Statnov?

PROKOFI (*challengingly*): Seventeen.

(*Bowing ironically, Mossalsky goes out. Of his own accord Prokofi mounts the boxes and looks out of the window.*)

PROKOFI: What a cro-owd of people they've brought here!

(*He pulls the rags out of the broken pane. The wind puffs a handful of snow into his face. Another burst of anti-aircraft fire is heard.*)

PROKOFI: Grandad. . . Tell me. . . Is Stalin very tall?

(*The old man is silent, he is listening to the sounds from above.*)

OLGA: Where did you see Stalin, Grandad?

OLD MAN: I saw him during the Agricultural Exhibition. I'd grown a new kind of thing. . . (*As though seeing it all in his mind's eye:*) I saw him in an eno-ormous room, and there were more than a thousand of us. But awhile it was empty and sort of cold. And then this one man came in, and suddenly the place seemed properly filled, and warm.

(*The boy has turned away from the window. Everybody is silent. A shout, twice*

[1] Platoon—halt! Left—turn! Cover!

repeated, is heard from the square: "Stalin! Stalin!" *The voice dies away in the middle of the word.*)

OLD MAN: As for how tall he is. . . about the usual height. (*Anti-aircraft fire louder, nearer.*) What's that, a salute instead of the drums?

PROKOFI (*clinging onto the window frame*): Parachutes, Grandad, parachutes! The sky's filled, Grandad! (*He jumps down, and all that he has pent up through the whole day breaks from him in unashamed sobbing, like a child's.*) Stalin, Stalin's come! . .

(*Running feet pass the window. For a moment it is blocked by the crumpled silk of a parachute, like a rose-coloured cloud. Then with a shout of* "Ah, would you, you dirty snake!" *someone smashes in the boarded over window with a rifle butt. Shouting, several men slide down the boards into the darkness of the cell, and the foremost is Kolesnikov. For a moment they can see nothing, coming from the bright snowy day outside, and are silent.*)

KOLESNIKOV: No strangers here? (*To Olga, nodding to the exit:*) Go and meet your mother. (*To two men with rifles:*) Look under the beds. Maybe some of those eels slipped in.

(*Two go into the dark neighbouring cellar. The woman is crying silently. Kolesnikov searches all faces.*)

KOLESNIKOV: Talanov. . . Fyodor! (*All are silent.*)

PROKOFI: They took three up above. You'll never catch up to them now.

(*A voice from the next cellar:* "Give me your torch, Andrei Petrovich. . . I've found an eel. It's licking my hand. There's an emergency exit here.")

KOLESNIKOV: Coming!

(*He goes out. Olga has come up to a young fellow in a greatcoat, who has dragged his arm out of his sleeve and is pressing his hand to his elbow.*)

OLGA: You're bleeding, comrade.

YOUNG FELLOW (*still excited with the heat of the attack*): You can't watch yourself in a mix-up like this!

(*Olga hastily tears up a handkerchief to make a temporary bandage, while the young man looks searchingly around the cellar.*)

OLD MAN: Lost something, lad?

YOUNG FELLOW: No-o-o. But when we were retreating last month, I saw an old man I was sorry for. I left the ranks and ran over to him standing there by the roadside, and I hugged him and said: "Don't be downhearted, Grandad," I said. "The Russians'll come back, the Russians always come back." And I gave him my last crust of bread, all I had.

OLGA: There, that's all now, only don't bend your elbow.

YOUNG FELLOW: And for the last month I've been dreaming of him. I dream that I go up to him and I say: "Stick it, Grandad," I say, "we'll be coming soon now. Just give us time to get worked up. Because it takes a Russian some time to get really mad." And with me it's like this: once I've given my word, I keep it. . .

(*Stumbling in front of the partisans, Faiyunin comes from the neighbouring cellar, wearing a short khaki winter jacket, and followed by Kolesnikov.*)

KOLESNIKOV: What sort of eel is that? That's a real pike! Call yourself a fisherman? (*The young fellow is looking in consternation into Faiyunin's face.*) Well, have you found your old man from the pavement?

YOUNG FELLOW: You've filled out, Grandad, on my crust!

(*Faiyunin is silent. Talanov comes down from above, followed by Anna Nikolayevna.*)

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA (*with all the suffering she has endured in her voice*): Olga! . . (*She is silent, burying her face in her daughter's shoulder. The young fellow taps Faiyunin on the shoulder.*)

YOUNG FELLOW: This isn't place for us to celebrate, old man! (*There's a ring of iron in his words.*) Come outside, into the air, we'll greet each other there. . .

(*Both go out.*)

OLGA (*to her father*): Did she see it. . . there?

(*The latter nods. Olga looks into her mother's face.*)

OLGA: Mummy, your eyes are dry. That's no good. You can cry for Fyodor, Mum! He left us, and now he's come back to us. He's beside you, he's yours again, Mum!

ANNA NIKOLAYEVNA: Yes, he came back again, he's mine, he's with us now! . .

The end

A MOTHER

One could go on writing about mothers without end, especially now, in wartime, when every mother is a hero, a boundless world of faith, hope and strength, a world ineffably stirring, unconceivably complex and at the same time serene.

Now there's our neighbour, Aunt Margaret, a lean, slouching old woman. Before the war broke out, there was nearly always something wrong with her health, and she scarcely ever left her home; and even at home she made no bones about giving up all the household work to her daughter-in-law. Sometimes, throwing her woollen shawl over her shoulders, she would sit close to the house wall basking in the sun like a sick hen; she seemed to have retired from the world and from life, nothing appeared to interest her any longer.

But this was only apparent; though at home she did not interfere with anything, one thought, one care kept burning within her, and that was for her only son Avag who, though a married man with two children of his own, would ever remain a child in Aunt Margaret's eyes; if Avag, for instance, was a few minutes late in coming home from his work, the old woman began to worry: "My little boy is late," and standing at the window she would impatiently wait for her son, or poking her head out inquire of any passing neighbours whether they had seen Avag. And when Avag returned, a pleasant smile would smoothe out the wrinkles on her face, with an experienced glance she would scrutinize her sonny from head to foot to see whether anything had happened to him; and whatever had happened, pleasant or otherwise, she knew in a moment by his eyes, by the set of his lips, by his gestures being either brisk or slow; she had so thoroughly studied every glance, every step, every movement of her son's that without words she could understand his mental state. And until Avag had had a square meal, she would not cease worrying. In the morning, too, she never allowed her son to leave the house on an empty stomach. In cold weather she saw to it that Avag was warmly dressed, and if he had to go anywhere she never felt at ease till she had provided some food for him to take with him, till she had found out who would be his fellow-travellers, how long he would be away and when he would return.

Notwithstanding the ailments which sometimes forced her to keep to her bed for a day or two every week—though perhaps it was nothing but senile weakness—even when in bed she kept thinking about Avag: had he had his tea, had he had a bite of something, was he in need of anything. And in those hard days she worried at the thought that she would soon die, that Avag would be left an orphan, and that very instant she would come to a firm decision: to impress upon her daughter-in-law that she should take better care of Avag, give him everything he wanted and as soon as he wanted. Her ultimate desire was that Avag should throw a handful of earth on her dead face, and then she would be at peace.

"May God grant only that I shall live till that day! . ."

And then war broke out, and together with all the others Avag started for the front.

Perhaps you think that news like this killed our ailing Aunt Margaret or unbalanced her mind? Not a bit of it! Learning that her son was mobilized, she was transformed as if by magic, just as a mother eagle is when she sees the danger threatening her young ones. First of all Aunt Margaret was not at all disconcerted; then, hearing that the departure of the mobilized men was fixed for the next day, she started fitting out Avag with the greatest energy; you couldn't imagine all the things she managed to stuff into his bag! There was a hen, some eggs, fruit, cold meat, and so on. She forgot neither salt nor pepper. Then she washed her son's linen, patched and darned it, and put it in his bag along with some needles and thread so that Avag might mend his clothes himself if anything got torn or ripped. . . All this she had time to do in one night. At the crack of dawn Aunt Margaret, who never went

out, started for the railway station with her daughter-in-law to see Avag off.

You may think, perhaps, that after that Aunt Margaret set her mind at rest and continued dragging along through her joyless, sickly life as she used to do formerly? Not at all. When in a few days her daughter-in-law went to work, Aunt Margaret again took up the household management and started cooking, putting things in order, cleaning and preparing nourishing dinners for her grandchildren to eat when they came home from school. Then was it not necessary to have a talk with visitors; to go to market or to the store? And Aunt Margaret managed to do all this, amazing everybody with her cheerfulness; and the same Aunt Margaret who used to be afraid to creep out into the street, who was afraid of cars and trams, now with a basket over her arm briskly pattered along to market, always intent and preoccupied. At other times she used to whisper, and nobody knew to whom she was talking, probably to her Avag from whom there was no news. Where was he? In what town? When would he write to her?

"If there would only be a letter from him, I need nothing more," she would say, "even if he is 'over the hills and far away.'"

At last, when the long expected letter came and Aunt Margaret learnt where her Avag was, she first of all unburdened her heart by having a good cry; then she again started thinking what she could best send to the son whom she missed so dreadfully. At last she made up her mind: it would be a parcel of dried Erevan fruit. . .

And when the first parcel was sent, a new field of activity was opened up for Aunt Margaret: having found out Avag's address, she tried to send him some of his favourite sweetmeats as often as possible. All the neighbours woundered at Aunt Margaret's inexhaustible energy, an energy which unbent her slouching back, and they would ask: whatever is it the old woman sends out to her son that she has to run to the post-office so often?

"Nothing much, just a little fruit, anything that turns up."

"And that's so much, Aunt Margaret?»

"I only wish it could be more; I keep thinking what if he has some pals out there with him: it wouldn't be fair if he ate alone with the others just looking on. . ."

Then, when winter came, Aunt Margaret began to provide warm clothing for Avag to wear during the cold season: a woollen jumper, woollen stockings and gloves. While she knitted, it always seemed to Aunt Margaret that Avag was not lonely, that all the boys in the army were like Avag, that they were all the sons of mothers, that they all had to face winter, and so they all needed warm clothes. From that time on Avag's comrades began to be as dear to Aunt Margaret's heart as he himself.

And so when the day for sending off the parcel came, having packed all the warm things for Avag she put into the same box another pair of socks and a pair of gloves, an old sweater of her own and a bushan jacket which she had been keeping for herself; Avag might now distribute these things among his comrades, the boys who might lack warm clothes. She made her daughter-in-law write this, and then herself put the letter into the parcel.

When the parcel, quite a big box this time, had been handed in at the post-office, Aunt Margaret not only grew composed, she even felt quite happy and freed from a heavy burden. Sometimes she felt sad only because she could not send more. That night she mentally followed the parcel, reckoning out the date when Avag was likely to receive the warm clothes and having taken his share would distribute the rest among his friends. She also wondered whether he would like the things and whether they would suit him.

Thinking about her son and about the parcel, Aunt Margaret in her mind's eye imagined the front: a large, wide, waste field with now and then the sound of an explosion, and with darkness so thick at times that not a single star would shine; a place where everything seemed evil and cruel, enemies and danger abounded.

Often at night-time Aunt Margaret would be assailed by visions, forebodings and hopes; often frightened by the grim picture of an imaginary battle, she would wish she were there herself, facing the enemy and not letting his bullets graze Avag and his friends.

Musing, Aunt Margaret would fly in thought to the distant battle-field, she

saw the soldiers and her Avag, tired out after a day's fight, resting at night out there in the trenches. . . . and she herself, dressed all in black with a black shawl on her shoulders, walking along the line of trenches, keeping watch over the soldiers' sleep. With strained eyes she gazes ahead, searching the darkness with her weary, waning eyesight, so that in case of an attack she may call out: "Wake up, children, get up! The enemy is advancing!" And meanwhile, stepping lightly, lest the soldiers should wake, she is walking along the trench-line and keeping watch over the sleep of the weary men. And so on for a long time, for many hours.

All this, of course, took place in her imagination, both at night and in the day-time, when Aunt Margaret was thinking about her son. The rest of the time she was engrossed with household work, with the care of her grandchildren, with her kitchen, always pattering along hurriedly, always anxious, always preoccupied.

"You have grown young again, Aunt Margaret," the neighbours would say. "A few months ago you kept saying you were going to die, now you see you have not died after all."

"And I shan't! Until my Avag returns, until I see him again, I shan't die!"

And this she said as if death and life lay within her own power, as if she herself could fix the day and hour of her death. Her confidence in this was unbounded.

"The Mother" By the Byelorussian artist A. Kshechanovsky

ONDRA LYSOHORSKY

THREE LACHIAN POEMS *

THE CROWS

When the new flag saluted a new Ukraine,
The midwife's slap first taught you pain;
From your mother's breast, by what high will,
You came to die on this eastern hill?

This was the land your father fled,
Its soil is black, its banner red;
The beaten soldier found new pride
In you, new-born, at your mother's side.

At the village-school, the master's cane
Taught you what grew in that Ukraine,
The wheat and the maize with the golden gloss,
But not the birch that made you a cross.

Relaxed from the workshop's bustle and din,
To drink and dally was no sin,
With talk of love, ambition, fate,
The Ukrainian crows knew they could wait.

Bright-eyed and fat, one finds a perch
Upon your cross of silver birch;
Your blanket of soil is patchy and thin,
She lifts a corner and snuggles in.

Oh, the clamouring brides, their overloved swains
Grow lank and hollow-eyed on the plains;
Black smuts of hell from Russia's glow,
Here, there and everywhere—a crow!

To the banks of the Nieman, Berezina, Bug,
To Novgorod, Lutsk and Kremenchug,
Chernigov, Kiev, Kherson, Šiauliai;
The banns are out, the bone-brides fly.

In summer grass and winter snows
The sulking graves hide from the crows;
But all in vain; the cawing spies
Shout their secrets in the skies:

* The poems of Ondra Lysohorsky are written in the Lachian language, which is spoken in the industrial area of Moravska Ostrava, Vitkovice and the Beskid Mountains (between the sources of the Oder and the Vistula).

"My soldier's alone in that Russian hill,
"I left him my token—a pretty black quill,
"For now I am going to join my kin,
"On the roads to Vienna, Ostrava, Berlin.

"To the Sava, the Rhine, the Po and the Seine,
"The ditches of Holland, the fields of Spain,
"Marseilles and Zagreb, Oslo and Crete,
"All Europe the table where we'll meet."

Dark minstrel fingers pressing strings,
The crows on the telegraph rest their wings;
Death-tidings travel the sagging wires
With caw, caw, caw from the tuneless choirs.

From house to house in blacked-out lanes,
The crows tap on the window panes,
The widow hears them through her sighs;
"He left your bed,—in a marsh he lies."

Old hopes and young, alike they fade
From their sermon-serenade.
And this the end of every verse:
"Who brought on Germany this curse?"

TO THE SOLDIER OF VICTORY

Frail seemed our craft in this black sea of years,
We feared our freighted heritage were lost;
The gold that Homer, Li-Tai-Pe refined,
Beethoven, Shakespeare and all the peers
Of humankind;

But now we glimpse your beacon through the waves.
The cavernous grins of war, the monster's rasping scales,
The bombs that shed, the fires that dried our blood,
They could not make you kneel
Save to the banners of the dead.

Oh, wide the wind has flung the ashes of our homes;
One day the wind will bring the gold-motes of a spring,
The sea-salt tang of Homer's lay,
Beethoven's triumphing.
The hands of Angelo will glide
With that wind
Over rocks sunlit on a mountain-side.

A SORDID TALE

A bird-shunned willow, drooping, damp,
Had smitten her house with a rheumy cramp.

Kolorka was old, forlorn and frail,
But there was body in her ale.

The pitmen brought their hard-earned groats,
To wash the coal-dust from their throats.

But soon they passed with thirsty sighs,
Their pockets limp on hairy thighs.

Alas, Kolorka, from your brews,
The State must have its revenues.

Due warning came, without delay,
The Law rolled all her barrels away.

It took her spigots, pots and stills,
Her house was empty as her tills.

She bit her nails down to the quicks,
Alone with a broom and crucifix.

What was the willow whispering?
She fumbled with her apron string.

Took down the cross, nor prayed for grace,
A make-shift noose put in its place.

Half-dead from court and lawyer's snares,
The farmers came to drown their cares.

Forgive me, friends, this sordid tale,
Kolorka's hanging on a nail.

Translated by John Evans

ITALY'S "ALLIANCE" WITH HITLERITE GERMANY

Reproduced from the magazine
L'Alba, *issued in the U.S.S.R.*

IN MY NATIVE LAND

These are my own dear old haunts, where I was born and brought up, where every ravine in the steppe, every little glade in the forest are familiar to me, as well as every inch of the lake-shore, overgrown with reeds, and alive with game; and now, these Don steppes and woods have, once again, become our deep rear.

The Don. The beautiful river in the vast sultry steppe. Trees cluster only in the ravines and gullies, and along the river there stretches a wide border of woodland.

Before the Revolution our part of the Don was considered unnavigable. Too many shoals made it impassable for any large ships. Once in a while some small steamer, wearily splashing the still water with its paddles, would stray into our parts. Lightermen vegetated by the waterside: they were downtrodden old men, destitute and illiterate, whose life wore on as though there were neither towns nor railways all around, as if the very river didn't exist, so small was their link with the outer world. These men lived as if the stretch of the shore they had to tend were a desert island in which they had been marooned. Had some modern Rip Van Winkle fallen asleep there and awakened at the present time, one glance at the busy workers would make him realize the radical change that had taken place in the country and had revolutionized their whole life.

Last summer I often dropped in to see those old men. When I arrived, he would blow on the coals in the samovar, seize his rifle and rush for the wood, from where he would promptly return with a wild duck.

At dinner, after we had talked to our hearts' content about the war and the Cossacks' prowess, and about things in the newspapers, he would begin a long story about his children. And, though I had learnt everything about each of his offspring long before, yet, the father's pride being a thing worthy of respect, I would dutifully listen for heaven knows how long to the story of the daughter who worked as a factory engineer, and of his other girl: she would be a doctor in a year's time; of his son, a military engineer; and of another son of his, a bright and gifted boy, still at high-school.

When the battle for the Don started, the lightermen greatly helped our army. Many a time they led our soldiers through the labyrinth of sand-banks and fords, or showed the best places to build pontoons; every bit of the bank being familiar to them, they knew of crossings where the trees reached right down to the water and the river made a sharp turn; they knew of crossings which the enemy scouts could not discover, try as they might.

The people of the Don region, the Don Cossacks, are brave soldiers. All through our history they have been consistently and justly celebrated for their courage, and this reputation will be enhanced in the present war.

I have seen Cossacks, mounted and on foot, literally besieging the War Office Bureau, tormenting the official with their urgent demands to be enlisted.

"You've got to wait till you're called up, boys," an official of the War Office remonstrated from the porch.

"What is there to wait for? The enemy's getting near the Don. Sign us up!" the Cossacks kept on insisting.

I was told this at the War Office Bureau: an old Cossack arrived; trim and dapper, he stood at attention in front of the commissar.

"What do you want?" the latter asked.

"Let me join a regiment, Comrade Commander!"

"Why, how old are you?"

"Sixty, Comrade Commander."

The commissar refused very politely, but the old man stuck like a burr: he was so importunate that the commissar lost his temper.

"Old men have no business to be at the front! Why, you're too old to get on a horse."

The Cossack got into a rage and literally dragged the reluctant commissar into the street. There, tethered to a post,

stood a splendid stallion, well-groomed and sleek as a champion race-horse. The old fellow untethered the horse, mounted at one mighty leap, without touching the saddle or stirrups; he galloped spectacularly several times round the vast enclosure, and then dismounted in the same way, without using the stirrups.

"Take me on," he said, "or I'll go off on my own, without any regiment, and beat the Germans single-handed."

I spent last summer at Serafimovich. In our district, where the soil is so fertile, where the rivers and lakes are alive with fish, and the steppe and woods positively teem with all kinds of game, there was practically no industry worthy of the name. But the front was getting nearer and nearer, railway communications were cut off and one couldn't expect to get sufficient supplies from other parts of the country. It was then I saw industrial enterprises spring up overnight, and Cossacks deftly and without loss of time take to this new kind of work.

Everywhere in the region, especially along the river, towns and villages boasted brand-new mills and factories of their own.

The war was drawing nearer and nearer. When I left Serafimovich, the town was being carefully and methodically bombed. The Hitlerites were probably pleased with the results of their first raid on our town: they had demolished the high-school and a lot of houses, they had killed and maimed a considerable number of men, women and children. The Germans bombed roads, bridges and ferries, and machine-gunned the refugees. In this way, now lying low in the steppe, now trudging wearily on, the refugee-train having been smashed, we arrived in Stalingrad.

It was not the first time I found myself there, for I had visited Tsaritsyn many a time, when I was young. I remember it still, as it was then: a big mercantile city, with a large and too ornate cathedral in the central square. The houses there were not unlike their owners, stout-looking and massive, girdled by preposterously high fences with heavy buckles of iron gates on them.

Looking back, I can see again the main street of the city and the numbers of corpulent, overfed people promenading slowly up and down it; and I can also see the side-streets, the narrow alleys and the suburbs as they were then, inconceivably dirty and squalid.

Last summer it did me good to see Stalingrad, a fine, clean city with plenty of trees and grass, and suburbs (workers' settlements clustering round the famous Stalingrad plants) as clean and pleasant-looking as any of the central streets. Coming down to the river, I saw a splendid new landing-stage, bathing-facilities and boating-stations in the islands.

I was in Stalingrad when it was first raided by the German planes; saw tankers ablaze on the Volga, and the first wounds inflicted by the enemy on that beauty of a town.

The enemy overran the district where I was born. From my home-town and the neighbouring farms alone, as many as five thousand people were driven away by the Germans to become slaves. An immense crowd of them was brought to Millerovo. But on that day the Red Army broke into Millerovo, and two thousand people who had not yet been crammed into trains regained their freedom.

I have letters telling me that every day fresh groups of wasted-looking, famished people are streaming back to the farms and villages liberated by the Red Army.

When forced to retreat, the Germans burnt and blew up houses, cut down orchards, plundered and murdered. The town of Serafimovich got its full share of the nazi "new order," though the Germans held it but a short time and were driven out of it by a violent attack. The best houses stand in ruins, demolished or burnt down.

I was naturally astonished, then, to learn that my house had been left unmolested, the library intact, the furniture unlooted, the trees in the garden still standing, even my motor-boat safe in its mooring-place.

A few days later the reason for the Germans' scruples regarding my property came to light when among the papers left behind by their headquarters was found an order signed by the Führer himself: Hitler had made a present of my house to Marshal von Manstein for his plundering exploits on the Don.

The Cossack villages have suffered badly. In the village of Veshenskaya Sholokhov's mother died. She was a fine, clever old woman. She found evacuation unbearable, felt homesick and came back.

One mild sunny day the dear old soul

The Cossack collective farmer Goussakov and his daughter Lidia, Krasnodar region, who volunteered for service

went out into the courtyard, and a brute in a dive-bomber killed her, while she was feeding chickens.

I used to know that woman well. Her Russian was wonderful, it was a treat to talk to her. I have been told by Sholokhov that when he was away at high-school in Kalach his mother missed him terribly. Letters from the boy came often enough, but she was illiterate; and she didn't like to bother the neighbours by asking them to read the same letters again and again. So she learnt how to read and write, learnt it by herself, without any help.

The front has receded to the west, far from my birth-place. The town is going back to its normal life, farmsteads and villages are getting ready for the spring sowing season. From my friends' letters I know that the valuable town library, burnt by the robbers of the "higher race," is being slowly reassembled.

The Don is free. Glory to the Red Army which is clearing our land of all vermin!

ALEXANDER SERAFIMOVICH

LACERATED ROSTOV

A heavy oppression of fog hung over the city, through which shattered, half ruined silhouettes of many-storeyed houses loomed up for a moment like spectres and disappeared again. Rivulets of water trickled down the pavements, and the deep shell and bomb craters were half filled with black pools, fouled with ashes. Everywhere along the streets lay bodies which had not yet been taken away. It seemed as though nature had drawn a merciful blanket of fog over the city aghast at the gaping wounds which the Germans had dealt Rostov, wounds so hideous that one could not gaze on them without a shudder.

They had left Rostov only the previous day, and for several hours we had been wandering through the city photographing with the cold, impartial eye of the camera, one after the other, the scenes of destruction and tragedy. Driven out of the city for the second time, the fascists had carried out a wanton and frenzied destruction before which all their savagery in other places pales.

It is hard to find words for an adequate picture of all that had happened in

Rostov: it is necessary to see the city as they left it. We passed block after block, or rather, I should say what was left of them: lines of torn-up pavement bordered by formless piles of stone. Here, for instance, had been the Gorky Theatre, in which the Rostov people took such pride. The Germans blew it up so completely that there can be no question of restoring it. Only a part of the walls remains, and a big pile of rubble and stones in the centre of what was once the auditorium. Here stood the Central Telephone Exchange, a tall building whose windows gape emptily. The whole interior has been gutted by fire. The famous Marx Library of Rostov formerly contained three million volumes. All were consigned to the flames.

And so it goes on, block after block, street after street. All large buildings belonging to cultural institutions, all the hospitals, schools and large dwelling houses have been blown up or razed to the ground. The Germans even blew up the water and drainage systems, and we saw exhausted old women dragging themselves wearily along the streets carrying kettles and bowls of water which they had brought from somewhere outside the city and were bringing home carefully, like some rare treasure.

Time was when Rostov industry was famous. But now the fine workshops of the Rostselmash [1], the motor works, the Krasny Aksai factory and others have all been blown up. The harbour installations were blown up, the railway station was blown up, and the whole Lenin district around the station was laid waste. Even the printshop has been destroyed. It is as though some gigantic typhoon had swept over the city.

There could be no more telling picture of savage German cruelty and ferocity than the Rostov prison-yard, where they have left hideous traces of their deeds. With my own eyes I saw a deep pit where excavation had been commenced the previous day. Carefully, layer by layer, the Rostov people removed the earth, unearthing the bodies of peaceful citizens whom the Huns had cruelly tortured. There were women, old people, children, many children. The first layer of bodies was removed, a second, a third; six layers of death were found, about a thousand of bodies were taken from this terrible pit.

People came and indentified those near and dear to them who had been tortured to death or burned alive. Nadezhda Tobina found her brother Pavel, a sixth-form schoolboy, among these bodies; Zinaida Khachkaruzova saw her husband, burned alive by the fascists.

Groans, muffled sobs could be heard in the prison-yard; there were tragic, pitiful scenes. Only a few prisoners had escaped by some miracle. There was an electrician, Kondratov, and M. Maklakova, who had escaped when taken out to be shot. They told how the Germans, before retreating, had organized the mass slaughter of all the citizens whom they had arrested as hostages. Between six in the morning of February 5th and seven on the next day, they massacred about seven hundred people in this prison-yard.

A huge crowd encircled these people whose faces were drawn by the inhuman suffering they had to endure, and listened to their story, told in broken words more eloquent than the most impassioned speech. A sickening stench of burning flesh was coming from the prison building: many, many prisoners had burned alive in their cells. Anyone who has seen the uncovering of this terrible pit in the prison-yard, seen the martyred faces and heard the ghastly stories, will remain an implacable foe to these foul Huns to the end of their lives, will be driven by a thirst for vengeance that gives one the strength of ten.

It is hard to give even an approximate picture of the devastation which the fascists have left in Rostov. One thing is clear: deliberately, maliciously, they did everything to destroy the city. According to preliminary, rough estimates, they killed, burned or buried alive over twenty thousand of the civilian population. They destroyed industry, destroyed whole districts of the city.

Nevertheless, Rostov still lives, Rostov's indomitable spirit is even now preparing for restoration.

We saw a crowd around Captain Zhurmensky, a Cossack guardsman, who was telling these Rostov people how the Soviet Union had been living these months, how the Germans had been smashed at Stalingrad, how the regiments had fought

[1] Rostov Agricultural Machine Building Works.

their way to their city. And how their eyes shone! The excitement with which they listened! The glad smiles lighting up faces which had forgotten how to smile during the long months of suffering under the Germans!

As soon as the sappers had finished their work, swiftly and efficiently deminging the streets and crossroads, brigades of experts got to work, settling what must be the first jobs of restoration in the city to bring life to normal. It is a gigantic task that lies ahead, but the people of Rostov are facing up to it. They are determined to wipe out all traces of the fascist horror in Rostov.

B. IVANITSKY

Rostov-on-the-Don.

BY THE ENEMY SHORES

In the North the weather is subject to swift, sudden changes. The sun shines, and a light breeze barely ruffles the surface of the water; then, almost before one is aware of it, the horizon has darkened, white caps stretch as far as the eye can see, and circling overhead, sea-hulls utter their mournful cries. The wind's force increases, showers of spray cascade over the officer on watch and the signalman standing motionless on the bridge of the submarine. A storm is rising, a storm on the open sea, hundreds of miles from shore.

Mighty billows toss the boat up and down. The wooden partitions inside creak and groan under the strain. In the engine and the electric-motor compartments it is hot and stuffy, and the heavy smell of diesel oil and exhaust fumes makes breathing difficult. Men stand at their posts with sweat streaming down their faces. In fact it would be hard to say who is worse off: the men suffocating in the depths of the submarine, or the watch on deck, soaked to the skin by the boiling surf and lashed by the cutting wind.

Two enemy transports escorted by six patrol boats had been reported in a neighbouring area. We calculated the distance separating us from the place where the enemy boats could be intercepted,, and ascertained that in all probability they would pass at night or in the early hours of the morning. This would give them a chance to slip by unobserved in the darkness, in which case the only thing that remained for us would be to break through to the enemy base and torpedo the transports at the moorings—a much more difficult and risky alternative, of course.

Arriving at our destination, we submerged. The men off duty were sleeping soundly, while those on duty were all on the alert, their eyes glued to their instruments. The asdic rating was sitting motionless with half-closed eyes. One might have thought that he was dozing, but he was far from slumber, he was all ears. Suddenly his eyes opened wide, and no words were needed to see that some new sound had come to his ears among the usual numberless noises of the sea. Another moment to make sure, and he

A submarine of the Northern Fleet with seven fascist transports to its credit

would report the sound of a ship's screw! But a moment passed, another, and the man, with evident disappointment, relapsed into his former tense immobility. In the morning we ascertained that the enemy had evidently slipped past. Now we were faced with the job of seeking him in the harbour.

My orders are: "First order of readiness, distribute emergency repair gear. Steer by hand. Keep strictly to course and depth."

The submarine slipped unobserved between the high cliffs bordering the narrow fjord, past the enemy observation posts and coastal batteries. We had been on our way for an hour, it was already time to get our pearings. I decided to use the periscope. It was just the right moment. Before me was the panorame of the enemy harbour. I carefully examined the deserted coast and the scanty harbour installations.

We entered the harbour. The high wooden wharves rose before our eyes, and at the middle wharf two anchored transports, one passenger ship and a cargo boat.

Not a second must be lost. The boat was getting ready for attack. Another moment, and the crosswires of the periscope came onto the targets. A slight vibration of the hull, and the torpedoes sped from the tubes.

We veered rapidly round, making for the exit from the harbour, counting the seconds, awaiting the explosions. One after another they thundered, the torpedoes had hit their targets. Now we could expect trouble. Nobody spoke about it, but all strained their ears, awaiting the roar of the first depth charge bombs. We steered a direct course, some time passed, but nobody seemed to be pursuing us. There was something queer about this: evidently, the snag lay ahead.

Twenty minutes after the attack the submarine steeply down by the stern, suddenly started to surface. The needle slid to the left, showing ten metres, five, two and then zero, that deadly dangerous zero. A moment passed before we realized that we had been caught in an anti-submarine net. Depth charge shells burst around us, as the coastal batteries opened fire. The roar of shells mingled with the hum of propellers as submarine chasers or patrol boats launched pursuit. We swung around: we had to act quickly, for it was a matter of seconds!

Losing speed, the boat swiftly sank to the lowest level it would stand without danger of the hull being crushed by the pressure of the water. I gave orders to force the air through the central tank, in order to use it as a stabilizer. There was a sharp blow outside the boat as the air was released. Then the boat began to rise. At that moment the first depth charge thundered above us, followed by a second, and the sound of a ship rushing over us.

I tried to skirt the net, while more bombs exploded above us. Then I decided to make the attempt to break through, and ordered full speed ahead. The boat trembled, the hull creaked but we didn't move. I ordered reverse, and again air was forced through the middle tank. The air reserves were running low, breathing became difficult. The situation seemed hopeless. After a short time bombs again burst to right and left of us, while the continuous sound of propellers told of the enemy ship waiting for us to come to the surface. They were hoping to capture us, but that was one thing that would never happen. Better die before their eyes!

Preparations had to be made for the last steps. I gave orders to prepare to blow up the boat. We had a good supply of shells and cartridges in the magazine, in addition to grenades. But suddenly, at the last moment, a thought struck me: suppose we rose to the surface with a gun crew, passed over the net at full speed, and again submerged. I took three grenades for myself and the gun crew, handing the others over to Engineer Smychkov, with orders to blow up the magazine in two cases: at order from the bridge or on the enemy demand to surrender.

Yes, that would be the last resort. But one more effort must be made first.

I looked at the ship's officers standing around me. Their eyes were more eloquent than any words. Dying was the last thought in their minds, they were thinking of life, and were prepared to fight for it to the last breath.

"Well, then, we'll try to pass over the net, using below the surface at periscope depth. Within a few moments it will be high tide, the water will rise. There's just a chance."

I ordered full speed reverse. The engines thudded dully, and the boat trembled as though gathering up her last forces to break out of the devil's net. The ship listed, then righted herself. I ordered dead slow ahead.

We began to rise, feeling our way slowly, carefully ahead. There was a metallic sound as something scraped along the keel. We trembled, our eyes fixed on the instruments. Slowly the boat advanced, while all waited in a tense silence. Nobody could believe that the deadly danger had really passed, everybody was expecting some new surprise. But the submarine moved smoothly. I raised the periscope and examined the horizon. We were still in the fjord, but nearing the exit. There was no doubt about it, we had passed over the net, and the enemy had not observed us.

I lowered the periscope. There was a sigh of relief from all, and immediately a running crackle of jokes.

We emerged from the fjord, left it five miles behind. It was difficult to breathe, and many men already had severe head-aches from the high pressure in the boat. It was still too early to emerge, however: another depth charge exploding astern emphasized this. I gave orders to set a new course, and at that moment there was a second explosion. The enemy ships pursued us for a long time, but in the end we gave them the slip.

At last! We emerged, our heads swimming as we drew in the intoxicating fresh air in great gulps. What a wonderful thing is fresh air after a long period under water! Around us was the clear, peaceful moonlight night. The commanders and men came out onto the bridge to stretch their limbs and fill their lungs, and the bright sparks of cigarettes pricked the velvet darkness.

Freedom! Life! The fight continues, the fight for our own land and seas!

VALENTINE STARIKOV,
Hero of the Soviet Union

The Velvet Book is not a literary production. It is written in the language of figures. Nevertheless it is being read attentively, with bated breath from cover to cover, like some brilliant, fascinating novel.

Peasant women of the Suzdal district, their children, fathers, old men arriving at the District Agricultural Exhibition saw *The Velvet Book* for the first time. It writes about the war activity of the collective farms. Many people reading the book found their own names in it, the names of their co-villagers, neighbours, relatives. All the heroes and heroines of *The Velvet Book* are from Suzdal. All of them are people of the soil, fine-spirited Russian people, patriots of the collective-farm Russia. They throw themselves wholeheartedly into tilling the soil, for it is the soil that yields bread, and bread gives strength to Red Army soldiers. In this way, the peasants' toil transforms itself into bullets, bombs, tanks, aeroplanes, into all-destructive fire against the German troops.

The first page of this book which the collective farmers call *The Velvet Book*, bears the name of a Russian woman, a peasant woman by the name of Praskovya Krivova, who, being a link [1] organizer, spent sleepless nights, early at dawn wakened her friends, went to work with them and toiled with them in the field until night fell. She raised golden wheat, gathered in the crop, thinking all the while only of the needs of the front. All her thoughts, cares and anxieties centered on one point: that the brave Russian soldiers should be well-fed, that they should be stronger than the Germans, that they may as quickly as possible kill off the last of the Germans who came to torture the Soviet land, the collective farms, to plunder our cities and towns, to murder our children. And now it is being said in the collective farm that all Praskovya's worries and anxieties were not fruitless, that her toil repaid itself a hundred-fold, that she well deserves the place of honour given her in *The Velvet Book*. Her link turned over to the Government 25 centners of first-class wheat per hectare. One need not be ashamed to call such a crop a war crop.

The chairman of the collective farm Anissimov said:

"*The Velvet Book* writes about many of the best workers of our collective farm. Last year everybody, children and old folks included, had plenty of work to do in the fields; no one shirked. It was a difficult year, but the harvesting was hardest of all. In spite of this we overcame all difficulties. People worked day and night. It was only due to the harmonious combined efforts of the collective farmers that we gathered in the crop while the weather was still fair. Only good dry grain was delivered to the granaries. We overfulfilled the production plan of all grains. Because of this our collective farm heads the list in *The Velvet Book*. This is a very high honour that has bestowed on us, and we intend to be worthy of it in the future.

"Now we are ready for the sawing. Our key people, leaders of brigades and brigade groups, have been to courses in agronomy at the district headquarters. The seed is prepared, sorted and turned over to the laboratory for analysis. I am of the opinion that the seed will sprout well. We have planned to fertilize the soil this year with twice the amount of manure as compared with last year. A thousand and a half cartloads of manure are already on the fields. All this was carted out on oxen. The horses were used for log-hauling in the lumber-camps. In order to speed up the fulfilment of the fuel supply plan, we sent an additional number of horses to the lumber-camps. I think that the spring sowing will be carried out in real wartime style, in a truly organized way. Our soldiers at the front will have nothing to complain about, regarding the way the Zapolinsk collective farmers worked."

Every honest toiler of the collective farm village thinks, worries and cares only for the needs of the soldiers at the front. Questions concerning aid to the Red Army occupy the centre of attention of all meetings discussing the annual reports on the work of the collective farm. As a rule, the chairman makes a detailed report about the help the collective farm has lent the front: how the subscription to the War Loan was carried out, how much warm clothes were sent to the defenders of the fatherland, how much grain, meat, vegetables, milk, etc., was turned over to the Defence Fund; how much money was collected for the construction of tanks and aeroplanes, how the collective farm helps the military hospital over which it has patronage, the quantity of produce sold to the workers of Moscow.

"Everything for the Red Army in its offensive!" said Mikhail Ivanovich Khokhorin, chairman of the collective farm "United Toil." "We'll grudge nothing for victory. Let our soldiers at the front destroy and strangle the Germans!"

"I want to help my fatherland to free itself from the yoke of the dastardly enemy. I hate the Germans from the very bottom of my soul. Send me a man through whom I could turn over to the Red Army 1,000 roubles and 50 kilograms of honey." These are the words of Kirill Stepanovich Afanassyev, from the village of Glumovo, a 74-year-old collective farmer, an invalid. The grand-daughter of Kirill Stepanovich repeated the old man's request to the district committee.

The collective farmers of the Glebov village delivered their grain in time and turned over to the government additional grain in excess of the plan. They sold potatoes and vegetables to the workers of the capital. At the meeting where the annual report on the activities of the collective farm was made, the collective farmers spoke about increasing their help to the front.

"We are able to do more to help the Soviet soldiers," said a woman collective farmer, Alexandra Bakhireva, "and we must do it. For instance, we raised tobacco last year. And turned over to the government our quota in full. But I know that not everything was done here, for a lot of tobacco remained on the collective farm. I am of the opinion that we should send this tobacco to the Red Army, to the front.

[1] Link (*zveno*)—one of the lower units in the organizational structure of a collective farm.

Let the Red Army men smoke a bit. What do you think, comrades, eh?"

"You're making a correct proposal, Alexandra."

"Let's send presents to the Red Army from the whole of the collective farm."

One collective farm woman proposed:

"To relieve the suffering endured by the Soviet citizens in the districts temporarily occupied by the Germans and now freed by the Red Army. We did not suffer, but they lived through hell during the German occupation."

"No need to explain, we've read about it."

With the unanimous agreement of everybody present at the meeting, the collective farm decided to plant over and above the plan, as a Relief Fund for the liberated districts, extra grain and to raise pigs and calves for them.

The Suzdal district collective farmers expect to inscribe new and famous names in the *Velvet Book*.

Ancient Suzdal,— a city-museum, a city of monuments of the past,—will keep *The Velvet Book* for future generations.

A. KOZLOV

Suzdal.

Threshing on the "Red Star," a millionaire collective farm

LEONID SOBOLEV, A RUSSIAN SEA-STORY WRITER

Leonid Sobolev writes of the sea and the navy with the familiarity of a sailor and the emotion of an artist in love with seafarers and with all the complexity of things that go to make up their lives.

He walked straight off his ship into literature, the decks are for him as ordinary and everyday as the floor of his study on Tverskoy Boulevard in Moscow. A ship's navigator by profession, he has climbed from 1916 the ladder from naval rating in the old navy to Soviet staff-officer and captain. In 1927 Sobolev had acquired a name for himself in the Baltic Fleet for his work in the naval press, as the author of a number of stories, feuilletons, slashing humorous reviews and even a volume of verse. In the early '30's his first long novel, *Storm Warning*, appeared. It was acknowledged as a work of high artistic merit and warmly received. The naval officer of yesterday whose literary efforts had been known only to the narrow circle in the fleet, now took his place in the ranks of writers recognized by their country.

Storm Warning presented a telling and vivid picture of the state of the Russian navy on the eve of the World War of 1914—1918, and of life in Russia at that time. Against this background he unfolded the tale of two brothers, Nicholas and Yuri Livitin, officers in the navy. The intricate political situation existing in tsarist Russia could not but have its effect upon life in the navy. Lieutenant Nicholas Livitin is sensitive to the atmosphere of tension between old and new, but cannot yet find his true place in the revolutionary struggle for a better future for Russia. His brother, naval rating Yuri, is still influenced by caste prejudices and outworn conceptions which obscure from his view the actual life lived by the people of his country.

Sobolev's novel was widely read. Readers were attracted by its thorough knowledge of naval life, by the warmth of feeling in the character-drawing, the clear and plastic language reflecting the peculiarities of that environment. The throb of life is felt in this book. It leaves the reader wondering about the fate of the Livitins whom he recognizes as good types of Russians: life itself will help them choose the right road.

At one of the public discussions held on his book, the author gave a very apt definition of that special trait of his creative work to which he owes his popularity as a writer:

"The Red Navy is one of the unacknowledged authors of my novel. Twelve years' service as navigator-commander and operative officer has borne fruit. It was necessary to work my way through the navy, the whole way from the ruin of the tsarist fleet, from the last battle of Kassar Reaches in 1917 through the

Ice campaign[1] from Helsingfors. . . it was necessary to endure the throes of the new Red Navy's birth, to have experienced the whole of that difficult journey that ships and people travelled from the *Ocean's* (the ship on which he was navigator) first voyage in 1922, to the earning of Voroshilov's opinion, "excellent," at the manoeuvres of 1930—in order to assimilate the knowledge and feeling that lie at the foundation of the book."

These words might have been applied with still more truth to Sobolev's new book *Sailor-Soul*, which came out in 1942. The men we meet in its pages are no longer the sailors and officers of the tsarist navy, but seamen whose faces are seared by the fires of the Great Patriotic War, seamen trained in Soviet Russia. This collection, in which the leading place is taken by war stories, may be regarded as an integral, well-thought out piece of work, the outcome of a single concept.

The decade that followed the publication of Sobolev's first novel was spent with his beloved navy, and from the outbreak of the war he has been at the front. The tall captain who is never without a pipe in his mouth, has become a familiar figure to seamen on many sectors of the front. He read his stories to men on ships bound for naval operations, to men in the trenches at Odessa and in the dug-outs at Sevastopol. Sobolev collects and marshals his facts very carefully, talks to scores of the participants, verifying details of battles, studying minutely the character of the Soviet sailor who is fighting in the just cause of liberation. The outcome of these notes was this main cycle of short stories which, together with the stories of the initial years of the Soviet Navy, make up the book he has called *Sailor-Soul*.

A great Russian naval leader, who was a sailor's son, Admiral Stepan Makarov, aptly called on the other side of the ocean "the conqueror of armour-plating," was fond of saying that the navy exists for war alone, that war is the test, the examination for its men and its technical side. The Soviet Navy and the Soviet seamen pass that critical examination in a way that involuntarily brings to mind the old saying: "None but the Soviet sailor is pluckier than the Soviet soldier."

Where do they come from, these generally-recognized qualities of the Soviet seaman? From what source springs the nobility that is the "sailor-soul?" Sobolev endeavours to supply the answer to these questions in his book, in which several generations of the Soviet Fleet pass before our eyes. We see their unity, their sequence, their connection with each other. Sobolev analyzes and demonstrates the building-up of character in these people and the traits that have earned Red Navy men their well-deserved renown in the Patriotic War.

The book opens with a short article *Seas and Oceans*, the history in a nutshell of the Soviet Navy. It has the author's own particular lyrical quality.

Here again the reader is presented with a picture of the first years of the Revolution, the battle against overwhelming odds, fought by the technically-backward, half-ruined and undermanned tsarist fleet inherited by Soviet Russia, against the first-rate navies of foreign powers. The heroic figures of the revolutionary sailors who defended the young Soviet republic never fail to stir the reader.

"It was as though the seas and oceans overflowed their shores, flooding the Soviet country; thus did the armies of the interventionists sweep down upon her from every side that was bounded by the sea.

The hostile oceans merge with the sea and wash over the Soviet army, casting up with the foam of the incoming tide armies, guns, spies, governments, canned foods, tanks. Smaller and smaller becomes the dwindling island whose centre is Moscow. . .

[1] The battle of Kassar Reaches is better known to history as the Moonzund operation in which the numerically inferior Russian fleet inflicted enormous losses upon a German squadron which was splendidly equipped from a technical standpoint and of far superior numerical strength. The Ice campaign is one of the most glorious pages in the history of the Soviet Fleet. In the spring of 1918, the Germans, anxious to avenge themselves for the Moonzund losses, attempted to seize the Russian fleet concentrated at Helsingfors. Despite grave difficulties—a frozen sea, an acute shortage of coal and oil — the seamen who remained on board (the old tsarist navy had been broken up and only about a fifth of the necessary crews were left) took the vessels out of Helsingfors. During the voyage through the ice not one of the 211 vessels that left Helsingfors went down; they all arrived safely at Kronstadt.

Coal, coal coal!—that brings salvation to Kronstadt, St. Petersburg, the country, the Revolution. . .

Concepts alter their functions in the strangest way. The country, tossing in the hungry typhoid delirium of encircling fronts, nevertheless overflows into history with visions that are heroic, unforgettable, unparalleled. Sailors on horseback fight in green plains; sea-going vessels sail rivers; three-inch field guns, startled by orders given in unfamiliar sea-jargon, fire on ships from rocking barges, while ships' guns fire from platforms of armoured trains on infantry columns that calculate their range, sailor-fashion, in cable-lengths. The Kronstadt forts, their sights turning almost convulsively, fire somewhere behind their backs, into the rear, at the flanking parties of white-guard Estonians, and somewhere on the Volga you could read in a ship's log-book an account of a cavalry attack on a mine-layer, a story such as the annals of naval warfare have never known. For two days running the *Andrei Pervozvanny*, a ship-of-the-line, has been pounding the "Krasnaya Gorka" (Red Hill), a fort built especially for the support of warships in battle, and Stalin wires the information to Vladimir Lenin:

'. . . The "Grey Horse" was liquidated immediately after the "Krasnaya Gorka". . . Naval experts assert that the taking of "Krasnaya Gorka" from the sea upsets naval science altogether. All that remains then is to weep for this so-called science. The prompt taking of the "Gorka" is to be explained by the most unceremonious interference in operations on my part and on the part of civilians in general, interference that in some cases went as far as countermanding orders on sea and land and substituting our own. I regard it as my duty to notify you that I intend to go on behaving in the same way despite all my veneration for science.'

Thus, departing from the traditions of naval warfare and overthrowing the theories of 'so-called science,' did the Red Navy seek new rules of warfare in battle itself and use destroyers for fighting in rivers, sailors for fighting in the steppe, submarines under ice, ships-of-the-line in port, until by a prodigious effort the republic checked the incoming waves of the oceans and the seas subsided within their natural boundaries."

But now the seas became Soviet again, and the tide of the republic's life forces flowed slowly in to its shores, storm-racked, wounded, despoiled though they were. The autumn of 1922 saw the Soviet naval flag hoisted for the first time over the Baltic's green spaces. The exhausted, immobile, sadly-diminished Baltic Fleet demanded fresh forces that it might live and grow together with its country while she was healing her wounds. These forces were supplied by the Young Communist League, which adopted the Fleet. Youth came aboard ship. There were those among the command, old service-men, who could not reconcile themselves to this new type of "recruit," with his independent spirit, his insistence on getting everything absolutely straight.

But the new generation proved persevering. "They conquered the navy like an unknown country. And here, on the ships, they finally found allies. These were old boatswains who came at last to appreciate youth's indomitable love for the navy.

The new seamen drawn from the ranks of youth in no wise resembled the Red Navy seamen of previous contingents. They brought to the navy their discipline, their clear-cut precision in thinking and acting, their method of organizing their time, their firmly-welded comradeship, their energy and eagerness for work, and the happy disposition of people who are sure of themselves. They came to the ruined, war-weary fleet with their dream of a mighty Soviet navy. . . and the history they created with the multi-million mass of the Soviet people was the realization of this dream. . .

They, the admirals of the Soviet navy, stand now on the bridges of the new cruisers; they, the engineers, are building impressive ships-of-the-line; they, the submarine-commanders, have built up in the icy waters of the Gulf of Finland and the Barents Sea a history of Soviet submarines that reads like a glorious legend. It is they who laid the foundations of the navy's new strength."

Such were the first two generations of the Soviet fleet: the sailors of the Revolution and the young people who were the first to be called up.

This book contains several stories of

navy life in those days. They are, in the first place, connected by the same heroes in the stories *Rings*, *The First Man at the Lecture*, *The Examination*; and in the second place, *Stories Told by Captain Kirdyaga*.

This same commander, one of the older generation of Soviet seamen, tells his comrades of the new Soviet Navy stories of the days that have become history: of faulty, spoiled instruments that deluded inexperienced submarine-men floating on the surface to imagine they were stranded on the bottom of the sea; of a commander who broke his bo'sun off the habit of using foul language by getting the better of him in a species of competition for swearing; and many other unusual and comical incidents. These are amusing tales in which Sobolev revealed his gifts as a humorist. Actually, of course, they are serious subjects treated humorously: the struggle between old and new, the cleansing of the navy from that coating of rust which had formed on it during tsarist times and of which traces still remained; the advent of new people and the assimilation and mastery of a more complex technique.

The language of the narrator himself is pungent and telling, flavoured with the salt of sea-humour.

Sobolev writes about submarine-men, Red Navy men, commanders of ships-of-the-line, cruisers, destroyers, trawlers, launches, cutters, naval airmen and marines. Without indulging in what is called the exoticism of the sea, without overloading his work with nautical terminology, he tells a simple, straightforward narrative of a seaman's life. Sometimes he chooses what seem to be unimportant everyday episodes. Following the best traditions of Russian classical literature, he focusses attention upon the individual; the environment and events are used, in the main, to reveal the hero's character. The setting, no matter how picturesque it may be, is not permitted to throw the actor into the shade. The author's efforts are directed towards revealing the soul, the feelings and emotional experiences of the man in naval uniform.

Take, for example, *The Night of the Summer Solstice*,—June 22nd, when the war broke out.

It had not yet broken out. This was the third night that the trawler was doing frontier patrol. All was quiet. Suddenly the captain noticed a suspicious-looking enemy transport in the "no man's zone," and military launches on the other side of the frontier. The strange vessels sailed as closely as possible to it, threatening to enter Soviet waters, then turning at the last moment, provoking the Soviet trawler, and drawing her on so that the transport might be free to carry out her fell purpose. In the game that began now, alarm and steadiness, firm resolve and hesitation, hatred and calculation, the thirst for revenge and self-restraint were intermingled, drawing in different directions not only the trawler that darts between transport and launches, but also the heart of the man on the captain's bridge.

The Night of the Summer Solstice is a story of a battle unfought, of a contest that ended in nothing. But that night the political instructor Kostin observed the change that came over the face of Lieutenant Kolya Novikov. It took place at the moment when the word "war" flared up with dazzling clearness in the awareness of the commander watching the enemy's manoeuvres. "In a single instant the word parched the animated, boyish face... drew the fresh skin into a deep furrow over the brows, robbed the eyes of their youthful humid sparkle, brought a dryness to the full lips."

The story's power, its stern grip of the reader, lie in the highly charged atmosphere of the approaching thunderstorm, in the wordless tension of struggle. The background, sparing of external events, helps the writer to throw into higher relief the passionate soul and proud will of a people capable of a stubbornness more stubborn than death itself.

In *All's Well* (see *International Literature*, No. 8-9, 1940), even the simple plot of the previous story is absent. Here a "baby" submarine is bound northward while a wintry storm is raging at sea. It might have submerged quietly, had the power in the accumulator not given out. The commander rises to the surface. He stands on the bridge, alone on that vast and storm-racked sea, with the waves lashing him. His cap has frozen to his collar and forms a sort of icy hood, but he keeps the vessel, which now resembles an iceberg, to her course. And the captain's obstinate will is not an isolated will: the spirit of good fellowship comes

to its support. The men confined below decks fight in their turn for their commander's life. From time to time the hatch opens, they ask the commander to stick his frozen feet through the hatch. They chafe them with spirit, wrap them in woollen cloths and put on well-warmed felt boots. "All's well" here, because what these people regard as normal is the norm of the hero.

The same invincible purposefulness is encountered in the story entitled *Georgian Fairy-Tales*. A submarine finds herself icebound. She cannot rise to the surface, because the sea is covered with a solid layer. The commander, anxious to keep the crew in good spirits, picks up at random a volume of Georgian fairy-tales, and begins to read it "with concentration, giving an occasional chuckle, and turning back to re-read a passage that he likes." Eventually the submarine bursts her icy bonds. Most members of the crew have never been aware of their danger nor of that the commander endured during those long hours.

Hold on, Petty Officer is a prose-poem on the theme of staunchness and will-power. The action takes place in the Black Sea during this war. It is built around a true episode in which the leading role is played by a seaman of the Black Sea Fleet, Pustovoitenko, a petty officer, to whom the writer dedicates this story.

In *The Battalion of Four* (see *International Literature*, No. 5, 1943), four parachutists, after doing some good work in the enemy rear, make their way across the front to join their unit.

The "sailor-soul" that knows not fear, the soul of those black-jacketed seamen, whom the nazis have dubbed "the black cloud" and "the black devils," is tender and romantic when it finds itself in the midst of friends and kindred souls. It is one of the special traits of Sobolev's lyricism to emphasize this contrast. The hearts of his heroes are not hardened by the bloody conflict, in which love for mankind calls for the destruction of its inveterate enemies.

This is the passionate and noble soul that we encounter again in the formidable fighters of the *Tatiana the Scout* story, a moving poem of the love of the valiant gunner Yefim for the girl Tanya. The heroes are, so to speak, dual personalities. Tanya has the heart of a bold and clever scout, and at the same time of a shy and tender girl. Very subtle, too, is the character of the gunner. Relentless to the Germans, this grim sailor's heart feels the first stirrings of first and only love when he meets Tanya. Yefim and Tanya are integral characters, merciless to the enemy, yet capable of pure and tender love. The gunner strives to hide his love from the girl: he is afraid of spoiling that wonderful sense of easy comradeship in the scouts' collective: so he leaves the untouched heart in peace, undisturbed. Only when the girl disappears, does he disclose his secret to his comrades. A man of action, he discloses it not only in his passionate confession but also in battle, when he sacrifices himself to save her life.

Remarkable, too, is the story of the friendship between two youthful pilots, Uskov and Utkin, *2-U-2*, as they are nicknamed in the regiment. "U-2" is the mark of the training plane on which the two sergeants make flights by turns each night. With a load, they fly to the enemy's forward positions and drop their bombs by hand on the heads of the German soldiers. Then they quarrel because one has been on a flight out of his turn, he has "pulled a fast one" on his friend. There is excellent humour in this description. The friends of yesterday rival each other in finding new and most uncomplimentary epithets. But when one gets into trouble, the other, without a moment's hesitation, risks his life to save his comrade.

The characters of the works mentioned above are purely fictitious, though the stories are based upon actual facts.

The book also includes a number of articles of a publicist nature, dealing with living people. To these belong *The Third Generation*, an account of what sailors did in the war with the White Finns in 1939-1940; *The Black Cloud*, which is about the marines who defended Odessa, and some short articles or, more correctly, "prose poems," under the one title *Sailor-Soul*. In the last Sobolev has succeeded in embodying the heroism which in these grim days has risen to such heights.

"Sailor-soul," the nickname applied to the striped jersey worn by Red Navy seamen, is used by the writer as a synthetizing symbol which permits him to

stress the main idea of this cycle: that, different though the people may be who wear the uniform of Soviet seamen, they are all equally brave and staunch, moved by the one will, the one desire.

Soviet seamen wear this same uniform, this same striped jersey, when they fight on land. "They are recognized at the front by these blue and white stripes over the broad chest which hides a heart burning with rage and hatred, the heart of the Red Navy man, cheerful and daring, ready for any desperate action, free from panic or despondency, the honest and loyal heart of a devoted son of his country." This "third generation" has assimilated the best that it inherited from the two preceding generations of Soviet seamen. True to the traditions of Russian glory on the seas, and enriched by their experience of a free, creative life in their Soviet country, the men of this generation have shown in war-time the stuff of which they are made.

Even those who have taken no part in the events recounted here involuntarily experience what Leo Tolstoy felt when he studied the defenders of Sevastopol during its first defence in 1854.

"The most gladdening conviction that you carried away from it," Tolstoy wrote, "was the belief in the utter impossibility... of shaking the strength of Russian people, no matter where; you read this impossibility in. . . their eyes, their speech, their ways, in what is called the spirit of Sevastopol's defenders. What they do, they do so simply, with so little strain and effort, that you are convinced they can do a hundred times more. . . they can do anything."

In the concluding article of the book Sobolev says:

"Today human fates have merged into one. One sorrow, one misfortune. And one reason for this.

And one hate. And one desire: to smash the enemy.

The end of the nazi hordes will mean a sigh of relief from the whole of humanity. It means life preserved for millions. It means the end of a nightmare that for long years has been tormenting a world unable to awaken.

The smashing of the enemy means the reunion of families, the smiles of children, labour in freedom, the restoration of the values by which man lives. It means light, air, water, happiness. It means life."

The tales discussed here we consider the best in the book. There are some weaker things, in which the author has not succeeded in embodying his conception with his usual forcefulness. *The Blue Scarf* is one. The hero, a pilot, finds the body of a girl on the seashore. She is wearing a blue scarf. He takes the scarf as a souvenir, a "talisman," into battle. The story's idea is a true one—that real heroism does not spring from narrow personal interests, that hatred and desire for revenge may be aroused by injustice inflicted upon a stranger. But the writing of the story is mannered, and does not produce the right impression. Sobolev's language becomes unexpectedly affected, which is very unusual with him. It is the same in other stories, for example in *Leonard the Barber*, about a man who lost his arms through injuries received when a house collapsed; and in *The Magic Rat-Catcher*, a story about a boy who "enchants" the dull-witted German soldiers with his singing.

But these less effective stories do not detract from the merits of the book. It could easily be purged of these occasional pseudo-beautiful subjects.

Turning the pages of the *Sailor-Soul*, you grasp with greater clearness than before why and how the Soviet people stood out against the onslaughts of a cruel and ruthless enemy, how they learned to beat him in mortal combat, and why their heroic exploits are done so simply and modestly.

Many of the stories which were printed in the newspapers evoked grateful comment from readers in the navy and the army, and also on the home-front.

The awarding of the Stalin Second Prize for Literature to Leonid Sobolev in 1943 is, in its way, an expression of the sense of gratitude felt by all his Soviet readers. The writer donated the whole of his prize-money to the defence-fund. Here, too, he did something characteristic of a true son of his native seas. In his letter to the Supreme Commander-in-chief Stalin, the writer asked that a launch should be built with the money and that it should be presented to the navy and called *Sailor-Soul*.

"Accept my greetings and the Red Army's gratitude, Leonid Sergeyevich," Stalin wrote, "for the care you showed

for the armed forces of the Soviet Union.

Your wishes will be carried out."

There is not a doubt that the exploits of the new launch will be a direct sequence of those recorded by the author, and will in their turn find a place in the pages of his future works.

ALEXANDER MAKAROV

AT ALEXANDER FADEYEV'S

Alexander Alexandrovich Fadeyev, one of the ablest writers of the Soviet Union and author of the widely known novels based on material drawn from the civil war in Siberia, *The Nineteen* and *The Last of the Udegeys*, is the head of the Soviet Writers' Union. In our conversation he dwelt on this side of his activity during 1942 and told me:

"My duties as secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union claim a great deal of my time. Our Union is intensely active in a life vibrant with social significance. Many of the writers may be found in the ranks of the army and navy as contributors to front and division newspapers, as war correspondents for political papers and as officers and political workers. From the Moscow branch of the Union, with its membership of 700 before the war, 280 now serve in the army and the navy. From the Leningrad branch, with its pre-war membership of 300, more than a hundred joined the army and the navy. The Ukrainian Union sent 80 of its members to the front, that is, about 60 per cent of its membership. Even distant Azerbaidjan sent 30 members to the front.

The most outstanding writers who are not in the army (A. Tolstoy, Ehrenburg, Sholokhov, Yakub Kolas, Tychina) have placed their pen at the service of front and rear to such an extent, that they also should be considered as participating in the war.

In an ideological and creative sense all this has raised our Union to great height and lent it an atmosphere of tense inner emotion. Great works of art have been written during this war. In poetry we may mention A. Tvardovsky's poem *Vassili Terkin*, N. Tikhonov's *Kirov Is With Us*, M. Svetlov's poem on the death of the 28 heroes led by Panfilov near Moscow, Margaret Aliger's poem about Zoe Kosmodemyanskaya, and verses by A. Surkov and S. Shchipachov. Among the prose works there is the historical patriotic novel *Dmitri Donskoy* by Borodin, *Ghenghis-Khan* and *Baty* by Yan, and *The Great Moouravi* by Antonovskaya. In the line of drama there are such remarkable plays as *Russians* by Simonov, *Front* by Korneichuk, *Invasion* by Leonov and *Immortality* by Gladkov and Arbuzov."

Asked about his own work in the past year, Fadeyev said:

"I have been to the front several times as war correspondent for the newspaper *Pravda*, collecting material at the same time. I was most powerfully impressed by Leningrad, where I spent the months of May, June and July, 1942. On the basis of my experiences there I wrote my book entitled *Leningrad*. This is an essay in which I endeavoured to portray the unforgettable impression of the firmness and greatness of spirit of the people of Leningrad. This city, with its population of several millions, was subjected to a fierce blockade which aimed at starving its people, but it stood the severe test, and despite lack of food, severe cold and an absence of means of transportation, it maintained the fighting ability of the army and navy to which it served as a base.

When I got there by plane, Leningrad was just emerging from the worst of it. The road across the ice of Lake Ladoga had played a most important part in helping to improve the situation. Despite all the enemy's attempts to bomb it from the air and to shell it with his artillery, this road supplied the Leningrad front with munitions and foodstuffs. About the time of my arrival a water-way was added to it, and this made it possible to carry supplies on a much larger scale. The weak had been evacuated from the city, and only the fittest and the most necessary remained.

The state of the army and navy was above all praise. Impregnable fortifications were raised around the city. The presence of powerful artillery and considerable air strength even then enabled Leningrad not only to repel the enemy blows, but to turn events in our favour as well. In my book I have tried to portray not only Leningrad's sufferings, but the remarkable living force of that great city as well.

At the end of December I made a trip to Velikie Luki. There I was an eye-witness of the brilliant storming of that city, which proved the undeniable military skill of our officers and of the Red Army. The material collected on that trip I used in writing a series of articles ("Flying Weather," "Velikie Luki" and others) for *Pravda*."

I asked the author whether he had written anything besides sketches.

"Yes; though slowly, I kept on working on the last part of my novel *The Last of the Udegeys*, dealing with the civil war in the Far East. The main idea of this novel is that the way out of the difficulties and contradictions, which now beset modern human society and which have become most acute with the appearance of fascism, lies in the establishment of new, just relations between the peoples and the States, relations which secure the peace and welfare of everybody. I have chosen this theme because, as I observed the romantic life of many small nationalities in the Far East, whose life may be compared to that of the primitive men glorified by Rousseau, I have come to the conclusion that despite Rousseau and Tolstoy the way out of these contradictions does not lie in the return to a primitive state, but in a continued development of progress and civilization and in the establishment of more just relations on that basis. Although my novel refers to the past, I hope that it will ring true even today. This work, together with my descriptions of the events of our Patriotic War, will constitute the main part of my literary activity during the year 1943."

ALEXEI SURKOV

I found Alexei Surkov, the poet and worker, author of fighting songs and lyrical verse, in the editorial room of our central army paper *Krasnaya Zvezda*. He works and lives here, in a small room with only a bed and wardrobe, a table with a typewriter. In fact the room borders on Spartan simplicity. The table was strewn with sheets of paper on which were written his new poems. Surkov's war-time verse is vibrant and breathes strength like his eyes and severe, somewhat stern Russian face, which is suddenly lit up by a warm smile.

1942 for Surkov was a year full of impressions and creative work, he said. He spent the first half of the year at the Western front as correspondent of the *Krasnogvardeiskaya Pravda*, and from June onwards became the special war correspondent of the *Krasnaya Zvezda*. He was at the South-Western front during the summer at the time of our retreat. In August he again went to the Western front where he remained during our offensive. In September he was at Rzhev, and in the second half of November and in December, north-west of Stalingrad and in the Middle Don. "From this dry enumeration of names you can see for yourself how rich and varied were my impressions," the poet said on completing the list.

In this past year Surkov has written two books of verse: *Roads Leading to the West* and *The End of the Year*. "I wrote articles for the papers too," he said, "although I find this difficult."

I asked Surkov how the war has effected his creative work.

"I am glad of the fact that I have been in the very heart of events since the first day of the war," he answered. "Thanks to this I am familiar with war, I know every aspect of the life of the soldier and his thoughts and aspirations. Despite the marked discrepancy between the demands of literary work and the conditions under which I accomplished this work, I have never yet been so inspired. I have acquired that confidence which enables me to give full expression to my thoughts. The reader's reaction is the acid test of one's poems. When a newspaper clipping with Simonov's poem *Wait for Me* or my poem *The Dugout* is found in the wallet of a killed Red Army man together with the portrait of his wife and son, it is proof positive that the poet has found his way to the heart of the reader. This is the highest mark of appreciation. . ."

He added that he receives a number of letters from the front. Sometimes they contain criticisms of his poems, but more often than not they are letters in which the men express their thanks. This living contact with the reader at the front, this heart to heart talk with him inspires and lends confidence to a writer.

Speaking of his plans for 1943, Surkov said he expects to continue to visit the fronts as a correspondent and to write verse.

"I plan to synthetize my verse into one poem, in which I will express the soldier's heart," he said. "I have been keeping this 'lyrical diary' since the beginning of the war. Now it will be re-written and made into one long poem. In the course of the war there has sprung up a kind of society of army poets. This society includes the Russian poets Simonov, Dolmatovsky, Kozhevnikov, Slobodskoy, Tvardovsky and myself, the Ukrainians Pervomaisky, Malyshko, the Byelorussian Kuleshov, a very young and remarkably talented poet. We give each other a helping hand in our work."

"In general the war has given me a great deal," Surkov continued. "First of all, I have covered great distances in my travels. Secondly, I have made valuable acquaintances and struck up friendship with people outside literary circles. This enriches one's knowledge beyond measure. Finally, the war itself is a military university.

"But I am by no means satisfied with what I myself have written or what has been written by my comrades. I consider it all fragmentary. When you read L. Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, Zola's *Débâcle* or Hugo's *Les Misérables*, you realize that this war is far more colossal and nation-wide, both geographically and as regards the number of people involved, and much more complex."

Surkov expressed regret that he has not had the opportunity to see how work is proceeding in the factories and plants. "You see, that too is an important front where heroism is displayed," he said. "The youth and women in industry and on the collective-farm fields during the war is a rich subject that fascinates me. And all this must be dealt with now and not pondered over after the war. The guarantee of our victory lies in the unsurpassed heroism of the whole Soviet people in the rear and at the front: thanks to this we have the means of crushing the enemy as we are crushing him now."

DMITRI GORBOV

"STALINGRAD"

The whole world watched with rapt attention the glorious Stalingrad epic, the historic Battle of Stalingrad. And now the world will have occasion to see the picture of the gigantic battle won by the Red Army, as reproduced in the faithful cinema-documentation of the film *Stalingrad*. The new Soviet documentary film is like a new chapter in the cinema chronicles of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against the German fascist invaders.

The cameramen who recorded it never left Stalingrad, they were always on the battle-lines with the units of the Stalingrad, the Don and the South-Western fronts, day in, day out recording the inimitable episodes of the daily life of Stalingrad and of the great Red Army offensive. And today the citizens of Moscow and London, of a village in far-off Siberia and in a prairie town in the heart of Texas, in sunny Georgia and in the grim North of Canada, are stirred as they watch with bated breath the episodes of the great battle reproduced on the screen.

The film presents the Stalingrad epic in broad outline. Along with war newsreel pictures, the film features a wealth of documentary material depicting the country's life before the war, a life teeming with constructive activity in its republics and cities, and showing its wealth, and the beauty of its landscapes. This enabled the film *Stalingrad* to be introduced by stills of pre-war pictures of the city which twice in the course of a quarter of a century was destined to play a decisive role in the life of the Land of the Soviets.

The picture opens with beautiful views of the Volga, the great Russian river; one of the cities on the Volga is the birth-place of Vladimir Lenin; situated on the bank of the Volga is Red Tsaritsyn, the city of Stalin—Stalingrad. During the years of Soviet power it was transformed from a city swept by sand storms and clouds of dust into a centre of vast industrial enterprises, gardens and parks, of broad asphalted squares and avenues, and tall buildings. Picturesque views of Stalingrad are flashed on the screen. It was here, at Tsaritsyn, that the white-guard troops were routed by the Red Army under Stalin's leadership. There is the house where Stalin worked during the historic battle, the dugout from where he directed operations. We see Stalin's portrait of those days. These introductory stills are linking the present with the undying traditions of the defence of Tsaritsyn.

. . . The enemy kept coming closer to Stalingrad. The Germans pressed forward in their summer offensive in an effort to outflank Moscow, to cut it off from the Urals and subsequently to strike a blow at the capital from the east. Having pierced the defence line and driving to the south-east, the enemy calculated on taking Borissoglebsk on July 10th, and Stalingrad on the 25th.

Day and night the battle raged in the Don steppes. The film gives a brief, but forceful picture of the fighting. It shows the heroism of the men in all branches of the services: we see the exploits of anti-tank troops crippling enemy tanks, of infantrymen, pilots bombing enemy columns.

In battles against preponderant German forces the Red Army wore down the attacking enemy. But hurling a total of eighty divisions against Stalingrad and the Caucasus alone, the Germans persisted in their drive. Villages situated in the steppes were destroyed by fire. Devastating everything in their path, disregarding tremendous losses, enemy tank columns swept on, drawing ever closer to Stalingrad.

The city was aware of the danger. Every day 150,000 Stalingraders went out to the steppe to build fortifications. The cameramen have recorded in this film a general view of this work as well as faces of the young and old who helped to fortify the approaches to their city.

A map is flashed on the screen, arrows indicating that at the beginning of August the Germans tried to break through to Stalingrad from the south. Worn down by the fighting on the Kotelnikovo salient, the enemy met with the unsurmountable resistance of the Red Army and was checked.

Thereupon the German command amassed strong forces of tanks and infantry west of Stalingrad. These troops forced the Don and broke through to the Volga in the neighbourhood of the workers' settlement "Rynok."

The Military Council of the Stalingrad front declared a state of siege. The city became stern, collected, tense. Stalingrad donned a soldier's uniform and became a warrior-city.

Finally August 23rd arrived.

On that day General Richthofen's air squadrons swooped down upon Stalingrad like beasts of prey. Millions of cinema-goers will no doubt pay due tribute to the cameramen who recorded the horrible bombing let loose upon the city. Bombs drop from swastika-marked planes. Buildings collapse, squares are converted into heaps of debris, and instead of trees with green crowns, there are only charred trunks.

While the raid was in progress, a German tank division battered its way through to the Stalingrad Tractor Plant. German panzers appear on the screen. At the telephone in the headquarters of the City Defence Committee is Chuyanov, chairman of the Committee. Decision adopted: tanks are to be manned by the tractor workers, and destroyer battalions formed of workers of the Red October and Barricades Plants are to go into action.

And the workers of Stalingrad rose to the defence of their native city, taking their places

Stills from the film "Stalingrad"

on the front-line side by side with men of the Red Army units.

The battle lasted two days and two nights, and throughout this time the cameramen were there together with the Red Army men and the Stalingrad workers. After repulsing the first German onslaught, the Soviet units halted the enemy at the city gates.

. . . The city is ablaze, oil flaming on the Volga, walls of burned buildings collapse. The spectator beholds a ghastly sight: a wounded city rising through smoke. Women, old people and children, their houses in ruins, are leaving their native Stalingrad.

But new inhabitants come to the city instead: men of the 62nd Army. They came with the motto to "stand to the death." "Beyond the Volga there is no retreat for us," they said.

Thus began the Battle of Stalingrad.

The world has never seen anything to rival this battle. The spectators see Stalingraders skilfully planting mines in the streets within some thirty metres from the German lines. "No man's land" there was frequently no larger than the size of a wall or a ceiling. Streets, alleys, buildings, cellars, floors and even staircases are being contested. The film gives a striking reproduction of these battles. Still after still unfolds the heroic daily life of the Stalingrad divisions.

An equally striking reproduction is given of the fighting in the industrial district, the main direction of the enemy's blow. In this section the picture affords the spectator an insight into the enemy positions, for good use has been made of German newsreel captured among other trophies. Long-range guns are shown firing from the left bank of the Volga in support of the counter-attacking Soviet troops in the factory settlement. The Germans lay down a heavy barrage in an effort to frustrate the Soviet attack. Nevertheless the Red Army men press forward, gaining metre after metre in the ruined shops. The enemy is lurking in ambush behind every bit of crumbling wall. German planes are bombing Soviet units entrenched in the shops. But the Red Army men are firmly clinging to their defence positions in the factory district of Stalingrad. The battle in this district lasted fifty days and fifty nights.

In the most trying days the Stalingrad power plant continued to generate electricity. The Germans fired 500 shells and dropped 80 heavy bombs on the station, but it kept up the supply of electric power to shops and plants in the southern section of the city where tanks were being repaired. When danger was great, the workers and engineers took cover in individual steel shelters.

Such was the daily life of Stalingrad.

In the ninety days of defence, life among the new inhabitants of Stalingrad, its defenders, has taken on a new course.

A soldier is shown skilfully making lamps from shell cases. Many an affectionate letter home was written in the dim light of these oil-lamps.

And there is guardsman Paul Shumilin. One day he repaired a watch, and since then he has been besieged by clients. There, too, is an improvised tea-room. The samovar, singing merrily, attracts the men shivering from the cold. Two comrades, comfortably perched on a bed near the wall of a ruined building, are absorbed in conversation. Perhaps they are recalling their homes, their families. . .

From nearby comes the ceaseless roar of explosions, as the enemy shells the Volga crossing. Defying enemy fire, Red Army boatmen make many trips daily bringing valuable supplies to the 62nd Army in Stalingrad.

Lieutenant-General Chuykov, Commander of the 62nd Army, orders the Germans to be dislodged from a building which served as a vantage point for keeping the crossing under fire. Cameraman Orlyankin, taking part in storming the building, boldly and fully recorded the battle on film. The Red Army men forged forward, gradually wresting from the enemy wall after wall, stone after stone. Fighting with fire and grenade, they ousted the enemy from every hook and cranny. And the building was taken, the order of the commander carried out.

. . . The ice grew thicker and thicker on the Volga, and the position of the divisions abutted against the river became ever more difficult. Arrows on the map indicate the positions held in the beginning of November by the units of Generals Gorokhov, Lyudnikov, Batyuk and Rodimtsev. They never looked back. Behind them was the frozen Volga, behind them was the fate of the country.

Meantime preparations were underway for the great offensive, to bring about the encirclement and rout of the German-fascist troops at Stalingrad. As the announcer utters these words, Moscow, stern Moscow, and the Kremlin are flashed on the screen. The Kremlin! It was there that the great plan of routing the enemy at Stalingrad was being shaped.

The country came to the assistance of the Volga fortress. Reserves are shown on the march. Columns of tanks rattle past, followed by heavy artillery, glorious Soviet infantrymen, cavalry units. A mighty, powerful stream. Crossing the frozen Volga, the troops are secretly concentrating for the attack. Along with the troops there is an endless stream of barges bringing ammunition and food supplies.

We hear the first salvoes of the historic day of November 19th. On that day the troops of the South-Western, the Don and the Stalingrad fronts launched the offensive. We see a tornado of fire directed at the enemy. We see too the powerful artillery forcing a breach in the enemy's main line of resistance.

Soviet tanks stream into the breach, moving irresistibly forward, cutting into the rear-lines of the Stalingrad enemy's group. Aviation supports the attackers. Bombers and attack-aeroplanes strike blows at the German rear services. The breach is steadily widened, and cavalry sweeps into it.

Endless columns of infantrymen appear on the screen. Now and again we see the face of a soldier, tired, weather-beaten and infinitely dear to us.

The advancing troops are steadily moving forward, day and night, snow or frost, without a moment's rest. Only forward!

Battle-scenes follow in swift succession.

An air-sledge, landing, surprises and captures an enemy aerodrome. Units of the Stalingrad front occupy inhabited points. Finally the stations Kinguta, Abganerovo and Krivomuzginskaya are taken.

At the same time the troops of the Don front, following hard on the heels of the enemy, break into the town of Kalach and occupy it.

And then comes the historic day of November 23rd, the day when the men of Generals Rokossovsky's and Yeremenko's armies meet in the grim steppe. The units of the Don and Stalingrad fronts join forces!

The Germans are caught in a ring! A splendid map shows how the encirclement of the twenty-two divisions was accomplished and outlines in detail the new blow struck by the Red Army at the enemy in the Middle-Don area.

In a desperate attempt to relieve its encircled troops the German command concentrated a large group in the area north of Kotelnikovo in preparation for a counter-offensive. The story of this stage of the fighting is told by the map, alternating with swiftly moving shots of the military operations of those days.

The Red Army routed the new shock group of the enemy troops, hurled the Germans back and prevented their breaking through to their divisions encircled at Stalingrad. The outlines of the map vanish. One after another German planes float through the clouds. For 45 days the Germans tried in vain to bring up ammunition and food to their encircled troops. The ring of steel tightened around the Germans not only on the ground, but also in the air. A dense network of giant Soviet A.A. guns downed one enemy transport plane after another.

On January 8th, 1943, the Soviet command presented an ultimatum to Fieldmarshal von Paulus, commander of the German-fascist troops encircled in the Stalingrad area. This too was recorded by the cameramen. We see the truce envoys on the receipt of a signal from the bugler, moving towards the German positions.

. . . The German-fascist command rejected this ultimatum. Its term expired at 10.00 o'clock.

January 9th. Lieutenant-General Rokossovsky is shown at the command station, his attention fixed on the hands of the clock.

The general attack began.

Artillery, the god of war, raised its voice. The cameramen succeeded in showing the destructive power of Soviet artillery. There is a magically fascinating and at the same time deathly spectacle in the shots showing the operations of the Guard's mortar regiments. And this is understandable, for the sea of flames released by them puts the enemy to flight. But he can't escape, for the fire overtakes him, consumes him. Soviet tanks dash forward. And Soviet bombers constantly drop their lethal loads on German strongpoints. The ring of encirclement is steadily tightening. More and more inhabited points are liberated by the Red Army. Then for a moment the roar of the battle dies down. Amid grim silence stills appear which evoke anger and hatred for the enemy. A camp for prisoners of war has been found in the village of Bolshaya Rossoshka. Only a few men survived of the 2,000 Red Army men interned in the camp. The rest perished in terrible agony from hunger, exhaustion and torture. The camp grounds are littered with emaciated bodies. Their faces are mutilated, knifed, bayoneted, it is a ghastly sight, this bit of ground fenced off with barbed wire.

Fire is the only answer to these monstrous crimes. And the guns pound away with greater force, as the destruction of the enemy continues.

Offensive operations shift to the city proper, where after 100 days of defence the 62nd Army has swung into the offensive. Mopping up shop after shop, building after building, it destroys the last of the enemy's strongpoints, dragging German soldiers from attics, basements, from under staircases. Once again we see the glorious heroes of Stalingrad whose acquaintance we made in the first sections of the film. They have gone over to the offensive, and their heroism is truly insurpassed.

Unable to withstand the Red Army's assault, the enemy garrisons blockaded in buildings begin to raise white flags and surrender. We see entire battalions and regiments of the enemy troops laying down arms, hundreds, thousands of German soldiers are being taken through the streets of the city. Here is Lieutenant-General von Daniel; he was taken prisoner together with the remnants of his 376th Infantry Division. The officers and soldiers straggling behind him present a pitiful sight.

A happy moment as the troops defending Stalingrad join the divisions which forced their way through from the Don. And again the solemnity of the occasion conveys itself to the spectator as he shares the feelings of the

defenders of Stalingrad. One could never forget the Russian cannon which fired the last salvo at the enemy in Stalingrad, just as one could not forget the moment when for the first time in 100 days silence spread over the city.

Quiet reigns in the wounded city, wrecked, reduced to heaps of charred ruins, but proud in its invincibility. Nothing but the snow crunching under thousands of feet as German prisoners of war are led through the streets, disturbs the prevailing silence.

We see endless columns of prisoners of war. There are the 24 hitlerite generals taken prisoner, including also Fieldmarshal von Paulus, commander of the German troops at Stalingrad. Lieutenant-General Shumilov is inspecting the documents of the captive Fieldmarshal. These stills constitute an indisputable refutation of the lying German propaganda from Berlin alleging that Paulus "was taken prisoner seriously wounded, unconscious, or even dead." There is Paulus on the screen in perfect health and sound mind.

The history of war knows no other example of the encirclement and rout of so great a number of regular troops armed to the teeth with modern equipment. There it is, the equipment too. The cameramen have photographed from the air hundreds of tanks, guns, motor-vehicles and aircraft captured by the Red Army forces in the course of their general offensive. These trophies are scattered over the vast plain all along the route to the city. The plane carries the cameramen over the city. Underneath, on Central Square but recently surrounded with beautiful buildings, the liberators of Stalingrad and the first of the inhabitants to return have gathered for a festive meeting.

The base, haughty enemy did not succeed in capturing the Volga stronghold. A few stills from the German newsreel are skilfully contrasted against the Stalingrad pictures. Fascist swashbucklers are shown lined up for a parade in Berlin. There they stood at attention before Hitler who sent them to this criminal war. And here they are again facing these heroes of Stalingrad. Filthy degenerates, pestered by lice. There is a scene showing German soldiers receiving Iron Crosses presented to them following their entry into Paris. And they were rewarded in Stalingrad too: thousands of wooden crosses on the graves of the dead.

Here he is, the soldier of the German-fascist army who had reached the banks of the Volga, Struck dead by a Russian bullet, there he lies frozen stiff on the bank of the river. And here is a German soldier crossing the Volga. dull-witted and contemptible, limping in his ersatz-felt boots, wrapped in some rags, a true picture of a pure-blooded Aryan.

These concluding stills of the film are filled with deep meaning. They show the inglorious end of the adventurous plan of the German command to capture Stalingrad, to encircle and take Moscow.

The film *Stalingrad* is particularly valuable in that it gives in broad outline a picture of the Stalingrad epic, tracing it from the beginning to the very end. Moreover, along with its aesthetic value of a true work of art, the film conveys the full military importance of the Battle of Stalingrad. The stirring story of the great battle is fully compatible with the stationary calm and precision of the staff maps that alternate with the pictures of action; this combines to familiarize the spectator with the strategy underlying the plan of encirclement and debacle of the Germans. In this respect tribute must be paid to L. Varlamov and A. Kuznetsov who drew up the outline of the film, to producer L. Varlamov and the author of the script V. Grossman.

The cameramen deserve the highest praise. Of the multiplicity of facts making up the Stalingrad epic they succeeded in selecting the most important, most striking and characteristic ones. And everyone of these facts is a living reproduction on the screen.

Everyone of its stills reveals faith in victory and the power of victory, for amid the roar of cannons, amid the blood and sweat of battle, cameramen standing shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army men knew that victory would come! And the whole film is a living testimony of this victory, and not only of the victory won at the walls of Stalingrad, but of the approaching decisive victory of the Soviet people and their Red Army over the German-fascist barbarians.

ROMAN KATZMAN

IN MEMORY OF EDVARD GRIEG

(Born 1843)

On June 15th, 1943, music-lovers all over the world celebrate the centenary of the birth of Edvard Grieg. Few artists have achieved such universal popularity during their life-time as this great Norwegian composer, who expressed the musical spirit of his people more clearly and completely than any of his contemporaries.

The period of his work, which extends from the second half of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, coincided with that extensive national liberation movement in Norway which gave to the world immortal treasures of art. Grieg, however, did not confine his work within these limits. Bound by a thousand threads to the life of his country, he devoted his creative life to national music, he was the singer of a freedom-loving people, of their joys and sorrows. Nevertheless, his compositions should be judged not only on the national, Norwegian scale, but from the standpoint of the world history of music.

The freshness, the depth and sincerity, the limpid purity of his music made Grieg's compositions for the piano, his songs and choruses, his chamber music and orchestral pieces dear to music-lovers in both hemispheres. *Solveig's Song, Death of Aase* and *Anitra's Dance* from the music based on the drama *Peer Gynt*; *March of the Dwarfs, Wedding March*, the songs *I Love You, The Princess* and *The Last Spring*, marches and music written to Björnstjerne Björnson's play *Sigurd Jorsalfar*, are among the world's most popular musical compositions.

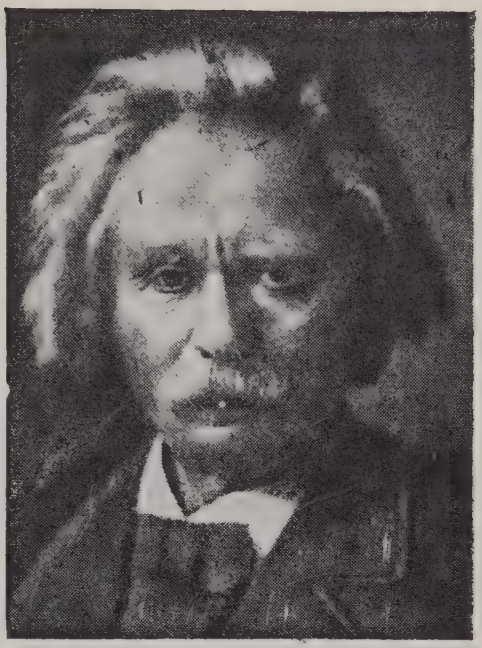
Grieg made extensive use of Norwegian folk melodies, and on their basis created a musical tapestry of the life of his country. It is these inexhaustible treasures of Norwegian folk music, peasant songs and dances that give his melodies their originality. Grieg was a creative artist who combined in his works a rare characteristic quality together with a broad appeal.

Grieg is also worthy of study as an individual. He belonged to the advanced group of Norwegian democratic intellectuals, was a close friend and counsellor of the ardent radical and well-known writer Björnstjerne-Björnson, and himself boldly lived up to his principles as a citizen. He did not hesitate to express his disapproval of the sentence passed on Dreyfus in 1899, and refused an invitation to Paris, thus subjecting himself to violent attacks on the part of the French reactionaries. Physically, Grieg was fragile. His health was poor, he suffered from a serious form of tuberculosis. But the composer's strength of spirit made him a selfless servant of his art and his people.

After graduating from the reactionary Leipzig Conservatoire in 1862, where, according to his own admission, he learned nothing, Grieg was sensible of a string aversion to contemporary German music. Although he owed much to his great predecessors Mozart and Schumann, he resolutely opposed any attempts to identify the main principles of Norwegian music with the German. "We have not the German leaning towards verbosity," he said. "We have always loved only that which expressed our thoughts clearly and exactly."

That Grieg felt a strong sympathy for Slav music is clearly evidenced by his interest in the compositions of the Czech classical composer Dvořák. In general, he had a warm affection for all music that owed its origin to folk sources, and was drawn to composers who turned to the treasure house of national music for inspiration. Grieg's interest in Mac-Dowell's work is well known, as is his influence on his American contemporary.

Particularly close ties bound the great Norwegian composer with the world of music in Russia, where his works won early appreciation. Already in the nineties of the last century, Russian musicians recognized all that was new in Grieg's art, and even at that time wide circles of music lovers were enthusiastic over his works. It was in Russia that the first work on Grieg appeared in 1891. [1] And Grieg realized and highly valued the favourable attitude of the Russian public. "Many reports from Russia," he wrote, "convince me that there, in that country, there is a sympathetic attitude



to my music." (From Grieg's letter to the Russian pianist A. Ziloti, June 21st, 1902). And from 1888, when Chaikovsky sent his first invitation to Grieg to give a concert in Russia, until the last days of his life, he dreamed of playing his own compositions in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Several times he was on the point of making the journey but was prevented by poor health or other circumstances. [2] But the composer did not lose hope. In 1902 he wrote to Ziloti: "Once more there is a possibility of being able to realize my cherished dream of playing my compositions in Russia."

There was one occasion on which Grieg refused to go to Russia on principle. This was in 1904, during the Russo-Japanese war and the period of political reaction. "I must live up to my convictions," he wrote. "And they forbid me to give concerts in Russia. I am fully aware, of course, that many artists' views on life are not so strict. But I am not one of those artists. It is a pity that it had to happen this way. But one must be a one's self first and foremost. True art can spring only from the personality." (Letter to A. Ziloti, October 29th, 1904.)

The most important of Grieg's Russian connections was his friendship with Chaikovsky. It was in January 1888 that they first met in Leipzig, and this meeting, one of the most pleasant memories in the lives of both musicians, is described by Chaikovsky in his *Autobiographical Description of a Journey Abroad in 1888*. We shall cite an excerpt from this sketch, little known abroad, which gives a vivid picture of Grieg's appearance and a sincere evaluation of his work from the point of view of the Russian composer.

". . . A rather short man entered the room, middle-aged, very fragile-looking, with one shoulder higher than the other, with flaxen

[1] An article by Nicholas Findeizen.

[2] In the spring of 1902 Grieg gave a concert in Warsaw, at the invitation of the Warsaw Philharmonic.

curls standing up on his head and a very scanty beard and moustache, almost like those of a youth. There was nothing particularly striking about the features of this man, though his appearance for some reason immediately drew me; they could be called neither handsome nor plain; but to make up for that he had unusually attractive blue eyes not very large, and with a certain indescribable charm reminiscent of the clear gaze of some lovable child. I was overjoyed on our introduction to discover that this man whose appearance attracted me so strongly was the musician whose deeply-felt harmonies had long held my heart. It was Edvard Grieg, the Norwegian composer, who fifteen years previously had already won considerable popularity in Russia, and enjoyed the highest esteem in the Scandinavian countries. I think I should not be mistaken in saying that Grieg won Russian hearts immediately and for all time. His music, which has a charming melancholy and expresses Norwegian nature in all its beauty, now spacious and grand, now grey, bleak, barren, but always holding its own indescribable attraction for the northerner, possesses something intimate that immediately evokes a warm sympathetic echo in our hearts. . . He is nearer to us, he is dearer and more comprehensible to us, because he is deeply human. . . There is such warmth and passion in his melodious phrases, such joy of life in his harmonies, so much originality and charming unusualness in his clever, piquant modulations; in his rhythm, as in everything else, there is always something interesting, new, independent! And if one adds to all this the rare quality of perfect simplicity which is a stranger to all over-refinement or pretension, to anything unprecedentedly deep and new. . . then it is not surprising that Grieg is loved by all."

In speaking of Grieg's wife, who rendered his songs with such depth and feeling, Chaikovsky makes valuable observations on Grieg's sympathy for Russian literature: "I have rarely met a woman who is better educated and better informed and incidentally, thoroughly well-acquainted with our literature, in which Grieg himself is extremely interested."

In Chaikovsky's own words, his acquaintance with Grieg "soon became a sincere friendship, based, undoubtedly, on the fundamental relationship of two musical natures, though they be of differing origin." During the last years of his life, the great Russian composer frequently expressed his love for Grieg and his admiration for this "higly talented" musician, longed to meet him again; but this wish was not destined to be realized. [1]

For his part, Grieg remembered his friend continually and with exceptional warmth, valuing him as one of the greatest artists. "During the year following the death of that noble master Chaikovsky," Grieg wrote to Ziloti in August 26th, 1902, "I learned to love him yet more deeply, and our old acquaintanceship, now renewed in connection with him, is for me sufficient reason to place your invitation to St. Petersburg above all others." On August 16th, 1907, seven days before his death, Grieg again mentioned Chaikovsky in another letter to Ziloti: "Yes, we really should meet again and talk over the good old days with Chaikovsky."

Russian musicians have been constantly influenced by Grieg's advanced, national, democratic art. The effect of his melodious, original, fresh harmonies and interesting rhythms can be found in works by Rachmaninov, Lyadov, Metner, and a number of Soviet composers, beginning with Prokofieff.

Grieg's music is widely known in the Soviet land, his melodies are to be heard at concerts and in the home circles, his works are featured prominently in radio concerts, in amateur musical circles and in the study of music, especially that of the pianoforte. The U.S.S.R. is celebrating with sincere love the jubilee of the great Norwegian composer. His compositions have run into editions of thousands, not only as they were written in the original form, but with their many adaptations for national instruments. Today, in these days of bitter fighting, when the Soviet and the Norwegian peoples, like all the freedom-loving nations of the world, are fighting the German fascist invaders, the destroyers of art and culture, it is pleasant to realize that our people value the spiritual treasures of the Norwegian people, expressed in the delightful tone-poems of Grieg.

ARNOLD ALSCHWANG

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[1] In one of his letters to Grieg Chaikovsky calls him his "little son," and his wife, "little daughter." This was a reference to the following occurrence: at a concert Chaikovsky was sitting beside Grieg couple, both small in build. A certain lady, pointing to them, said to her daughter: "Look there, dear, there's Chaikovsky with his children." (Grieg was just three years younger than his neighbour.)

THE RED ARMY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE GERMAN FASCIST INVADERS

The traditional exhibitions of painting and sculpture devoted to Red Army jubilees acquired an added significance in connection with the recent twenty-fifth anniversary of its formation.

In these days of a war unprecedented in history, the workmanship of Soviet artists, moved by its stern, harsh reality and based on the two feelings of love of country and hatred for enemy, has increased in profundity and strength. There are new subjects to be seen at this exhibition: countrysides bearing the grim traces of warfare. Another interesting point is that the usual portraits of fighters, however successful, do attract not attention; the important and complex problem of the heroic portrait is solved by some artists who have realized this need.

A. Gerassimov's portrait of Stalin on the battle-field, V. Yakovlev's *General Panfilov*, *General Belov* from the brush of the young artist K. Kitaik; the portrait of the airman Molodchy, by the Kukryniksy trio—all these are a living proof of the birth of the Soviet heroic portrait.

Most striking characteristics of our times are vividly expressed in battle pictures as we understand them. There are only a few such pictures as the term was previously understood, pictures depicting fighting of a concentrated character.

V. Odintsov's *Battle for a Firing Line* attracts immediate attention. The painting is executed with much temperament, and the artist has solved his purely pictorial problem excellently. This is one of the most impressive pictures at the exhibition. A. Deineka's canvas *The Defence of Sevastopol* has aroused much discussion on the depiction of the theme.

A. Plastov's canvas *For Hearth and Home* represents a small handful of inhabitants defending their own home, perhaps built by the hands of their grandparents. With his innate strength and truthfulness, the artist has shown all the resolution, the tense effort, the fighting tenacity with which the Russian people resist the enemy. P. Sokolov-Skalya's canvas, *Exploit of Twenty-Four Men on Skis*, who nobly gave their lives for their country, comes within the category of battle pictures. This artist has also contributed a small sketch, *The People's War*, which contains such concentrated action, such movement seized and graphically depicted, such a vivid feeling of the imminence of victory, and such a successful treatment of a war-torn countryside, that it is in no way inferior to finished work.

These are practically all the battle pictures, in the old sense of the term, to be seen at the exhibition. The change in the character of battle scenes is readily understood when we consider the fundamental changes which have taken place in the nature of the battles themselves. In his interesting work, *Notes of an Artist*, V. Odintsov, who took part in the Battle of Stalingrad, remarks that formerly battle pictures showed a maximum concentration of action, and points out that whereas the Battle of Borodino extended along a front of six to eight kilometres, the Stalingrad front occupied several dozen kilometres. For this reason, modern battle pictures can show only those separate episodes which produce a more profound impression on the observer.

A convincing confirmation of this is to be found in the canvases by the artists V. Odintsov and A. Plastov, mentioned above. The former has a painting, *January Night at Stalingrad*, the latter, one entitled *On the Stalingrad Road*. The battle-scarred countryside is flooded with moonlight, showing a snowy plain with abandoned heavy guns which seem to merge with the landscape, and the Stalingrad road, crowded with military traffic. In these two pictures one gets the feel of battle more than in the larger canvases by the same artists.

The artists whose canvases are exhibited have depicted the war in all its many-sidedness, with its subjects and types, with profound attention to that startling reality which they saw in places where the enemy had passed, where fighting had taken place. They have striven for the greatest possible accuracy, so as to make their art appeal to the masses.

A particularly strong impression is produced by the *Exploit of Twenty-Eight Guardsmen*, by P. Malkov, interesting from the purely pictorial point of view, and his *General Rokossovsky's Army Headquarters*, as well as *What the Monsters Did*, by G. Shegal, *Fascist Bestiality in Rechitsa* by B. Krivonogov, *The Presentation of the Guards Banner* by B. Preobrazhensky, a young artist who has only just graduated from the Moscow Art Institute.

The exhibition also contains some historic works. P. Sokolov-Skalya's canvas *Kulikovo Field*, purely decorative in execution but interesting in composition, is worthy of note, as well as T. Mavrina's original and unusual print, *The Battle of Kulikovo*, and L. Golovanov's portrait of Minin and Pozharsky.

There is a large collection of drawings, which is wide in scope and of documentary value. These drawings are not only the expression of what the artists have themselves seen, but of deep experience; the artists lived with the Red Army men, went to the front-line positions with them and sometimes took part with them in operations, rifle or mortar in hand.

The Stalingrad front, Millerovo, Sevastopol, all these are shown in drawings of Soviet artists. K. Finogenov, one of our most interesting graphic artists, has contributed a series of drawings on the Stalingrad epic. All are of a very high standard, and not one shows any lessening in the artist's sharp perception, his ability to catch and fix the most favourable and vivid points. With the greatest economy the artist has created impressive scenes showing the historic localities of the Battle of Stalingrad, such as the Karavatka, Kuznechikha, Starodubovka and Talovo ravine. In drawing after drawing, the artist unfolds the panorama of the scenes of these historic battles which will go down in the history of wars as unequalled examples of courage and glory. From these scenes arises the picture of the Soviet fighting men, and we realize how the Red Army, overcoming all the strength and guile of the enemy, ad-

J. V. Stalin
at the Front

Painting by
A. Gerassimov

vanced further and further forward, dislodging him from his fortified positions. K. Finogenov's drawings are remarkable not only for their accurate documentary value. They are a vivid expression of the artist's emotions. This last quality is particularly marked in his portraits. That of the scout Malyavin is excellent: a face filled with grim determination. This is exactly how we picture to ourselves the faces of those who fought at Stalingrad.

E. Komarov's drawings, especially *On the Stalingrad Line*, the exhibits by A. Soifertis, A. Laptev, S. Khinsky, B. Nemensky, and many other artists, so lovely in form and shading, especially I. Lukomsky's portraits, with their profound psychological content and interesting line, are all treasures in the graphic history of the Red Army's great battles for country and freedom.

Among the sculptures, works by the Byelorussian sculptor Z. Azgur are worthy of special mention. In a number of busts of Generals Rokossovsky and Dovator, Hero of the Soviet Union Kozlov, and the partisan Minai, the sculptor not only expressed in a firm, laconic style the features of strong, courageous faces, but in every bust, particularly that of General Rokossovsky, solved the problem of colour in a way rarely achieved in sculpture. Z. Azgur is undoubtedly an artist of great and original gifts.

V. Mukhina's sculpture, a girl partisan's head, of no great size, leaves more than a passing impression: it remains in the memory. The courageous expression, the forceful carriage of the head, all the charm of the young girl partisan attracts and holds the attention. The sculptural portraits of Colonel Tokarev of the Guards and Hero of the Soviet Union Grigoryev, by S. Lebedova, are also worthy of note.

S. Orlov is still quite a young sculptor. This is all the more reason for observing his fine monumental piece. A mother is mourning her children tortured by the nazi savages: such is the theme of his composition, which is finely executed and profoundly expressive.

E. Vuchetich's sculptured portraits of Suvorov, Kutuzov, Bagration and the partisan Denis Davydov are well conceived and executed, but not always exact from the iconographical point of view.

The exhibits shown in the Jubilee Exhibition in general produce a strong impression, and are a valuable contribution to the history of modern Soviet graphic and plastic art, closely linked with the Red Army. The general high level of the works exhibited form a solid foundation for future representation in oil, black-and-white, and sculpture of the Red Army's glorious deeds.

IVAN LAZAREVSKY

THE CONFERENCE OF SOVIET WRITERS

The object of a recent extended conference of Soviet writers was to summarize the results of the work of various sections of Soviet men of letters during twenty-two months of the Great Patriotic War. The experience of Soviet literary workers has disproved the well-known saying that "when the cannon roar the Muses are silent," and is a living reproach to those writers who have not found a place of honour for themselves at a time when the fate of man, and of the culture he has created, is being decided for hundreds of years to come.

The poetess Vera Inber, living in Leningrad during its siege by the fascists, wrote a stirring poem on the courage of the defenders of the impregnable "city called Lenin." This poem, *The Pulkovo Meridian*, has become the favourite book both of the inhabitants of the city and its heroic defenders. There was little bread in the city, especially during the memorable winter of 1941-1942. But Vera Inber's little book of verse was priced higher than bread: people gave away a day's bread ration for it. "We get pleasure out of hearing your voice," an A.A. section commander told the poetess: "it helps us to fight."

Boris Gorbatov, the author of a number of excellent short stories (*Letters to a Comrade, Alexei Kulikov—Soldier*, and others) which have a large reading public, told the conference how he found his place as a writer during the war. "When I was called to the telephone at 6 a.m. on the 22nd of June, 1941, and told that hitlerite Germany had attacked us, and that I had to proceed to the front as a writer within an hour," Gorbatov said, "I felt insulted. A strong, healthy man, who had received special military training, was not going to fight in defence of his country and his people, but was only going to describe the fighting. A few months passed, and I realized the correctness of the decision to send me to the front in order that the fiery, truthful words of the writer should inspire the soldiers of our Red Army. I realized that," said Gorbatov, summing up, "when I saw the effect of the stories, articles and leaflets I had written on my comrades-in-arms."

The experience of Soviet literature has shown that poetry, prose in all its forms and genres, and the drama can and must become an important force in the life and struggle of the army in war-time. Literature, to use Ehrenburg's expression, is "spiritual ammunition," and is of no less value to the army at the front than any other type of weapon. One fact which speaks of the powerful influence of the writer's word, is the letter which sniper Kandogin, a man well known at the front, sent to Ilya Ehrenburg. "Your articles," Kandogin wrote to Ehrenburg, "have aroused in me a fierce hatred of the enemy, have set me afire and inspired me. I have already accounted for ninety hitlerite savages, and I credit you with half of them."

The Muses in the Soviet Union do not flee from war, do not beseech writers to sing the praises of the "quiet joys" of a peaceful life. Everything in the right place. At the moment the front makes heavy demands, and we have the response of the writer. It is the novel *Rainbow* by the Polish authoress Wanda Wasilewska, a story of the immeasurable sufferings and heroic struggle of the fraternal Ukrainian people under the yoke of the German invaders, the age-old enemies of all Slavs. It is the poem *Zoya* by the young poetess Margarita Aliger, immortalizing the great deed of Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, a simple Russian girl whose name has become known to the whole civilized world and whom generations to come will remember and place beside the famous names of the heroes of antiquity. It is the play *Russians* by Constantine Simonov, a play which not only moves Moscow audiences, but also those of distant New York.

In a short article it is difficult to describe the greatest achievements of Soviet writers in war-time. Academician Alexei Tolstoy has published a brilliant

series of scathing newspaper articles. Since the war began Tolstoy has completed his trilogy *The Road to Calvary* on which he has been working for many years, incorporating in it his innermost thoughts on Russia, her destiny, and the feeling of patriotism which has grown up in Soviet man. Many writers have found a wider range of activity during these months of war. Samuel Marshak, a popular children's writer and brilliant translator of English verse, has shown himself a master of the short satyrical epigram, fired with deadly accuracy at the flagrant crimes of the organizers of the "new order" in Europe.

Side by side with those veterans of literature, young writers are making successful headway. One of the names most frequently mentioned at the conference of Soviet writers was that of Constantine Simonov. This is not to be wondered at, for the author of *Russians* has shown himself to be a brilliant war correspondent, a talented poet and playwright and a good scenario writer. At the same time quite a number of criticisms were levelled against Simonov by the conference.

Pushkin's demand of a poet that he be "an exacting artist" should not lose its force even in the days of bitter struggle. Works that have been written hurriedly, carelessly, without a feeling of responsibility to the reader, were condemned by the conference. Naturally, of course, popularity and services rendered cannot serve as a shield against criticism, but should, on the contrary, increase both the demands which the writer makes of himself and those made by his critics. Nikolai Chernyshevsky, the great Russian thinker and writer of the last century, defined criticism in the following way: "Criticism," he wrote, "is the opinion of the better part of society concerning a literary work." In examining the value and shortcomings of all works of literature that have been written since the war began, the conference of Russian writers took this excellent definition as its guide.

The opinion of the majority of those attending the conference was well expressed by Ilya Ehrenburg: "We often hear talk of the 'material' with which war provides a writer. . . Let us say straight out: this talk of what the war has given the writer is out of place. Something else is burning at our hearts: what has the writer given to the war?"

Soviet writers, and above all those who have plunged into the life of the fighting force at the front and those who are bound up with the life of the people working in the rear to create the prerequisites of victory, have done much to achieve that victory. Favourite books with Red Army men on all fronts are Vassili Grossman's *The People Is Immortal* and, to an even greater extent, Wanda Wasilewska's *Rainbow*.

Life itself points out to the writer subjects, which, in the hands of a master, become a mighty spiritual force exercising a tremendous effect on millions of people. Let us cite an interesting example.

There have been frequent cases of Soviet people who have been taken to Germany as prisoners of the Hitlerites, escaping and making their way safely back to territory which has now been liberated by the Red Army. Eugene Gabrilovich, author of the scenario *Mashenka*, took as his theme the story of a Russian girl who escaped from German slavery. Overcoming tremendous difficulties and dangers, the girl made her way through Germany and some occupied countries to her own native place. The picture of this heroic journey through many countries that are experiencing all the pleasures of the fascist "new order," the picture of the sufferings of the nations of Europe and of their struggle against the hated Hitlerites should be brilliantly reflected in this new scenario. The name of the author gives promise of this being a powerful and topical film.

Outstanding Russian writers have always been intimately bound up with the life and struggles of their people; beginning with Lomonossov and Radishchev, progressive Russian literature has shown the world examples of civic service rendered to one's country and to the whole of mankind. In this connection the name of Maxim Gorky is unforgettable, as that of one who was able, as nobody else has been able, to grasp and quickly respond to everyday problems which interested his reading public all over the world, and most of all in his own country.

Continuing in and developing the noble traditions of Russian literature of the 19th century, Gorky laid the foundations of that broad, international antifascist

movement amongst writers, which is now producing such fine results. The example of Gorky, his work and his public activities have had a tremendous influence on many leading workers in the field of culture all over the world.

This is a side of Gorky's activities which has not yet been deeply studied, any more than a proper study has been made of the influence of Russian culture in general on the culture of other nations. In both the U.S.S.R. and in the West more and more works are appearing on this subject.

Research into this question is now being carried out in the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow. The most interesting productions so far are lectures on the role of Gorky in the world literary movement and the contribution made by Pushkin to historical drama.

All problems of the devolopment of Russian and world literature and all they embrace come within the range of the work of Soviet men of letters despite the difficulties that have to be overcome on account of the war.

There are passion and inspiration, and a great love for their art that made itself felt in even the most severe criticism, in the way Soviet writers spoke of various aspects of the literature of our day. Whatever direction the talks took, they were inevitably subordinated to the one idea, the one passion which is paramount with all Soviet people and consequently with all workers in the field of culture. The people at war—that is the art theme of our days! The future victory of the forces of mankind and culture over a despicable and evil foe is the optimistic note struck. Burning Soviet patriotism, national pride, consciousness of the responsibility a writer bears to his readers and to the whole of mankind for the fate of the world and of culture—these are the feelings which Soviet writers have made the basis of those literary works which have justifiably earned general popularity in the Soviet Union.

TIMOFEI ROKOTOV

SIX-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ST. GEORGE'S NIGHT REVOLT

The spring of 1943 saw the six-hundredth anniversary of the revolt of the Estonian people against their German oppressors. St. George's Night, April 23, 1343, has gone down in Estonian history as one of the milestones in their struggle for liberty and independence against their age-old enemies, the Germans.

The German bandits' invasion of Estonia began in 1208, when the German feudal barons, having established their rule on the banks of the Western Dvina, and subjugated the Livonians and Northern Letts, organized a predatory raid on Estonian territory, leaving behind them a path strewn with the bodies of women and children and lit by the flames of great conflagrations. After twenty years of fierce struggle, the Estonians came under the power of the Germans, who established the German type of feudal rule in subjugated Estonia and enslaved the liberty-loving Estonian people.

The will to struggle, however, had not been extinguished in the hearts of the Estonians. In 1343 they arose against the Germans. The manors of the Teutonic knights burst into flames. An army of 12,000 insurrectionists, commanded by four leaders chosen from amongst the people, laid siege to the city of Tallin. The Teutonic knights hastily sought the help of the Livonian Order and were promised it in suppressing the rebellion by Burhardt von Dreileben, Master of the Order. Following their usual course of treachery and dishonesty, the Germans, and the Master of the Order in particular, decoyed the four Estonian leaders into one of their castles, under a guarantee of personal safety. The Estonians, entrusting their worst enemies, were bitterly deceived. Their leaders, imprisoned by the Germans as a result of their deception, were treacherously murdered. This left the Estonian movement without a head, its four principal, outstanding leaders having been removed. The Germans succeeded in gaining a victory over the insurrectionists in a battle near Tallin. Two months later, however, in July, 1343, a revolt of Estonian peasants on the island of Saaremaa broke out, and the insurrectionists captured important fortifications belonging to the Livonian Order. The badly scared Germans concentrated large forces and undertook a number of punitive expeditions. In two districts alone they annihilated about 30,000 men, women and children. The chronicles of the times say of one of these, that after the German terror the whole district was "terra desolata."

Despite the fact that the revolt ended in failure, it played an important part in laying the foundations of the struggle for liberation which the Estonians carried on against the Germans.

The revolt of 1343 became a favourite topic in Estonian literature and art. Edward Bornhöe's novel *Tasuja (Avenger)*, which contains episodes from the revolt, has been extremely popular with Estonian readers for many years.

At the present time the heroes of the St. George's Night Revolt are an inspiration to the best sons of the Estonian people in their struggle against the German-fascist invaders.

The German-fascist bandits ruling in Estonia outdo in cruelty and perfidy the German feudal barons who ruled Estonian territory 600 years ago, at the time of the suppression of the St. George's Night Revolt. The fascists are plundering and ruining Estonia, annihilating the civil population, establishing all over the

Estonian Insurrectionist.

Sculpture by Ferdi Sannamees

country an extensive system of concentration camps and prisons. According to far from complete data, the Germans exterminated more than 20,000 Estonians in the period from July, 1941, to February, 1942. Over 30,000 people are incarcerated in their concentration camps and prisons. Tens of thousands of Estonians have been deported for convict labour in Germany. As Nigol Andresen, People's Commissar for Education of the Estonian SSR, said in his article in the Soviet press on the St. George's Night Revolt, "the Hitlerites are endeavouring to destroy Estonian culture and germanize the unconquered Estonian people. In the famous University of Tartu all Estonian professors and lecturers were discharged and replaced by Germans, and later the University was closed."

At the present time many Estonians are fighting in the ranks of Red Army units against their historic enemies, the German aggressors. These formations distinguished themselves in particular during the fighting at Velikiye Luki. More than 1,000 Estonian patriots, commanders and men of these formations have been awarded medals and orders.

The six-hundredth anniversary of the revolt of the Estonian people against the German invaders was marked in Moscow by the publication of an almanac by Estonian writers entitled the *Battle Horn*. The almanac contains an article by Nikolai Korotamm, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party, on the history of the revolt, an article by Professor Hans Kruus, Rector of Tartu University, *The Estonians' War of Liberation*, verses and poems on St. George's Night by the famous poet Johannes Barbarus, President of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR, and the poet Jaan Kärner, and stories by Aadu Hint and Arnold Tulik on the same subject.

On the day of the anniversary Soviet newspapers carried articles by outstanding Estonian cultural workers on the St. George's Night Revolt and its significance in the history of Estonia. In addition to this a number of gatherings were held and concerts given in which Estonian artists took part.

BRITISH FILMS ON THE SOVIET SCREEN

The love story of Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson, the great British admiral, has more than once provided a subject for books and films. At present the British film *Lady Hamilton* (producer Alexander Corda, scenario by U. Reish and R. Sheriff) is being shown with great success in the U.S.S.R.

A review which appeared in the Moscow newspaper *Literature and Art* notes that the "new British film treats with great artistry the famous romance of Nelson and Lady Hamilton." N. D. Volkov, critic and scenario writer, the author of the review, gives a high estimate of the skill of the producer who has balanced excellently the intimate scenes with the big battle and mass scenes. The critic considers the most successful part of the film to be the closing shots in which "the purely romantic line of the story is strengthened by a high patriotic content." Lord Nelson, who had withdrawn to the quiet of private life, returns to the deck of his flagship when the enemy is menacing his motherland. The message of the gallant admiral: "England expects every man to do his duty," spread to the whole fleet.

The film *Lady Hamilton* has aroused the interest of many who have seen it in the literature of the period. Some libraries have received requests for books on Nelson, his biography and descriptions of the Battle of Trafalgar. "Give us something about Lady Hamilton," young girls asked. The reference department of the Lenin Library, the biggest in the country, has drawn up a list of books on the subject. The personality of Nelson has always attracted attention in Russia. As far back as 1807, two years after his death, a book called *A Description of the Life of Lord Horatio Nelson*, translated from the English, appeared in St. Petersburg. In the list of the Lenin Library there are about twenty Russian and foreign books, including *The Letters of Lord Nelson* (London, 1814), *The Memoirs of Emma Hamilton*, published in 1899, Alexander Dumas' (père) novel on Lady Hamilton, the big articles by E. K. Pimenova in the magazine *Russian Thought* for 1911 and 1912, and, finally, a

popular pamphlet with a detailed description of the Battle of Trafalgar, published recently in the U.S.S.R.

Hardly had *Lady Hamilton* disappeared from the Moscow screen when bill-boards, bearing the Union Jack, announced a new British documental film, *Desert Victory*.

This film evoked the liveliest interest of the Soviet public. The newspapers, which devoted a number of articles and reviews to the film, noted its moving truth and excellent production. The *Pravda*, in an article by D. Zaslavsky, gave a detailed description of the film. "Why didn't Rommel get support from Hitler at the critical moment?" asks the author. "Why didn't more swarms of German planes come to the rescue?" The Soviet film-goer knows very well the answer to these two questions. Hitler could send Rommel another dozen field-marshal's batons, but he couldn't send him even one division. The hitlerite reserves at the time were sent to the rescue of the German generals the Red Army was routing at Stalingrad, in the Caucasus and in other sectors of the Soviet-German front.

The *Red Star* considers one of the most successful parts of the film the shots which "succeeded in conveying the tension and formidable beauty of the barrage by night." In complete darkness the infantry go into the attack. Through the scream of shells and the roar of explosions come the strains of the bag-pipes, the same that played in the opening scenes, showing the soldiers at rest. Now the strain sounds like a battle song leading men against the enemy through fire and death.

"The film shows well the endurance, pluck and fighting spirit of the allied British Army," writes the *Red Star*. "On halting the Germans and Italians at the last line, Generals Alexander and Montgomery methodically prepare their blow."

The reviewer of the newspaper *Literature and Art* considers that the film has achieved an excellent combination of the documental episodes with the relief maps showing the disposition of the British and enemy forces and explaining the tactical aim and course of the operations.

"We must take off our caps to the courageous British cameramen who shot the perilous episodes of the fighting," writes the newspaper *Moscow Bolshevik*.

The newsreels of allied countries invariably arouse the lively interest of the Soviet film-goer. In its time the documental film *Carry on London* was viewed with great interest in the U.S.S.R. The new British film *Desert Victory* was seen by seventy thousand people in Moscow alone in the first two days.

THE THEATRE HELPS THE DOCTOR

In war-time the danger of widespread illness and epidemics increases. Illness is the inevitable concomitant of any war. In the Soviet Union health protection and hygiene were always given great attention; in these days of the Patriotic War with fascist Germany this work has acquired exceptional importance. All means of propaganda: posters, films, magic lantern exhibitions, window displays, books, brochures, leaflets, radio talks, post-cards—all are being used at present in the U.S.S.R. to improve the people's knowledge of hygiene in combating the peril of widespread disease. Those enthusiasts of national health protection, the Soviet doctors, are always devising new means of popularizing hygiene.

To the aid of the doctor comes the theatre. A year ago, in May, 1942, a special one-act theatre was founded in Moscow, attached to the Institute of Hygienic Enlightenment.

Can dramatic art be employed for such a utilitarian purpose as the propagation of hygiene? This question interested both scientists and actors in equal measure. True, a similar attempt had already been made in Moscow several years ago when the Moscow Planetarium opened its "Star Theatre" to popularize astronomy. There plays were staged about Galileo, Copernicus and Bruno. But if the biographies of these warriors of science provide the richest of materials for stage presentation and abound in acute dramatic tension, is it possible to have a play about the typhus germ or the Koch rod? Wouldn't the audience melt away after the first mention of influenza or catarrh of the stomach?

In the very first days of the Revolution experiments of this type were tried. But they were carried out in an extremely unimaginative fashion. The actors, rigged-out as "microbes," spouted monologues, dances of the "bacilli" were followed by "songs of the spirochaete". . .

The newly formed Theatre of Hygiene realized clearly that only *artistic* productions, charged with vital truth, could really touch the audience and produce the desired effect. It is in this direction that the theatre is working.

In its first year the theatre staged 20 one-act plays and sketches, whose themes were extremely varied. N. Shapovalenko's play *The Meeting* concerns a girl donor whose blood saves the life of a badly wounded sailor. M. Dolov's sketch *Fluffy Teddy Bear* is a touching story of a little boy who catches a disease by playing with someone else's toy. G. Landau's sketch *The Thermometer* ridicules a slovenly young man, a confirmed "enemy of hygiene," whose girl thinks of a clever means of breaking him of his unhygienic habits once and for all. The action of S. Dinin's play takes place in the front-line zone: a German scout attempts to evade pursuit by pretending that he has typhus. There's an old woman in a comic scene of N. Krymova's *A Troublesome Case*, who prefers "old wives" medicine to the doctors. . . With all their variety of theme the productions have a single aim: to create a vital realistic dramatic performance which will convey to the audience sound ideas on hygiene in artistic form.

The theatre is also working on a series of plays featuring world famous men of medicine. M. Sizova's play *Louis Pasteu 's Two Days* tells the story of the great scientist's battle with the representatives of conservative science. It is based upon a historical episode concerning a boy who is bitten by a mad dog and saved by Pasteur's innoculation. N. Shapovalenko's play *Horatio Wells* tells the audience of the young American doctor who first employed

narcotics in medicine. The action of the play is laid in Boston in 1857. *Alleviator of Human Suffering* is the sub-title of this play which is dedicated to a doctor with great humanitarian ideals. The hero of E. Varukova's play *The Wonder-Working Surgeon* is N. I. Pirogov, the renowned Russian surgeon of the 19th century.

The theatre's repertoire also includes variety turns, catchy songs and even dances. Such themes as *The Imaginary Invalid* or *The Quack-Doctor and the Invalid* provide a wealth of material for the presentation of witty miming with clever costumes and expressive make-up.

The theatre also has its juvenile group of talented schoolchildren who have their own repertoire. It includes chorus songs and acrobatics, dramatic reading and even a whole "opera" about the little bears who gobbled too many raw vegetables.

The theatre decorations are portable, and the sets extremely simple. This is a mobile theatre in the fullest sense of the word. Its shows are given in army units, in hospitals, in the clubs of large factories and in schools. The audience are interested in the new departure. "Everyone of these shows adds to one's store of useful knowledge, and they are good entertainment too," write wounded men from Hospital 4633. Such testimonials spur on the actors and assure them of the usefulness of their work.

THE BEST SCHOOL

At a recent review of secondary schools in the R.S.F.S.R. the title of best school in the Republic and, together with it, the Red Banner of Merit of the People's Commissariat of Education was won by the Moscow secondary school No. 29.

Ninety-seven percent of the school's pupils have gained excellent or good marks. The war-time spirit can be felt in the headmaster's study, in the class-rooms, and the laboratories. It is all-pervading: in the discipline and smartness of the school-children, in their work and in that of the teachers.

The numerous children's study circles function well at school No. 29. The literary circle enjoys great popularity. Here the children study Russian, Western-European and American literature more fully than in the school curriculum. Pupils of the higher classes give lectures. The historical circle did some interesting work in describing actions of gallantry performed in the present war and also on the history of the heroic cities of Stalingrad, Leningrad, Sevastopol and Odessa.

And when lessons are over, another kind of life begins at the school.

Side by side with the class-rooms are the school workshops. Instead of desks and the familiar blackboard are workshop benches, racks with their neatly arranged tools, sewing machines.

In these workshops the school-children make many useful things for the front and the hospitals.

About sixty girls are occupied in the dress-making workshop, turning out goods to the value of many thousands of roubles. Twenty-five pupils are working in the fitter's shop, where under the guidance of instructors they are learning the fitter's craft and are already turning out goods. Wooden rakes, hammer handles and various articles for the hospitals are made in the carpenter's shop.

The school has shown excellent initiative in preparing for the coming spring farm work. Last year children of school No. 29 did very well working in the fields, allotments and gardens. Then, of course, they were novices. Now the school-children with the aid of the biology teacher are specially preparing themselves for farm work and acquiring a lot of useful information.

The spirit of cooperation is in great evidence among teachers and children at school No. 29. Upper class pupils help the little ones with their homework. Special attention is given to the children of men at the front. Teachers and older pupils visit their homes, often mothering the children while their real mothers are away at the factory.

The Moscow school No. 29, a model Soviet school, is training a generation of courageous and cultured young folk devoted to their homeland.

NEW RESEARCH WORK CONCERNING LERMONTOV

Problems concerning the heritage of classical Russian literature find a profound reflection on the pages of the comprehensive publication *The Heritage of Literature*. A number of the preceding volumes of this edition were devoted to Pushkin, Tolstoy, Herzen and many other eminent Russian writers (to some of the foreign writers as well, and to problems of the mutual influence of Russian and foreign literature, French for instance). The newly published volume of *The Heritage of Literature* devoted to the great Russian poet M. Y. Lermontov (1814—1841) bears witness to the fact that even in the grim surroundings of the war the Soviet investigators of literature have not given up their extensive and fruitful work.

This volume contains about fifteen investigatory treatises dealing with different aspects of Lermontov's creative work and world outlook.

Articles concerning Lermontov's literary views (by B. Eichenbaum), the attitude of the critics of the forties of the last century to the poet (by N. Mordovchenko), as well as the attitude of the Russian democracy towards him (J. Elsberg), follow the leading article by V. Komarov, president of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

The question referring to the poet's conception of the world and the philosophical ideas which stirred him, is dealt with by V. Asmus. V. Vinogradov, L. Pumpyansky and I. Rozanov have devoted their articles to the study of the character and style of Lermontov's prose and poetry. Here we also come across V. Komarovich's essay on Lermontov's drama *The Masquerade*.

Most interesting are the papers by M. Azadovsky and I. Stockmar, concerning the influence of Russian folklore on Lermontov's creations, and G. Vinogradov's article in which

he traces out the reverse, i. e. the influence of Lermontov's works on the people's poetry.

Last, but not least, Leonid Grossman traces the great influence the East exerted on Lermontov, an influence that found its reflection in the poet's works.

Two articles (by A. Fyodorov and B. Tomashevsky) show the influence of the poets of the West on Lermontov (Byron, Shakespeare, Thomas More, Coleridge and Macpherson).

Despite these influences Lermontov remained an essentially Russian national poet. He wrote of himself:

I ask no leaf of Byron's laurel crown,
Choice spirit both — for that the more we vary.
Like him I wander through a world contrary,
My voice though yet obscure is Russia's own.

In the near future, a second volume of *The Heritage of Literature* devoted to Lermontov will be issued which will include materials of documental character.

We may also mention that preliminary work is now being done for the issuing of a symposium of *The Heritage of Literature*, which will deal with the literary-cultural relations between Russia and Britain.

An exhibition has opened in Moscow devoted to the Russian Guards, to their glorious past and their heroic present.

Ancient Guards standards, torn by bullets, bleached by rain and sun, gleaming with old gold, bring back to the visitor the 250 years history of the Russian Guards. The Guards were formed at the time of Peter the Great. The oldest Russian Guards regiments, the Preobrazhensky and Semyonovsky, covered themselves with unfading glory in the Battle of Narva in 1700. That glory was enhanced in the Seven Years' War with the Prussians, when the Russian troops reached Berlin. That glory flashed forth once again on the fields of Borodino, in the battle against Napoleon.

The Soviet Guards received their baptism of fire in the Patriotic War against German fascism, and already have a record of triumphs. The twenty-eight guardsmen of General Panfilov's Division forever will remain fresh in the memory. In the autumn of 1941 they withstood the onslaught of 50 German tanks. The name of Guardsman-General Dovator, whose Cossacks made lightning raids behind the enemy's lines, carrying terror and confusion into his ranks, is a synonym for selfless courage.

Photographs and documentary material is on display at the exhibition illustrating the life of the guardsmen at the front: infantrymen, sappers, airmen, tommy-gunners, tankmen, cavalrymen and the medical corps. Here is one of the innumerable front-line episodes. The pillbox of two Russian liaison men, Samokhin and Merkurov, was surrounded by the Germans. Several dozen nazis attacked the two Soviet soldiers. An unequal combat followed with the guardsmen fighting back with unprecedented coolness and grit. The Germans showered them with grenades. The plucky men caught the grenades in flight and threw them back at the enemy. The approaches to the pillbox were cluttered with German dead. Despite their losses the Germans were unable to take the pillbox.

Another episode was photographed. The snapshot shows a heavy German tank blown into the air. The description underneath the photograph tells you that guardsmen sappers had laid skilfully camouflaged mines in the path of a German tank column. The leading nazi tank was snapped as it blew up.

Many women soldiers bear the coveted Guards insignia. At the exhibition you will find the portrait of nurse Lena Kovalchuk who has been twice decorated with the Order of Lenin. Vera Krylova, a young woman teacher of a far-off town in Siberia, now holds the rank of major of the Guards.

There's also an interesting snapshot of guardsman Novikov, the Soviet Union's champion skier, leading a group of guardsmen skiers behind enemy lines.

The exhibition has been housed in the light and spacious halls of the Historical Museum. It is not confined to the museum however, but extends beyond it to the columns of the daily papers, the radio and the late news messages from the front describing fresh exploits of the Soviet guardsmen.

The Soviet Writers' Publishing House has issued a book entitled *Gorky Against Fascism*, containing Gorky's remarks on fascism drawn from his articles, letters, speeches and talks.

The material, part of which is being published for the first time, is arranged under the following headings: *Gorky on the Menace of War; If the Enemy Doesn't Surrender, He Must Be Destroyed; Fascism Is Cultural and Moral Degeneration and Savagery; The Soviet Union Is Invincible; The Red Army Man Will Win.*

The book was prepared for the press by the Gorky Institute of World Literature.

A number of new books have made their appearance in the Soviet book-shops dealing with men and events of the present war.

An album entitled *The Great Patriotic War* has just come off the press ("Iskusstvo" Publishing House), dealing exclusively with the defence of Moscow. 240 outstanding works by Moscow artists are reproduced in the album. The following numbers are to be devoted to the heroic cities of Odessa, Sevastopol, Leningrad and Stalingrad.

The Soviet Writers' Publishing House has printed the following books: *The Story of a Soldier's Feelings*, by B. Gorbatov, *The Road of Valour*, by P. Pavlenko, *Black Sea Sailor*, by L. Solovyov, *The Chairman of the Town Soviet*, by M. Slonimsky, and the collections of poems: *Smolenshchina*, by A. Tvardovsky, and *Poems about the War*, by Ilya Ehrenburg.

The Young Guard Publishing House has issued the first of a new series entitled *The Art of Fighting*. The book is dedicated to the great Russian general Suvorov. It quotes Suvorov's sayings about war, the struggle with the enemy, the essence of military art, and also his famous book *The Art of Winning*, and publishes orders, instructions and the correspondence of the great general with military figures of the times.

The State Publishing House of Children's Literature has published a number of new books for school-children. A. Beks' book *The Eighth of December* bears the sub-title: *The Record of a Single Day*. It deals with the first day of the Red Army's historic offensive in the winter of 1941 which began the rout of the German forces at Moscow. L. Solovyov's tale *Stepan Polossukhin* tells the story of a young Red Navy sailor who took part in the battle of Sevastopol. The heroic defence of Sevastopol is also the subject of a book of short stories, *June Sky*, by A. Ivich. M. Cherevkov's fictionized sketches *Snowshoes* acquaint the reader in an attractive way with the history of skiing and describe interesting battle incidents concerning skiers.

The Leningrad State Publishing House has printed M. N. Nikitin's absorbing book *Partisan Warfare in the Leningrad Region*. The book is based entirely on documents, reports, statements of eye-witnesses, the evidence of people who have escaped from German imprisonment, convincing stories of partisans who have fought the hitlerite invaders for many months.

Faith in Your Star, a collection of war stories by the talented Ukrainian writer Savva Golovanivsky, has come off the press (Soviet Writers' Publishing House). The book contains four parts: "The Formidable Dnieper," "Simple Hearts," "Portraits of Heroes," and "Remarkable Adventures." The book begins with a letter to the Red Army man, entitled: *Warrior, Avenge!*

C. Trenyov, the well-known Soviet playwright, has finished a new play entitled: *Seeing It Through*. The heroes of the play are Russian intellectuals, scientists and inventors. The action takes place in a Russian town near the western frontier. Scientists are completing a labour of many years and of great importance to the country. Then comes the news of the Germans' treacherous attack on the Soviet Union. The scientists are confronted with this dilemma: shall they abandon everything without completing their research, or risk their lives but finish the job? They unwaveringly choose the latter. The results of many years work are saved, but only at the expense of the life of Sergei, a young scientist, the son of a professor and inventor.

B. V. Assafyev, a prominent Soviet composer and authority on music, did not leave his native Leningrad since the war began; this year he came to Moscow and acquainted the music world with his new works.

In the grim conditions of besieged Leningrad the composer has written a new ballet, a number of musical cycles, has completed an opera, a small symphonietta and several long articles on the works of Russian and Western composers (as a music critic Assafyev writes under the pseudonym of Igor Glebov).

Recently Assafyev was awarded a Stalin Prize for his many years service in the sphere of music.

Assafyev's new ballet *Militsa* is built upon the rich musical folklore of Yugoslavia. The heroine of the ballet is a girl partisan bravely fighting for the liberty of her homeland against the German invaders. With *Militsa* the composer continues his ballet work. His previous ballets *The Flames of Paris*, *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* and *The Caucasian Captive* have won great popularity.

The composer has dedicated his new vocal series *The City* to his native Leningrad and its heroic people. Assafyev has also written a number of songs for the Red Army.

In the past eighteen months of life in embattled Leningrad Assafyev has produced the following research works: *The Creative Method of Glinka*, *The Czech Musical Renaissance* and an article on the Norwegian composer Grieg.

The composer has also completed the second revision of his opera *The Bronze Rider* and is now working at a production he has long had in mind on the Patriotic War of 1812.

The Kirov (formerly Mariinsky) Opera House in Leningrad has staged *Gayane*, a new ballet by A. Khachaturyan which won him a Stalin Prize.

The action of the ballet is laid in one of the prosperous collective farms of Soviet Armenia. The heroine is Gayane, a young collective farm girl well-known as a Stakhanovite of the collective farm fields. A patriot of her country, she exposes her own husband who turns out to be a traitor bent on wrecking the collective farm. The enemy's plans come to nought. The cotton essential for war-needs is saved. Gayane and other women give fellow collective farmers a good send off to the front, promising them to work hard and devotedly in the rear.

"In my new ballet," says Khachaturyan, "I have tried to show on the stage through the medium of rhythm and of the dance the courageous Soviet people and their heroic struggle for the happiness of their country. The music of the ballet has original themes but at the same time has many echoes of Caucasian folk songs and dances."

Shakespeare's comedy *Twelfth Night* in its Kirghiz translation has just had its premiere at the Kirghiz Dramatic Theatre in Frunze. It was a big event in the theatrical life of the Kirghiz Soviet Republic. The play was performed by young Kirghiz actors who graduated from the Institute of Theatrical Art in Moscow two years ago. *Twelfth Night* is the second of Shakespeare's plays to be staged in Kirghizia: last season *King Lear* was shown.

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CONTENTS

No. 7 July 1943

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