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THE PERFIDY OF THE HANGMEN

There is no more honoured title in our country or in the whole world than that of a soldier of the Red Army. He it was who took the first blows of the Hitler hammer on his chest, as on a heavy anvil, and the German hammer, raised to deal the whole of mankind a death blow, was smashed against the mighty breast of the Russian people. For two years the soldier of the Red Army has withstood the awful onslaught of Hitler's war machine without wavering, without losing heart, boldly and selflessly struggling alone against the hordes and the machines of the whole of Europe; in the fire of war he has become more agile, more stubborn, cleverer, more enduring, superior to his enemies; the spirit of the Russian soldier has become sterner and more implacable in the soldier's love for his homeland and hatred for the foe.

The world will never revolve about the fascist axis. The Germans will not consider themselves the "master race," will not rule the State apparatus and culture of other nations as they would rule a cowshed, slaughtering those whose breed they do not favour; they will not plough the lands of others or befoul the seas with the swastika flag. Germans will sigh as they lift the hod on to their shoulders, or take in hand the plasterer's trowel to make good the damage they have done. Hitler will lose this war. We said this two years ago because we believed in the great history of the Russian people. Then we had faith. Now there is a crisis in Hitler Germany, an unquestionable fact. Hitler is already unable to win the war. Mankind has averted the threat of a social plague. History, after the bloody drama of these years which has shaken the economy and the psychology of the nations to their foundations, has exposed with great clarity the causes of this public disaster, history will hasten to assist in building up the common weal. It may be that clouds will again cover the sky, but the milestones have been erected, the trail has been blazed.

All these great world events are in the main the deeds of the soldier of the Red Army, and first and foremost of the Russian people. His unbounded courage, stern simplicity in the struggle with death, his ability and his invincible steadfastness have enabled our allies, England and America, to make ready a mighty war machine for the joint assault, for the defeat of Hitler Germany. The wolf is hemmed in. And again, as during the past two years, the soldier of the Red Army is bearing the main burden of the struggle. It is from here, from us, that Hitler is expecting his death blow.

When the German is strong, he is cruel; when things go badly with him, he is spitefully mean; when the German is licked, he becomes a tearful romantic and tries to convince the world that Germany is a poor and unfortunate land full of kindly, hardworking people. Things are going badly with the German today, and he plays every dirty trick he can think of—low cur that he is.

Here is a document issued by the Supreme Command of the German Army. The document has come from Berlin (Berlin-Schöneberg, Badensche Strasse 51), addressed to the commander of the Special Police in the Ukraine, and his chief of staff, one Müller-Brunckhorst, forwarded it to police officers for compliance. The copy before us is signed by somebody called Loose.

This is the document:

"Supreme Command of the German Army.

Contents: Branding of Soviet prisoners of war.

1. Soviet prisoners of war are to be marked with a permanent brand.

2. The brand is to have the form of an inverted acute angle of approximately

45° with arms 1 cm. in length, to be placed on the left buttock about a hand's breadth from the anus. (∧).

3. Branding is not a medical measure, therefore, this added to the fact that there is a shortage of medical personnel, the latter are not to be burdened with this task.

5. The branding includes:

a) all newly captured Soviet prisoners in the operative zone of the commander of the Wehrmacht in the East and in the Ukraine, and of the Army Command in the Governor General's Province, at the time of the first delousing;

b) all other prisoners of war within the area of the Supreme Command in the Ukraine before 30th September, 1942. Compliance with this order to be reported by 15th October, 1942.

6. The application of this measure must not interfere with the employment of war prisoner labour.

7. As soon as the brand has been applied, note to this effect is to be made on personal card I, by placing the sign '∧ ..., 1942' in the 'special marks' column."

Does this order need any commentary? No, it does not! On reading this, every soldier of the Red Army will simply clean his rifle more carefully and pull the chin strap of his steel helmet tighter. Is he indignant at such an order? Certainly not. The proud do not allow such things to disturb the serenity of their spirit, but with determined and calm hatred they kill. Woe to you, Germans, woe to those who have descended to such depths of depravity!

So that is the sort of enemy you Germans are! You put on your glasses and sit down before a captive Red Army man's backside with a hot branding iron! The Nibelung, the son of Wotan, God of War, the Superman! That ugly face of yours is branded with a whole rainbow of disgrace. Which do you prefer now: to be shot or have your ugly branded mug spat at? The soldier of the Red Army will shoot first, and then spit.

ALEXEI TOLSTOY

THE BRAND OF HITLERITE GERMANY

I have before me a horrible document. It is carefully drawn up in neat writing, accurately numbered paragraphs, signatures and underlinings. I am alone in my room. It is quiet and peaceful, all is still.

Suddenly I notice that my hand is trembling. I have not been reading for a long time. My eyes are fixed on one spot, I cannot tear them away from the strange mark on the paper, something like an inverted V—"∧."

All my life I shall never forget that mark. And I am sure that no Russian, no Soviet citizen will ever forget it.

It is a sign that was invented in Berlin, at Badensche Strasse 51, where the German provost marshal, under the control of the German Supreme Command, had his headquarters. The Supreme Command has sanctioned this sign and given instructions for the issuing of the order which I have before me—an order to brand Soviet prisoners of war, those who have the misfortune to fall alive into the claws of the Germans, with an indelible mark carefully described in great detail in the document: an angle, open at the base, of approximately 45°, with sides of 1 cm. in length—"∧."

A brand! In ancient, forgotten times, slaves were branded. Tyrants branded their soldiers. The branding of criminals was regarded as an antiquated legal practice even under absolute monarchies. Criminals have long been relieved of this disgrace by all civilized nations.

Only cattle were branded. Herds of horses were branded on their cruppers, cattle on their necks and haunches, so that one herd could be distinguished from another, so that people would know to which stud a foal belonged, or which dairy owned a calf.

Adolf Hitler, Commander in Chief of the German armed forces, has ordered all his police, gendarmes, special police, S.S., to place all Russians in their power on a level with cattle! It is not enough for Hitler that he makes slaves and convicts of prisoners of war. Not enough that he uses prisoners to pull ploughs. He wants to make his captives the equals of cattle in every respect by

burning and defiling their bodies with his fascist brand.

Moreover, no fuss is to be made about the whole dirty business. Point three in the order says that it "is not a medical measure." The Germans should not think that burning human flesh is the business of doctors or medical personnel. Hitler has so many wounded on the Eastern front that his medical staff is insufficient. Any policeman or any gendarme may brand a Russian. It does not matter if this makes the prisoners ill. They are used to that—they are scarcely alive, anyway.

Then another point—they must not waste too much time on this procedure! Point six of the order says that "the application of this measure must not interfere with the employment of war prisoner labour." This means that the disgraceful branding of those prisoners who fell into the Germans' hands before the order was issued will be done wherever they happen to be, in war prisoners' camps, in the factory, in the fields, on the road, in the open air, in view of all. Those who are taken prisoner by the Germans "in the operative zone of the commander of the Wehrmacht in the East and in the Ukraine, and of the Army Command in the Governor General's Province. . ." will be branded according to the order.

There is a Russian proverb: "you know the master by his brand." In the brand placed on Soviet prisoners of war the hand of the hangman is to be seen. It is the brand of dishonour for Hitler's cut-throats. It does not disgrace him whose flesh has been scared by the touch of the red-hot branding iron. It disgraces the masters of the "new order," it disgraces Hitler's rule in unfortunate Europe.

This is indeed the brand of Hitler Germany! The brand of her eternal shame.

The mark of shame will not be forgotten even when the last branded war prisoner dies. Our children and grandchildren will remember the German's mark of shame—the inverted V.

CONSTANTINE FEDIN

VICTORY-MAKERS

We had the luck to be witnesses of the successful engagements fought by the Red Army on a sector of the Orel front. Our troops' assumption of the offensive came as a surprise to the Germans. In the initial hours of the battle the nazi commanders felt confident enough. They were particularly encouraged by the knowledge that in this sector they had over a year and a half to build up solid well-thought-out defences. Crack troops manned the forward lines.

Our officers and men knew what terrific difficulties they were up against. The first defence belt consisted of five lines of trenches with a well-developed network of communication trenches. Barbed wire entanglements fixed by steel stakes—for strength and speed of erection—protected each of the first three lines. The second belt consisted of three lines of trenches connected by villages turned into strongpoints. After that came a third belt, while deeper still ran more and more defence lines on heights, in deep ravines, and along rivers with steep precipitous banks.

To this you must add mine-fields. Invisible, a menace at every step, they were laid out with particular density at the first defence belt. Here mines were laid both before and behind the barbed wire. It was all arranged with great cunning. The main body of anti-tank mines were laid between the first and second trenches, so that our infantry could not clear them beforehand. Anti-tank mines were even laid on the trench parapets. The Germans wanted Russian earth to kill Russian men.

They thought out something new in defence tactics—the memory of Stalingrad had made them cautious. They are less inventive nowadays in attack than in defence. A mobile armoured defence—that is the new invention of the Germans on the Orel front. They placed their tanks and their huge, heavily armoured "Ferdinand" self-propelling guns running on crawler treads in concealment on the further slopes of the heights.

When our men attacked, the German infantry stayed in their trenches, while from behind them the tanks and "Ferdinands" emerged at top speed opening up fire at the Russian tanks and the attacking Russian soldiers, then immediately hiding again, diving behind the crests of the hills—elusive, wandering armoured monsters.

We must include another innovation in the German panzer defence. This is slung on wheels but can be rapidly dug into the ground. It looks like an iron crab. This is a new German stunt. Now it is at our disposal, so we are in no hurry, and shall postpone our story about it.

And so in the initial hours of the battle the nazi generals were fortified by the thought of the impenetrability of the German defences of 1943. Later on, however, things took a very bad turn. Neither the serried lines of trenches, the barbed wire and steel stakes, the cunning mine obstacles, the German defence tactic with jack-in-the-box iron monsters, nor the iron crabs could stem the attacking Russians.

While the Germans were building the defences our people were studying them. Suvorov adhered to the impossible: he took Izmail after his men had been trained by storming models of the Izmail fortifications. In 1943 the Russian generals saw to it that every company commander knew which trench he was to take, what its contour was and so what form his fighting formation must assume in attack. No doubt, some young inexperienced lieutenants grumbled when they were made to sweat at attacks on models which were precise reproductions of the German defences. It was a boring job; but in the present battle lieutenants have felt grateful to their generals. In their turn Red Army men under fire now remembered gratefully the severe demands of their lieutenants. The Red Army entered the lists armed with knowledge accumulated by diligent training. They stove in the Germans' defences with valour and intelligence. Action to meet all contingencies that might arise in battle had been worked out down to the last detail till it became practically instinctive reflexes. Encountering a strong barrage, the infantry did not take to the ground but dashed ahead in order to get out of the zone of fire. If the tanks for some reason or other lagged behind, the infantry did not fall into confusion but drove forward knowing quite well that a moment later the German guns would open up at the lagging tanks. In this way the infantry escaped undue losses even under terrific fire. To all the difficulties of battle the infantry responded by one movement: forward! The Germans had hardly time to drag themselves to their feet, deafened and stunned by the tornado of the preliminary barrage, when the infantry burst into their trenches. At the same time guns hauled by traction engines dashed straight at the Germans to fire point blank. And the German defences rocked and crashed, and the smart, youngish Russian general said with admiration:

"What men! If there's fire—they go forward. If there are no corridors through the mine-fields—they go forward. Tanks ahead—they go forward. The tanks lag behind—they go forward just the same. Ours is a golden infantry, made up of such men!"

The artillery and the infantry are the victory-makers in this battle. Lieutenant-colonel Velichko's men assaulted a strongly fortified height and were held up by a tornado of fire. Velichko informed by phone: "Hard to make headway. Intense fire from height. Request you to silence it by artillery." The Russians tireless guns responded at once by fresh salvoes, almost cutting off the crest of the hill, and at 2 p.m. Velichko informed: "Have occupied height, are pushing on!"

I saw that height afterwards. One of the nazi general's best observation posts was situated there. Here too, dug into the ground, were the latest iron monstrosities of German war industry. At first we took them for tanks, but they were something different. The wall of the offensive is driving ahead, and now we can at our leisure make a detailed inspection of the iron crab. German prisoners call it an armoured mobile gun post. It is a steel hood slung on wheels and drawn by a traction engine. At the desired point the wheels are detached and the steel hood is tipped into a pit dug beforehand. Only the oval, forward protruding cone of the armoured turret remains above ground. There

is a machine-gun loop-hole in front. Above, two telescopic sights stick up. You can enter the turret through an armoured door, which closes hermetically. Let us go inside. Right before us is the stand of a machine-gun, a small wireless receiver and a ventilation pipe for pumping out exhaust gases. Along the sides run two benches, from each of which protrude pedals of the cycle type. Pressing on a pedal with your foot, you pump out the gases. It is a ventilator! Over here are two spare telescopic sights, a box for cartridges and some small iron shelves. The armoured crab may serve both as a gun post and as an observation post in the zone of fire.

General Kolpakchi's men captured quite a number of these crabs. The vicious innovation of the German defences could not stand up to the storm of the Russian offensive. They rocked and crashed. The Germans began to surrender by the dozen, by the hundred: they are being escorted over territory which for practically two years they have regarded as theirs. Now it fills them with fear. Just as it was, so it has remained Russian. There are too many prisoners; no time now to examine them all. The lively, quick-moving commander tells the reconnoissance men.

"What's the good of your oberleutnant to me? He's been sitting in the rye for two days. Just for historical interest? All he can tell us has grown old while he was still in the rye. But you just trot along that N.C.O. from the 'Ferdinand.'"

The battle goes on. Artillery salvoes roar.

EUGENE KRIGER

The Orel direction, 28th July.

SOVIET SCIENCE AND WAR

Amongst the fatal mistakes and miscalculations made by the nazi strategists in their plan of assault on the Soviet Union must be included their arrogant underestimation of Soviet science and technology.

The animating spirits of the invasion believed that they had taken everything into consideration and reckoned confidently on scoring a swift and complete victory. One thing, however, the main thing, they failed to take into account—the attitude of Soviet people towards their country. A wave of patriotic enthusiasm swept over commander and soldier, worker, peasant, engineer and scientist alike, and the enemy found himself up against something vastly different from what he had expected.

Only after the war shall we be able to assess the full extent of the part played by scientists and engineers in making possible the victories of the Red Army. As will be readily understood, the conditions imposed by war prevent the publication of many interesting scientific facts and of many of the glorious achievements of our scientists. The lists of Stalin Prize winners, however, and those of scientists and engineers who have been awarded orders for work in the sphere of defence, tell of the exceptionally active part they have played in the organization of military operations.

The role played by science and industry in modern warfare does not call for lengthy explanations. For a thousand years man has been acquiring a mastery over the methods of production on the basis of the development of industrial technology. In matters of warfare the changes have been particularly rapid and sweeping. Since the outbreak of the present war, there has been a tremendous development of science and technology in all the freedom-loving countries. Scientists and engineers, in unison with the whole people, have mobilized all their forces and resources in defence of their countries against the dark forces of tyranny, for the defeat of the enemy.

Whence did the Red Army obtain its vast reserves of up-to-date arms and equipment? The foundation for producing these reserves was laid during the first years and from the very first months following the October Revolution of 1917. Even during the difficult period of the Civil War scientific and technical research centres, laboratories and institutes were organized with astounding rapidity.

Pre-revolutionary Russia prided herself on her science and her famous scien-

tists. The country which produced Lomonossov, Lobachevsky and Mendelyeev had long since shown the world that "Russian soil could also give birth to its own Platos and its own Newtons with their searching minds" (Derzhavin).

A distinguishing feature of the new phase in the development of our science and industry, the post-revolutionary phase, is the breadth of its scope. A whole army of young specialists, numbering tens of thousands, has been drawn into scientific work which was formerly engaged in by individuals or small groups, or at the very best by some few hundreds of enthusiasts. In a short time huge research institutions have grown up, working on general or specific problems. Now, for the first time, we have numbers of specialists in almost all the more important branches of science and technology. In place of the former isolated islands of scientific thought we have established an unbroken scientific-technical front. Science has become organically linked with the needs of life itself, with industry, farming and war.

This extension of the scope and the penetration of science in all aspects of life has made possible the tremendous help which science has been able to afford the army at the front in the present war against Germany. The timely preparedness of Soviet science and the patriotic enthusiasm of our scientists are the factors which make Soviet science so important an element in the victories of the Red Army.

I well remember the first days and weeks of the war. All the thoughts and interests of our scientific institutions and laboratories turned unhesitatingly from everyday problems to grapple with questions raised by the war.

Physicists engrossed in problems of the structure of the atomic nucleus or the nature of cosmic rays, without any compulsion, without wasting a moment, immediately transferred their knowledge and ability to problems of ballistics, aerodynamics, war acoustics, etc. Experimenters began to search for, and found, important war-time uses for the delicate and sensitive instruments and methods used in studying the physics of the atomic nucleus. Specialists in the sphere of spectroscopy turned from problems of molecular and atomic structure to the introduction of an extensive scale of highspeed methods of chemical spectral analysis in war factories. The result was that the analysis of metal castings, samples and manufactured articles was carried out at an astonishingly rapid rate. There are some factories where the usual methods of chemical analysis have been dispensed with as unnecessary.

Chemists formerly crushed the sample taken from the furnace, went through the long and tedious process of analysing it, determined the proportion of the various components it contained, in order to decide whether or not the sample taken answered certain industrial requirements. All that is now necessary is an ability to use the spectroscope in order to determine the quality of the metal by the presence or absence of certain lines in the spectrum. This method can also be applied to quantitative analysis without any particular difficulty. Analysis of metal goods and alloys which formerly took several hours can now be carried through in a few minutes. Although some difficulty was experienced in trying to introduce this method before the war, it has now been extensively developed and is in use everywhere, and in order to satisfy the growing demands of the country the research institutes themselves have begun to help with the manufacture of the hundreds of instruments required by industry in time of war.

The army at the front makes heavy demands on the opticians. The air forces require new, intricate and exceptionally large photographic lenses, but research workers, designers and lens makers have been able to satisfy these needs by working in close collaboration with one another. The production of lenses for aircraft cameras, incidentally, involves extremely accurate work. The modern aircraft camera, it must be remembered, employs a lens unit consisting of a large number of separate lenses of considerable size. The latter have to be made of special kinds of glass, and special care is taken to ensure its conforming to standard and possessing certain definite optical qualities. In order to give even an approximate idea of the work involved, we need only mention the fact that the lenses have to be set in position with great accuracy, the spaces between them being measured in hundredths of a millimetre.

The practical demands of a rapidly growing war industry often border on the fantasy of a Jules Verne and sometimes even surpass it. The constant improvement of artillery that has been going on since the beginning of the war, for instance, has faced our scientists and technicians with entirely new problems. New sights were needed, range-finders had to be improved, all the various optical instruments used on a modern gun had to be remodelled.

The black-out had given rise to a number of new problems in lighting methods, all of which have been solved. Formerly nobody was interested in the study of natural lighting by night. We are now studying even the weakest sources of light, and since the war began a new branch of science has sprung up round the problem of natural lighting at night. New electric fittings have been designed for use during black-outs, luminous paint is extensively employed, etc. Our physicists and opticians have done a lot of practical scientific work organizing the night lighting of cities, wharves and stations in areas at or near the front.

Scientific workers have been cooperating with the army in this work and, in so doing, have directly participated in difficult military operations.

The same may be said of the war work of scientists specializing in acoustics. Acoustics is a science that few were interested in thirty years ago; it was regarded as a science requiring great mathematical precision but of little use to anybody; in the present war, however, acoustics is of great significance. In this respect it is sufficient to point out that mines exploded by sound are being widely adopted in practice. This alone made it necessary to mobilize all scientific workers who specialize in acoustics.

It would be difficult to give even a bare list of the various ways in which electricity and magnetism are used in warfare. We need only mention the huge field covered by the telegraphic, telephonic and radio services, magnetic mines and instruments for combating them, in order to give some idea of the extent to which physicists and electricians are participating in the present war.

The defence industry and the front are presenting Soviet chemists with a continuous stream of demands. Ammunition, the endless diversity of chemical raw materials for industry, the problem of substitutes, drugs etc.—all these problems are occupying the attention of our chemists, who have succeeded in discovering much that is both new and important in the course of their work.

Geologists and botanists are working hand in hand with the chemists seeking new mineral and vegetable raw materials. The increased importance of food supplies in war-time confronted specialists in agriculture and livestock raising with a number of extremely important problems, many of which have already been solved.

The struggle against the cannibal ethics of fascism is also of paramount importance in the war, and, for this reason, the humanities, particularly history, have been mobilized, no less than the natural sciences and technology, to combat them.

The activities of our scientists take on the most varied character. Many younger scientists are working right at the front, in the air forces, the artillery, the signal services and hospitals, etc. Scientific institutes remain constantly in touch with members working as specialists at the front. It often happens that scientists return from the front to continue work in their own laboratories on the solution of some technical question connected with the war or to get supplies of instruments.

For example, one of the oldest scientific workers of the Institute of Physics of the Academy of Sciences has been attached to the signal service at the front since the early days of the war. He is personally in charge of the radio installations of a number of Red Army units. But whilst working at the front he has by no means given up his research work and recently provided his Institute with the task of perfecting an instrument for testing field radio-stations. His colleagues carried out the instructions of their comrade and took the new instrument to the front in order to test it under field conditions.

A new instrument of great value in reconnoissance work was recently constructed by the workers of another research institution. They themselves took their new instrument to the front and there, in the fighting zone, under real war conditions, tested it, discussed its merits and demerits with army men and taught

reconnoissance troops how to use it on the spot.

It would be possible to quote many such examples. All the work of our scientists is done in a spirit of fraternal collaboration with the front. Scientists, bringing ever new technical inventions to the front, are equally well-known to our seamen, airmen, gunners, signalmen, mortarmen and others. There have been many famous instances of heroic work on the part of research workers at the front, and many of our scientific bodies hold sacred the memory of members who have fallen on the field of battle.

The occupation of a number of districts of the Soviet Union by the fascists has compelled many scientific institutions to evacuate, together with industrial enterprises that were situated in threatened areas, to the East.

What were once huge institutions now have their temporary homes in distant parts of the U.S.S.R., in little townships, amidst forest and swampland. The staffs of such institutions, which often consist of over a thousand workers, have taken on all kinds of jobs—they have helped lay down water mains, build power stations, dwelling houses, laboratories, workshops—and in a very short time have created the necessary conditions for carrying on their work with the greatest possible energy. Scientific work is being carried out on a large scale in quiet towns, where, at the same time, the manufacture of arms and equipment, invented and designed by Soviet research workers, is being organized. Normal scientific life has not come to a standstill, meetings, lectures and discussions are still held, scientific journals are still being published, and candidates for various degrees still read their theses in public.

From these remote spots far in the rear many scientists have left and are continuing to leave for the front with their new inventions. From the direction of the front a similar stream of scientific workers crosses them on its way to the interior—the front sends its envoys to the new scientific centres with new demands and problems.

During the past two years many scientists have been sent to work in industry, in factories, workshops and laboratories. Factory buildings were designed and built with their help,, workshops were organized, the production of new articles was mastered and new methods of testing were introduced—methods which have not infrequently saved the country the expenditure of many millions of roubles. It is difficult to estimate and adequately appreciate the help which science has rendered the war industry in this respect.

The war is not yet over, the decisive battles are still ahead. Soviet scientists are prepared to continue working at their important tasks with ever greater intensity until the end. They believe in victory and are sure that the war will end with the defeat of the enemy. They know well that the era of peace which succeeds the war will confront them with tasks no less formidable, the tasks of reconstruction. But the magnitude of these tasks and the difficulty of their solution, far from frightening our scientists, encourage them. For the true joy of the scientist lies in his love for his country and his people, and the keen fascination of his research work springs from the fact that it is done for the benefit of his native land.

Academician S. VAVILOV

LEONID SOBOLEV

SAILOR-SOUL

This name, jestingly but affectionately given to the sailor's striped jersey, and long a part of naval vocabulary, has acquired new meaning in the Great Patriotic War, a meaning which is both penetrating and heroic.

In the dusty trenches at Odessa, in the tall pine forests near Leningrad, in the snow-drifts at the approaches to Moscow, in the dense undergrowth of the wooded mountains near Sevastopol—everywhere I saw the dear blue and white stripes of the "sailor-soul" through the open collar, unbuttoned as if by accident, of the khaki greatcoat, cotton-padded jacket, sheepskin coat, or tunic. It has become a tradition, an unwritten law, to wear this jersey under any uniform the seaman wears in war-time. And like every tradition born of the war, the "sailor-soul" means a great deal.

It is a practice which dates back to the days of the Civil War; it originated with the lion-hearted sailors of the Revolution, that whenever grave danger threatens at the front, the Red Navy sends into the marines every man capable of fighting on land, and the marines meet the enemy in places where the situation is most critical.

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.

The sailor-soul stands for resolution and ingenuity, for stubborn daring and unwavering fortitude. It is the cheerful gallantry, the contempt for death, the age-old fury that is the sailor's, his burning hatred for the enemy. The sailor-soul symbolizes sincere war-time comradeship, readiness to save the wounded, to help a comrade in battle, to shield the officer and commissar with one's own body.

The sailor-soul stands for the self-respect of men whose ambition is to be first and best everywhere. It is the remarkable charm of a man, cheerful, confident in himself and successful, perhaps slightly inclined to self-admiration, to a passion for the spectacular, for glamour and witticism. But there is nothing bad in these "slight" departures. This exultation, this slightly deliberate affectation can be traced to one source, a reason both good and simple: pride in one's sailor's ribbon, in the name of one's ship, pride in the name "Red Navy man," with its halo of glory of the legendary exploits of the sailors of the Civil War.

The sailor-soul stands for a great love of life. A coward does not love life, he simply is afraid to lose it. A coward does not fight for his life: he merely tries to preserve it. The coward is always passive, and it is precisely the lack of action that seals the doom of his pitiful, useless life. The brave man, on the contrary, loves life passionately and actively. He fights for it with the courage, the tenacity and the ingenuity of a man who knows well that the best way of surviving in battle is to be braver, more ingenious, faster than the enemy.

The sailor-soul is the striving for victory. The power of the marine is irresistible, persistent, purposeful. That is why the enemies refer to marines fighting on land as "black cloud" or "black devils."

When they march into attack, they are resolved to defeat the enemy at all costs. In defence they hold on to the last man, amazing the enemy by an incredible fortitude which he cannot understand. And whenever marines die in battle, their very death strikes terror into the enemy, for departing this life the marine takes with him as many enemy soldiers as he sees before him.

In this daring, brave and proud soul of the sailor is one of the sources of victory.

FEDYA WITH HIS NAGANT

During the strenuous days of the push on Sevastopol, reinforcements arrived at the front from the city. Sailors from the port and the base, young volunteers and elderly workers, wounded men who were convalescent (or who pretended to be so), everyone who had any fight in him, scrambled into trucks, sped down the mountain road under the shower of bursting shells, and jumped into the trenches.

On that day the 3rd Marine Regiment lost count of the German attacks. After the fifth or sixth assault the marines themselves launched a counter-attack on the hill from which the Germans were pounding the regiment on the flank. In one of the trenches, from which the marines turned against the nazis their own silent and abandoned machine-gun, they found the body of a Soviet seaman beside the gun.

He had a steel helmet on his head and wore a camouflage tunic. But when they opened his collar to look for any identification papers that might be on him, they saw the familiar blue and white striped navy jersey. Silently the sailors removed their hats as their eyes took in the scene of the unequal battle.

All around were nazi corpses, the whole machine-gun crew and others who had evidently run up to their rescue. A German bayonet was thrust in the breast of an N.C.O. In his outflung hand the dead sailor clutched a German grenade. An enemy tommy-gun which had been emptied into the nazis lay alongside. An unloaded Nagant was slung at his belt.

It was then that someone said softly:

"That must be him... Fedya with his Nagant..."

He had made his appearance in the 3rd Regiment just before the counter-attack, and his companions remembered his name just because of the Nagant which had given rise to numerous jokes in the truck. He had dashed into the fray straight from the truck, catching up with the men of the 3rd Regiment. At first they could see him ahead, flourishing his Nagant. He had shouted something, turning round, and his young face was ablaze with the furious ecstasy of battle. Later someone noticed that a German rifle had appeared in his hands and that he was rushing ahead alone, bayonet at the charge, towards a machine-gun nest.

Finding him here now, near the machine-gun that he had captured, among some dozen dead nazis, the seamen realized what this unknown Black Sea sailor, who had thus gone down in the history of the defence of Sevastopol as "Fedya with his Nagant," had accomplished in the fighting.

They never learned his name; his papers were so blood-stained that they were undecipherable. His face had been disfigured completely by a point-blank shot.

Only one thing they knew about him: he had been a sailor. This was proved by the blue and white striped jersey under which had seethed an angry sailor's heart. From his hardy body his courage and fury had made it boil over.

THE RADIOGRAM THAT WAS NOT SENT

Disaster had overtaken the "marine hunter," a small cutter. It had been despatched on a night mission to an enemy-occupied section of the coast. On the way it ran into dirty weather. It made its way through snow, blizzard, and high seas buffeted by the raging wind. It became coated with ice, and chipped off the ice. It shipped water, and pumped it off. But it carried out its mission.

When it turned back, the wind changed, and once again the cutter ran in the teeth of a gale. The storm necessitated the use of extra fuel, and later a wave had flooded the petrol tank. Now the cutter was being carried back towards the enemy-occupied shore.

It sent out an S.O.S. and fell silent, as the motor of the radio-transmitter refused to work on the mixture of petrol and water.

The cutter was dying like a human being. First its legs went dead; then it became numb. But its hearing still continued to function. And through the air it heard its own call signal and received an alarmed radio-message asking for its exact bearings, as it was extremely difficult to find such a small cutter in the great expanse of the Black Sea.

For two days the seamen heard this search, but were unable to reply.

Meanwhile life went on aboard the cut-

ter. First of all, First Lieutenant Popov, its commander, solved the problem of food. The wind might change, in which case the cutter would most likely drift south for as long as a week, or even two. Popov ordered that as much herring and bread be issued to the men as they wanted, and that there be no stinting on the use of fresh water, of which there was a plentiful supply. His calculations were justified. Towards evening, when he asked whether it wasn't time to start preparing dinner, the seamen, glancing down at their water-bloated stomachs, replied that they weren't hungry yet and that they might as well save the canned food for the time being.

Two men were constantly on duty in the galley, as on a watch, and stood there with their feet planted wide apart, holding a pail in their hands. They tried to hold it so that it would not swing when the ship rolled. Here another of the commander's plans justified itself: the petrol in the pail, "isolated from the rolling," separated from the water. It was carefully decanted, another pail was filled with the mixture, and once again the men held it in their hands, waiting until the petrol separated. Thus towards the end of the second day they finally obtained enough fuel to send a single brief radiogram.

Popov drew it up in two variations. The first was to be used if the radio began to work in sight of the enemy coast:

"Date. . . time. . . enemy shore visible . . . miles away stop drawing closer every minute stop no way out stop will fight to last bullet blow ourselves up last moment stop shall die but not surrender to enemy alive stop good-bye comrades long live country and comrade Stalin stop commander commissar crew of cutter 044."

But the wind changed and the cutter began to drift away from the shore. For this reason they sent the second variant: its exact bearings and the information that the radio was working for the last time and that the cutter needed help.

Help came in time.

THE DUEL

One night a group of sailor volunteers bailed out on parachutes behind the front, in order to assist the 3rd Marine Regiment in their attack by destroying enemy communications and spreading panic, after which they were to make their way back to their own forces. Among them was Pyotr Korolyov, A.B. He was unlucky: the haversack, which he had slung on his back with the automatic rifle, pliers, grenades and other articles that would be required on land, struck him full in the face when he jumped, and he was knocked out.

On coming to, he found himself falling through a dark void. He just managed to jerk the ripcord when he again lost consciousness until he hit the ground. This second blow brought him to himself. He saw that he was lying on the ground, his face battered, blood streaming from his nose, and to crown everything one of his legs hurting badly as the result of a sprain received in falling. He destroyed the parachute according to rule, taking care to stuff two pieces of the silk into his pocket to use in wiping away the blood that kept streaming down his face, unpacked his haversack, listened intently to the firing around him and proceeded in the proper direction.

He had to walk upright as his injured leg made it impossible for him to crawl, and in addition, every time he bent his head his nose bled profusely. Nevertheless he managed to make his way towards the enemy trenches, cutting two or three communication lines on the way. But by dawn he was completely exhausted. He inspected a ditch which looked suitable, placed his tommy-gun beside him and prepared a few grenades for action, but was so weakened by loss of blood that he fainted again.

He recovered consciousness when it was already quite light. Two nazis were standing at the side of the ditch, one young, the other elderly, and looking down at him. Evidently they thought they were looking at a corpse. Korolyov grasped his tommy-gun, but the disc fell out. The young soldier saw him move and shouting: "A sailor!" ran for dear life. The elder thrust his rifle out in order to bayonet this sailor who had so inopportunely come to life.

But Korolyov seized the barrel and jerked it so hard that the nazi fell into the ditch, while the sailor rolled over on to him.

Thus began the terrible, unequal battle between the sailor, weak with loss of blood, and the strong, healthy foe. Korolyov felt for the dagger at his belt,

but lacked the strength to raise himself sufficiently to pull it out. Thereupon he seized a grenade and began to batter the soldier over the head with it. But evidently he was not strong enough, for the blows seemed to have no effect on the nazi. He felt as if he were dreaming and having some terrible nightmare in which a fatal languor paralysed his every movement. At the fourth blow the sailor's fingers opened and the grenade fell. The nazi seized it and with all the might of a healthy man hit Korolyov over the head.

"I saw stars," related Korolyov afterwards. "But, you know, somehow it not only failed to knock me out, but on the contrary I even came to as a result. . . It put me into such a rage: bashing me over the head with my own grenade like that! . . I don't know where I got the strength, but I went for him like a lunatic, yelled something and cracked out at his hand; he let go of the grenade at that, and I grabbed it again. And then he went for me. . . From underneath I kept cracking him on the skull, but I couldn't move and I had no strength. But he got the wind up and began to shriek so that it sent shivers down my back: like a rabbit. . . I swung at him, but just then the grenade went kaput; the grip came off. And what could I do with my fists? . . At this point he whanged me with something, and I went out like a light again. . ."

When he came to, Korolyov saw that the soldier had jumped out of the ditch, grabbing his empty tommy-gun and leaving his own rifle. When he picked it up, Korolyov realized why he hadn't fired: he was also out of ammunition. Thereupon he rose and flung after the soldier the second grenade which had rolled into a corner of the ditch during the struggle. Once again his weakness showed: the grenade burst too far from the soldier and too close to Korolyov.

Forgetting his game leg, he ran after the soldier: the latter had carried off his rifle without which it would be a disgrace to go back to his own outfit. He overtook him and struck him over the head with the German's own rifle. The soldier yelled and turned. Korolyov threw down the rifle and made a grab at his own tommy-gun, and once again began the unequal match between the strong and healthy soldier whose only weakness was fear and lack of faith in victory, and the staggering, weakened sailor, formidable in his stubborn insistence and desire to win.

They tugged at the tommy-gun, glaring at each other and cursing, each in his own language. Then Korolyov noticed a look of joy and malice come into the soldier's eyes. Glancing quickly round, he saw that the latter was watching a horseman who was galloping towards them. The soldier lifted his left hand from the automatic rifle and beckoned to the rider with it. Korolyov also removed one hand, recalling that he still had his last grenade slung on his belt. He raised it over his head, deciding to wait until the rider came up and then to throw the grenade under his own feet so that both he and his two enemies would be blown up.

"There we stood and waited. I kept looking at the nazi all the time and wondering whether he wouldn't take a swing at me with his free hand. In that case they'd take me alive, because one poke would be enough to put me to sleep. But suddenly the expression on his face changed, his eyes popped and his mouth dropped open as he stared over my shoulder. I wheeled round. The rider was close by. I looked closer. . . and good heavens!—it was Korovnikov of the 1st Battalion! There he was dashing up to us at top speed, the streamers of his cap fluttering behind. . . The soldier dropped my tommy-gun, and off he scurried! Korovnikov polished him off on the run with one shot and came for me. . . As for me, I was completely played out, and down I went for the count again. . ."

It turned out that by morning one battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment had reached the hill. In the bushes they found a waggon and a couple of horses (evidently the two nazis had abandoned the waggon and had been retreating to their own lines when they had come upon Korolyov). Having captured the enemy position, the battalion was getting ready to move on.

Just then the political officer, who was examining the terrain through his field glasses, noticed two men fighting.

"What the devil is that?" he exclaimed, not trusting his own eyesight. "Take a look through your gun sight, it's more powerful than these glasses: is

that really a sailor having a tug-of-war with a nazi? . ."

Looking through the stereoscopic sight of the sniper's rifle, they found it was really a sailor there. The sniper watched the fight closely, reporting all the details to the interested men of the battalion and waiting for a favourable opportunity to fire at the nazi without harming Korolyov. But Korovnikov had already acted: jumping on the captured horse, he had galloped post-haste to Korolyov's assistance.

A FORMIDABLE WEAPON

The bomber was returning from a sortie. It had used up almost all its ammunition in a fight with "Messerschmitts" and had been separated from its squadron. Now it was flying over the Black Sea quite alone in the blue, uncomfortably high heavens.

It was from these heights that a "Messerschmitt-109" swooped down on it.

The first to spot it was the navigator Kovalenko. He fired as many bursts as he could and fell silent. The gunner allowed the enemy to come closer and taking careful aim fired the last of his ammunition. Then he reported this to the pilot.

"I know," replied Popko. "We'll do some rolling."

And the plane began to roll. It side-slipped the tracer bullets just as they were about to bury themselves in it. It dived abruptly, then climbed up. It went into all sorts of turns, commonly considered impossible for planes of its type. So far these tactics had succeeded, and the plane had sustained only a few inoffensive bullet holes in its wings.

Evidently the nazi pilot realized that the plane was unarmed. But most likely he had heard something of Soviet ramming and was wary of the bomber. Now the whole game was for the "Messerschmitt" to get at the tail of the bomber within certain range.

At last he succeeded. The gunner saw the German making straight for the tail, and involuntarily squeezed the trigger. But there was nothing to fire. Only the enemy could fire. It was the end.

Just then something flashed along the whole length of the fuselage. Strange white cylinders were speeding towards the "Messerschmitt." They flew past it, beat against its wings, hit it head on. They got into the airstream of the propeller and burst into great, sluggish bits of shrapnel, glittering in the sunlight, such as had never been seen before. One after the other these fantastic shells flew out of the navigator's cabin.

The "Messerschmitt" went into a steep dive under the tail of the bomber, losing its favourable position immediately. After that it was simple to shake it off, and the nazi soon fell back, apparently wanting to save fuel for its return journey.

The gunner sighed and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"The Jerry's dropped back," he reported to the pilot, and asked with curiosity: "What did you fire at him, Comrade Captain?"

"Nothing here I could fire at him," came Popko's voice in reply. "I was wondering myself what made him duck like that."

At this point the voice of the navigator Kovalenko broke in on the telephone:

"It was me—I gave it to him! I was simply furious: coming up so close, the swine! Who knows, I thought to myself, perhaps he'll take 'em for some kind of new shells."

"Well, what was it anyway?" asked Popko.

"Leaflets. I slung leaflets at him, and I fairly wrenched my arm, those packages are heavy, let me tell you! . ."

And the whole crew, the pilot, gunner and navigator, burst out laughing. It seemed as if the plane were laughing too. At any rate, the wings dipped and the plane wobbled in the air like a person who was reeling with laughter and helplessly flapping his arms with uncontrolable mirth.

At last, when the fit of laughter had passed, the plane straightened out and headed for its base, quite alone in the clear and most pleasantly high blue heavens.

IN HIS STRIDE

The forward slope of Hill 127.5 on which lay the hamlet of Mackenzie, was designated by the cryptic phrase: "Where the Petty Officer, Second Grade, took a ride on a tank."

In one of the battles for Sevastopol at the beginning of March, the 3rd Marine Regiment launched a counter-attack on Hill 127.5. The attack was supported by

the tanks and artillery of the marines. The hill was encircled by three rows of German trenches and gun emplacements. There was fighting at the first row, artillery pounded the top, paralysing the fire of the nazis, while tanks crawled along the slope crushing enemy bunkers.

One of the tanks went out of action, its commander was seriously wounded. The tank rolled down the incline and stopped at the field dressing station. The orderlies were taking the wounded man out of the tank when a tall sailor, with his left arm in a sling that looked as if it had just been made, came out of the bushes and walked over to the tank. Sizing up the situation and realizing that without its commander the tank would have to remain idle, he jumped in without further ado.

"Get going straight up that hill; we can't stop the night here!" he told the driver, and noticing that the latter was hesitating, added authoritatively: "Come on now, get going! I'm a petty officer, second grade, and myself steered a cutter, I take things like this in my stride. Full steam ahead! . ."

The tank sped up the slope. It lumbered over the first and second rows of German trenches, got to the top and for a good twenty minutes danced about there, spinning round and round, sending out showers from machine-gun and cannon, and crushing the nazis in their lairs with its caterpillars. Our shells were bursting right alongside: the artillery did not even imagine that one of our tanks could have gained the top. The tank then slid down the hill at the same headlong pace as it had ascended, and rolled right over to the bushes where the artillery correctors were sitting.

The petty officer, second grade, forthwith made his complaint to the lieutenant:

"Comrade Lieutenant, couldn't the battery shift its fire? I'd have squashed all those Jerries there like bedbugs, but you've got the place covered so that there is no getting out of it. You've ruined my operation. . ."

But when he learned to his chagrin that his jaunt on top of the hill was interfering with the artillery fire, the seaman jumped out of the tank in embarrassment and regretfully running the palm of his hand over the armour murmured:

"Too bad, Comrade Lieutenant, she's a good machine. . . well, excuse me for getting in the way. . ."

And with a flourish of the German tommy-gun which he held in his uninjured hand (and with which he had gone on his trip in the tank) he disappeared in the underbush. And all we knew about him was that he was a "petty officer, second grade." Yes, and we remembered his "sailor-soul," the blue and white striped jersey that peeped through a slit in his jacket, grimy with smoke and blood.

That evening we tried to find him among the men in order to establish the identity of this spirited and dauntless sailor. But the regimental commissar laughingly shook his head:

"It's no use. He's most likely eating his heart out now for not having fought in accordance with the requirements of tactics, and won't make himself known for anything in the world. Yet he certainly did a job up there. The tankmen say he simply crushed one machine-gun nest into the earth. He gave the command to keep spinning round on that spot while he leaned out of the turret and with his uninjured hand fired all around him with his tommy-gun. . . That's the 'sailor-soul' all right. . ."

AND THE MORTAR KEPT POUNDING AWAY

On reconnoissance near Sevastopol three sailors of the Red Navy came upon a German mortar battery. They flung a few grenades into the trench and shot the Germans who attempted to flee. The battery was silenced.

There seemed every reason for going back: one isn't as lucky every day. But the mortar was undamaged and beside it lay several cases of mortar bombs.

"What do you say, mates," said Abrashchuk thoughtfully, "how about us three letting the Germans have a little taste of something?"

He set about pointing the mortar, Kolesnik carried over the cases with the bombs, while the third scout, an Armenian by the name of Khastian, served as loader.

The German bombs flew into the German trenches, and all went well. At last the nazis realized that it was their own mortar pounding them. A shower of shells and mortar bombs began to rain down on the three sailors.

It seemed high time to blow up the mortar and withdraw from the trench. But the sailors noticed that their battalion, taking advantage of the unexpected support given by the mortar, were advancing to the attack. They therefore decided to continue firing so long as their ammunition lasted.

And the mortar kept pounding away at the nazis. German shells kept bursting closer and closer to the three sailors and ever more frequently. They were showered with earth from the explosions, and fragments whistled past their ears. Kolesnik fell, wounded in the legs. After bandaging the wound, he continued to drag the cases of bombs over to Khastian, crawling on his hands and knees.

And the mortar kept pounding away at the nazis, pounding away furiously and incessantly. Once again a German shell roared as it burst right in the trench. Khastian's hand was severed at the wrist. The other two bound his hand with gauze and stopped the flow of blood. He got up, staggering, stretched out his uninjured hand for the next bomb handed to him by Kolesnik, who was crawling on the ground, and fed it to the mortar.

And the mortar kept pounding away at the nazis.

It kept pounding away until the advancing Red sailors reached their trench.

Even the Sevastopol fighters, who had seen about all there was to see, exclaimed at the sight of those three blood-stained sailors—one without legs, the other without a hand, and the third completely covered with blood and earth, who were methodically and persistently sending bomb after bomb over to the Germans.

The wounded men were immediately sent to the rear, while Abrashchuk said:

"Damn it, you've bust up our company! . . Well, then, volunteers, take your places at the mortar. . . There's still a full case here. Aim for the trench on the left, I'm going ahead!"

And picking up a German tommy-gun, he dashed after the attacking sailors.

"THE GUN WITHOUT A SIGHT"

Every ship, as is well known, has some particular curiosity of which it is proud and about which it feels in duty bound to boast to visitors. Either it is some special sort of derrick of unusual outline, resembling a clumsy flying machine and therefore called the "winged bondsman," or it is an out of the ordinary storm passage extending from stem to stern, as on the flagship X., along which its crew swears you can walk in any weather without even wetting the soles of your shoes. Or else it is a modest sailor in his first year of service who turns out to be a world swimming champion, or, the other way around, an ancient ship's carpenter who has been in the Navy since Nakhimov's day.

A naval unit on shore is no different from one aboard ship. And so, the brigade of marines at Sevastopol, under Colonel Zhidilov, also had its curiosity.

This was the "gun without a sight."

So many stories had gathered round it that it was impossible to determine what was actual fact, what simply irrepressible sailors' yarns, what was justifiable admiration, what simply jealousy on the part of the neighbouring naval units because they had not invented this extraordinary gun.

Someone assured me that the colonel had procured the gun from the Museum of the Defence of Sevastopol. Someone else went even further and declared that this "gun without a sight" had blazed away even earlier, with Mamai on Kulikovo Field. But then apparently recalling that at that time fire-arms had not yet been invented, he caught himself up and stated that historically this had not been proved, but that in any case it was, of course, an indisputable fact that Potemkin had brought the gun to the Crimea.

Even more was told of this gun, that it grew together of itself in the night, like the fabled dragon which, when hacked to bits, patiently fastened to its body the severed pieces, cursing when it could not find in the dark the necessary part, its eyes or its right foot. Incidentally, stories of this kind originated from the testimony of German war prisoners, for this was approximately how they spoke about some sort of "deathless gun" at the Italian Cemetery, which they could in no way destroy either with shells or mortar bombs.

All this aroused my interest to such an extent that I made a special visit to the brigade for the purpose of seeing this "gun without a sight" and collect-

ing exact information about it. Here are the authentic facts about this prodigy. On their truth I stake my reputation.

Somewhere in Eupatoria, in the warehouse of the Scrap Iron Works, Colonel Zhidilov came across four guns. This was last autumn. They were quite presentable guns, each mounted on two good wheels, each having a barrel and even a breach mechanism. Their most valuable feature, and the one which attracted the colonel's attention, was the fact that the 76 mm. anti-aircraft shell was just the right size for them, and of these shells the brigade had unlimited quantities. Their drawbacks were that they were rather outmoded (1900 model) and without sights.

The first of these details did not worry the colonel. As he asserted, in war any gun is good for something, the only question is what use to make of it. Since the shells suited the guns and since these guns could fire, they must be used against the Germans and not allowed to rust away idly in the warehouse.

As for the second drawback, the absence of sights and the absolute impossibility of adjusting modern sights to this ancient contraption, that was also ruled out. When the colonel heard complaints about unreliable material, he usually answered with the navigator's wise saying: "There are no bad instruments, there are only bad navigators." And he then proceeded to prove brilliantly that for the purposes to which these guns would be put sights were unnecessary.

One of the guns was rolled out to a vacant space. Amazed at its change of fate and groaning away on its carriage, the old crock turned round and pointed its purblind muzzle at a bomb-wrecked truck, standing some two hundred metres away. The gun-layer, instructed by the colonel, squatted down on his haunches and glancing into the muzzle, as into a telescope, began to issue commands to the men who had grasped the trail of the carriage.

"To the right. . . A bit more to the right. . . Now just the least bit left. Hold it!"

Then the breach clicked as it swallowed a cartridge, and the old gun whooped, surprised at its own daring: the truck had jumped and fallen over on its side.

In just this way all four "guns without sights" subsequently strafed the German vehicles on the highroad near Temishev. They were set up in shelters to cover the withdrawal of the brigade, and they overturned nine truckloads of German infantry, adding a nice little dessert of pointblank shrapnel fire for the fleeing Germans. In the same way they pounded tanks, and in the same way the last "gun without a sight" was working at the Italian Cemetery. The other three had perished in battles and had to be abandoned when the brigade was ordered to cross the mountains, where tractors were needed for more modern weapons. But all the same the fourth gun was brought by the colonel to Sevastopol.

Here it was given a new task, to function as a mobile gun. It would be set up some two to three hundred metres from the German trenches, and choosing a time when the artillery began to plaster the Germans, would add its shells under cover of the general uproar. Small, but vicious, they would land square in the trenches, until the enraged Germans discovered the location of the "gun without a sight," whereupon a regular barrage of shells would be hurled at it.

At night the sailors would dig out their "gun without a sight" from the earth that had showered down on it, harness themselves to it and without undue noise drag it to a new location, even closer to the Germans, digging a reliable shelter for themselves close by. And once again the dumbfounded Germans would be pelted with the accurate by-aimed shells of the deathless gun. This happened again and again. . .

In introducing his favourite to me, Brigade Commissar Yekhlakov said:

"She's a treasure and not a gun! The Germans keep on wasting hundreds of shells on her, but can't get any results. The crew sits in the dugout and has a smoke, and as for this sweetheart, the shooting can't hurt her. Judge for yourself: she's got no sight, no breakable fixtures, no gadgets of any kind. All she has is a barrel and wheels. And the only way to bust her is with a direct hit. Some day there'll be a direct hit, but as for splinters she only whistles at them. Do you see?"

I did.

A PRESENT FROM THE COMMISSAR

We were sitting in the cellar of a ruined café near the Italian Cemetery, where there was something like a club for the men of the 3rd Marine Battalion, and sniper Vassilyev was showing me his score book. It contained nothing but figures. For example, the inscription "14—9 1—2" meant that on the fourteenth Vassilyev had picked off nine men and one officer and wounded two (whether they were officers or men, Vassilyev had refrained from mentioning from a sense of pride: they were misses, a botched job). He told me how he used to come to an agreement with the mortar crew (they would fire a volley into a trench, and he would pick off the Germans as they came running out), how he would keep a watch on the path, how he crawled to his position on the slopes of the cliff. And while he was telling me all this, he kept looking enviously out of the corner of his eyes towards the other end of the "club" room.

There in the shadows an accordion was playing and the commissar was dancing. This was the way he rested.

The commissar was an amazing person, a bundle of energy, a steel spring, always on the go and drawing others after him. Wherever he took me that day, I noticed the men liven up and look brighter, and at the same time a little apprehensive—would the commissar utter those familiar and stinging words: "Having a nap, are you, my lads? Why aren't you poking up the Jerries? Or maybe the war's over? I haven't seen the papers today."

And everywhere, no matter where it was that I saw him that day, he was "poking up the Jerries." Thus he found a target for the mortar crew, waited until they had covered it, dragged the "gun without the sight" over to a new position and was not satisfied till it had drawn the furious but futile fire of the enemy. "Let them waste their ammunition," he thought to himself. He had sent out a scout to capture a "tongue," dispatched the wounded to the rear, and now, tired of doing nothing, was dancing.

"What's your score?" I asked Vassilyev.

"I've been out for a month, wounded," he replied as if excusing himself. "Thirty-seven. . . That is, actually, thirty-five. The brigade commissar presented me with two."

And he told me that at first he had used an ordinary regulation rifle. However, when he had got his tenth Jerry, the commissar, who followed the progress of every sniper, had crept up to him on the cliff and solemnly presented him with a sniper's rifle with a stereoscopic sight. He had stretched out beside him in his shelter, scanning the German forward position and looking to see where he could "poke them up" that evening. Suddenly two enemy soldiers came out onto the path, and the commissar was unable to contain himself. Silently he took up Vassilyev's new rifle and picked them off one after the other.

"Of course, I wouldn't have put them down in my score myself," concluded Vassilyev, "but the commissar ordered me: 'Put them down,' he said, 'for yourself. First of all, I was really too impatient; secondly, it's not my rifle, and thirdly, there's no need for me to keep a score, I've already lost count of them. . .'"

And I recalled the score the brigade commissar had to his credit.

During the December push on Sevastopol, the brigade command post was cut off. The brigade commander was not there (he had been wounded and taken to the rear the day before), but the commissar saved the staff and the whole brigade. He had sent eight dauntless marine tommy-gunners crawling through the nazi line. The post was already being showered with grenades when the eight sailors began to strike at the rear of the attacking enemy, and the commissar with the sailors who had remained with him met the foe with fire and grenades. "It was black with uniforms all around the command post," was how the sailors described the outcome of this battle.

The accordion was silent, and the commissar came over to us.

"Well, done enough talking? Time's getting short," he said as he strode towards the door.

His quilted jacket was unfastened, and, stirred by his breathing, the blue and white stripes of the jersey with which he had never parted since he had first entered the Navy, rose and fell across his broad chest like waves of the sea.

THE "SAILOR MAJOR"

In the fierce autumn battles at the Isthmus of Perekop the small Red Army unit had to merge with the neighbouring detachment of marines. The commander of this joint detachment was an elderly major of the coast artillery. The Red Army men affectionately called him the "Sailor Major." He had immediately earned their liking by his courage, his coolness, his cheerful ways and his indomitable will to victory.

Before an attack the "Sailor Major" would usually turn his sailor cap with the gold emblem back to front. He explained it thus:

"I have two reasons for doing this. First, the nazi snipers won't see the emblem and so they won't take special aim at me. Second, my men, you know, are behind me: I always lead in an attack. Well, there it is, all nice and shiny so that the men can see it: there it is, they say, the commander's in front and that means all's well. . ."

And in a business-like tone he added:

"Now in withdrawing, if it should happen that we have to, the commander should wear his cap properly. The men glance back and it tells them: 'All's well, the commander is the last man to withdraw. . .'"

But once the "Sailor Major" had to change his own rule.

The joint brigade was cut off by the enemy. The enemy ring was drawing closer and pressing the men down to the sea. By night they had occupied their last position, right at the water's edge. Here they dug in, resolved to hold out to the end.

It was hard to say at just what spot on the coast the detachment had emerged in the course of their many days' fighting retreat. The map showed a tangle of creeks, fords, lakes and bays, and all these were thick with the same reeds and bushes. One thing was clear: the enemy was pushing ahead and on either side, while behind them lay the sea. There was no place to which to retreat.

The end was expected to come with the morning, when the Germans would have brought up fresh forces to wipe out the "black devils" whom they had at last bottled up. Meanwhile all was still. The firing had died down. Through the night the wind whistled and the moon shone. Between the reeds and bushes the Black Sea rippled in a broad, free path to Sevastopol, useless now for the detachment.

The great open spaces drew the eyes of the men like a magnet, and practically everyone in the detachment was silently looking out to sea. But whereas the Red Army men turned away from it with bitterness and vexation, exasperated by the barrier that spelled the end of their fighting and the end of life, the sailors, bidding farewell to the sea, regarded it with longing and hope, still trusting that it would not betray but rescue them.

But not a ship or a craft of any kind was in sight on the silvery moonlit waters.

The "Sailor Major" having made his tour of inspection, lay down beside the commissar on a ground-sheet stretched out among the reeds, and his eyes too wandered to the sea. All his life in the service, ever since the Civil War, when he had joined a marine detachment as a young volunteer and broken through to the Crimea with it along this very same narrow isthmus, had been bound up with the sea. Every day for twenty years he had seen it through a gun-sight or range-finder, and later through an officer's binoculars or between the flowers on his window-sill when his family had come to live with him on the coast where his battery was stationed. And now the thought that he was looking at the sea for the last time seemed to him absurd.

Apparently the commissar guessed his feelings, or perhaps his heart too was touched by this moonlit expanse of waters. He sighed deeply and said:

"Yes, brother. . . Beautiful sea! . ."

"Beautiful," echoed the major, and once again they were silent.

There was much that each wanted to tell the other on this night, the last night, as they both realized so well, of their lives. The words welled up spontaneously in their hearts, words that were out of the ordinary and vivid, like poetry. But these words could not be uttered.

In them lay only the past: there was no future. In them lived far off people dear to their hearts; there was no place for those who lay alongside in the reeds confident that these two men were conferring about how to save the detach-

ment. The sea, the beautiful, familiar sea, beckoned them to life with its great expanses, and the path to this life had to be found. But there was no way out, and to each of them so unbearable was the regret for his lost life that if he were to utter aloud the words that rose in his heart, his voice might tremble, his eyes glisten.

And so they spoke of other things.

"What a gale!" said the commissar. "There must be a storm out to sea."

"Must be a storm," replied the major.

And again they were silent. Then the major raised his head and began to scan the sea with such unexpected and lively curiosity that the commissar involuntarily raised his head too and whispered without really believing that there was any hope:

"A ship, is it?"

The major turned his face towards the commissar, and the latter saw in his eyes, sparkling in the moonlight, the familiar cheerful shrewd expression.

"Commissar," said the major tauntingly, "do you really think this is the sea?"

"Well, what is it, a plain or something?" retorted the commissar. "Of course, it's the sea."

"And you a sailor!" exclaimed the major shaking his head. "Can't tell the difference between a pool and the sea! . . If we'd been sitting by the sea, you can bet your life the waves would have let us know it! Understand?"

"I don't understand a thing," said the commissar frankly.

"Well, let me show you. Is your flashlight still working?"

The major pulled the ground-sheet from under himself and threw it over his own head and the commissar's.

When the commander of the machine-gun platoon came up to report that the machine-guns were ready for action, he saw a queer four-legged creature with an enormous head lying on the sand. It was muttering in two voices and rustling paper. Then it burst out laughing with the infectious high-pitched laughter of the major and the deep rumbling of the commissar. One pair of legs was drawn up, and the major jumped to his feet, slipping a map into his dispatch case.

"Dug yourself in, have you?" he asked briskly. "That's fine! Drag all the machine-guns back to the water. . ."

An hour later the men were stealthily making their way through the chilly water, waist-deep, careful not to splash, holding their automatic rifles and guns above their heads. They carried the machine-guns on a sling of rifles, while five machine-guns still stood in the bushes, covering their retreat, the commissar lying beside them.

The sea to which the Germans had pressed the detachment had turned out to be an estuary, calm and shallow. The wind whipped out the streamers of the men's caps over the water, but the estuary was covered with nothing more serious than tiny ripples. The Black Sea proper thundered and rolled nearby, beyond the low sand dunes.

And though this was a retreat and not an attack, this time the major walked ahead, his cap turned back to front. The emblem gleamed in the light of the moon, showing the way to the men, and the "Sailor Major" groped for with his foot for the road to Sevastopol; from time to time he was up to the neck in water just like twenty years ago when he had forded the Sivash and first learned that not every broad expanse of water is the sea.

THE LAST REPORT

From the shore, it looked as if some weird mobile grove of white-trunked trees was growing in the middle of the river. Bright and unsteady, rising from the water and slowly falling back, they kept springing up in the way of the small cutter, and their showy crowns, sparkling through the mist of tiny droplets, showered down metal fruit.

It was a mortar and artillery barrage from either shore directed against the narrows of the river. The cutter, making its way through this forest of splashes, was darting to right and to left.

The captain had been wounded. He lay stretched out at full length on the deck of the wheel-house and was looking straight ahead, guessing by the splashes where the next death-bearing grove would spring up. He kept issuing orders to the man at the wheel behind him, and everyone of his commands saved the cutter from a direct hit. In order to get through this narrow stretch of river and save the cutter, it was necessary to keep darting from side to side,

evading the hits of the enemy. And so the captain kept shouting his orders and the pilot repeated them, and the cutter forged steadily ahead, though changing its course all the time.

But now and again the grove of bright, unsteady trees sprang up right beside the cutter, at times on both sides at once, which meant the target was straddled. At these moments heavy sprays drenched the cutter, and along with the water splinters fell on the deck, whistling and rattling. After one such hit, the pilot failed to repeat the order, and the captain realized that he had either been wounded or killed. Just as he was turning round to him, the cutter manoeuvred in accordance with his order, and the captain realized that all was well and continued to call out his instructions. And even though the pilot did not repeat his orders, the cutter obediently heeded the captain's every wish and zigzagged along the river, avoiding the splashes.

At last the watery grove thinned. Only occasional splashes pursued the cutter. Then they too were left in its wake, while ahead stretched a broad, calm expanse of water. The cutter had made its way through the barrage, and it had become quiet on the river, so quiet that it seemed strange to the captain.

And in this silence he heard a low voice reporting behind him:

"Comrade Captain. . . I can't manage the wheel. . ."

With difficulty he turned round. The pilot was hanging over the helm. His face was pale and bloodless, his eyes closed. His hands still clutched the wheel, and as he slowly slid down and then collapsed in the deck, these hands, still clutching the wheel, gave it a sharp turn. The cutter headed straight for the shore.

The captain seized the wheel and called down from the bridge for someone to come to the pilot's assistance.

When they raised him, he was already dead. One of his legs was shattered with splinters and the deck by the wheel was drenched with blood.

This was the cutter 034. Its pilot was Petty Officer Shcherbakha, a Second Grade sailor of the Black Sea Fleet.

IN THE OLD RAVELIN

This ancient fortress knows everyone who has been in Sevastopol.

Just at the exit from the bay, on the north, stands a stone fort, its high walls descending steeply into the azure waters of the bay. Almost a hundred years ago it saw in these limpid waters the black hulks of the eighty-four gun boats, sunk at the entrance to the bay by the heroes of the first defence of Sevastopol, and the naval guns removed from these ships pounded the enemy from the fort's wide embrasures.

During the second defence of Sevastopol the great-grandchildren of Nakhimov's sailors once again raised over the ancient ravelin the proud banner of Black Sea fame.

The enemy needed this ravelin badly. If they captured it, the nazis could make it impossible for ships and cutters to put out to sea. The ravelin commanded the exit from the bay, and the Germans were trying to capture it in the shortest possible time.

During the last tragic days of the defence of Sevastopol seventy-four sailors were on guard over the bay under the jurisdiction of Captain Yevseyev, Third Grade, and Battalion Commissar Kulinich. They gave the heroic city their word to hold the ravelin and the exit from the bay. They climbed up to the ancient stone walls with tommy-guns in their hands. During the first attack by the Germans the sailors wiped out over fifty of their tommy-gunners and forced the rest to beat a hasty retreat.

Then the nazis hurled bigger forces against the ravelin. Tanks were thrown against the ancient fortress. Hundreds of shells burst against its granite walls. In its day these walls had resisted the impact of the cannon balls of the first Sevastopol siege, but the sharp and powerful modern shells were more than they could withstand.

Attack after attack, head on and from the flanks, with tanks and infantry, one after another rolled up against the ravelin, rolled up and fell away like a wave. And in the interval between these attacks hundred of new shells fell on the ancient fort.

They smashed huge breaches in its walls, crushed the granite, and great clouds of dry stone dust rose in columns

towards the blue Crimean sky. But every time the Germans rushed at the ravelin with shrieks and yells of victory, automatic rifle and machine-gun fire rattled out of this cloud of dust, and the attack was repulsed once more.

The defenders of the fort were few in number, and each man had to fight for a whole company. On the left flank stood a solitary machine-gun and beside it one seaman, Kompaniets. Sixty German automatic riflemen rushed towards the breach that had been made in the wall after a barrage, thinking to break through from the flank. Kompaniets with one machine-gun burst mowed down thirty Germans, while the rest retreated.

The barrage, the attacks and the pressure of the tanks continued for three days. For three days and three nights seventy-four sailors held out against the vast enemy strength of men and material. Behind the broad backs of the sailors was the exit from the bay, ships had to get through and the ravelin had to be held. Had to be. . .

And for three days and three nights the sailors held the ravelin, until all the vessels had left the bay, and not a single nazi passed through the ruins of the ravelin to the clear blue waters.

The walls of the ravelin fell in ruins and the rubble showered down on the sailors. They crawled out from under the stones, shook themselves clear, and once again pressed up against the embrasures, searching for a target for everyone of their bullets. Wounded, they crept up on the stones again, dragging their tommy-guns after them with difficulty, and once more peppered the enemy.

Kuzov, an assistant surgeon, gave first aid to the wounded. He lay on a ruined wall with an automatic rifle and fired at the nazis. Someone called to him. He put aside the gun, bandaged the wounded man and clambered onto the wall again to do his bit in repulsing the attack. Thus he bandaged and fired, fired and bandaged, until a shell, falling nearby, cut short his brave life.

In the water, near the wall of the ravelin facing the city, stood a number of sloops. The men could have embarked on them and left the ravelin. They could have left this hell which seemed impossible to hold any longer. But that would have meant giving the enemy an exit from the bay. That would have meant cutting off the road to those who could still leave Sevastopol.

The sloops lay near the wall of the ravelin in the calm, translucent waters; their crews listened to the bursting shells and to the long drawn-out sentences of the machine-guns. They stood and waited. And past them ships and cutters put out to sea.

At the end of the second day of fighting, two sailors came out of the ravelin carrying a stretcher. On the stretcher lay Groshov, radio-operator, Petty Officer, Second Grade. They had dug him out from under the ruins of a wall that had caved in as a result of a direct shell hit, and had decided to send him across to the other shore. There he lay in his tattered uniform, and through the torn clothing on his motionless body the jersey showed, but the white stripes on it could no longer be distinguished, for they were grimy with earth, with the penetrating dust of the crushed hundred-year-old granite.

At the water's edge he came to, raised his head and glanced at the sloops.

"Come on back!" he said hoarsely. "I'm not dead yet, where are you dragging me to? I've still got enough strength in me to pound those blasted Germans. Come on now, carry me back, mates! . ."

The sailors continued on their way towards the sloops in silence.

"Take me back, I say!" he shouted in a fury, raising himself on the stretcher.

And there was such rage and strength in this cry of the wounded man that the sailors turned just as silently, although they had reached the sloops, and carried him back to the ravelin.

The sloops continued to wait. They had to wait a long time, another evening, another day and still another night. Only at dawn of the fourth day out of the clouds of stone dust rising over the fort came the sailors carrying the wounded and their arms: they had received orders to leave on the last ship.

They made their way to the water in silence, without haste; tattered, covered with stone dust, wounded, they made their way like a solemn procession of heroes, a fierce, inspiring vision of Black Sea glory, grandsons of the Sevastopol sailors who had once built this ancient ravelin.

VOROBYOV'S BATTERY

The AA battery under Hero of the Soviet Union Vorobyov was already well known to the nazis from the days of the December assault. Then the long sharp needles of its guns, accustomed to search for the enemy only in the skies, stretched out over the ground. They had sent armour-piercing shells at tanks, incendiaries at trucks, shrapnel at infantry. With their accurate automatic-rifle fire and grenade-throwing the Red sailors had checked the nazis who were furiously storming the battery that had so unexpectedly sprung up on their road to Sevastopol.

Now, in June, the battery once again covered itself with glory on the road to the city.

This time the nazis hurled tremendous forces against it. Aircraft dived over the battery one after the other. Great columns of smoke covered the site of the battery. But when the smoke cleared and the rain of stones flying up to the very sky fell to earth again, out of the smoke and flame the sharp, long barrels of the AA guns stretched along the grass once more, and once again their accurate shells crashed into the nazi tanks.

At last the guns were demolished. They lay like dauntless soldiers, face to the enemy, their slender barrels extended. The battery was now holding out only with grenades and the small arms of the sailors.

As to how the sailors fought there, as to how they skilfully managed to hold out another few hours, mopping up the enemy, as to what took place on this patch of Soviet soil that still remained in the hands of Soviet people, we need not guess or imagine.

Suffice it for each of us to read in silence over three radiograms sent out by the Vorobyov battery on its last day:

"12.03. We are being showered with grenades, numerous tanks; farewell, comrades, continue to victory without us."

"13.07. We are fighting for the gun emplacements, only there is no one to fight, we are all wounded."

"16.10. There is no one to fight and nothing to fight with; open fire on the command post, there are many Germans here."

And for four hours on end the twelve-inch coast artillery pounded the command post of the famous battery. And if guns could weep, tears of blood would have fallen on the soil from their heated muzzles, which were firing shells on friends, brothers, sailors, men with the true "sailor-soul," lofty and ardent, contemptuous of death for the sake of victory.

TRAINING ONE'S FEELINGS

Washing dishes is known as a rather dirty and irksome occupation. But the captain's tiny mess serving table aboard the destroyer of which more will be said anon, was fitted with a complicated scullery which changed matters radically.

This device occupied the entire right angle of the serving table where the brightly polished brass samovar always stood, puffing angrily, ever threatening to burn one's fingers. The tin foundation of this ingenious installation was crowded with a wealth of wire shelves for plates, pigeon-holes for glasses and a specially suspended net for knives and forks. An intricate system of brass pipes was connected with a rubber hose to the tap of the samovar. Strong streams of boiling water poured over the plates, washing away the greasy and sticky fragments of food clinging to the dishes, traces of compote and canned milk (of which for some reason the destroyer's commissar was very fond).

The dining-saloon "boss" himself, the captain's orderly Andrei Krotkikh, contemptuously leaving the water to do the dirty work, departed to the tiny cabin which boasted the high-sounding name of "captain's drawing-room." And to show that the captain's and commissar's dinner was over, he replaced the white table cloth by a coloured one; meantime the automatic device did a good job. Returning to the scullery, Krotkikh soaped a narrow brush and with the same contempt on his face scrubbed the plates and then, washing away the suds with the hose, shut off both the water and steam. The hot air in the crowded saloon did the rest of the job, and in an hour the shining dry plates were stacked securely in the nests which prevented their breaking

when the boat rocked. And only the steel of the knives and forks required the use of a towel to protect them against rust.

All this intricate automatic machinery was born of the bitterness which gnawed at the heart of Andrei Krotkikh, Red Navy man. He hated dirty dishes because he saw in them the symbol of his unsuccessful life. The young men of his age were preparing to take their places at engine, cannon or rudder, while he had a rather odd war duty to perform: washing dishes. The reason for this was that Krotkikh, brought up on a collective farm in the far-off Altai mountains, had willfully parted with his textbooks in the fourth grade, and so when recruits were selected for naval schools, he was passed over.

True, when the alert was sounded, Andrei Krotkikh was there to help bring up shells to the automatic gun No. 2. But his part in the battle was very trifling: he took the sharp-pointed shells (resembling cartridges of a giant rifle more than anything else) from the case and spread them on a mat near the gun. Another sailor, gunner's mate Pinokhin, was there to feed the gun, and Krotkikh could merely look on with envy, and regret—alas, too late!—the reckless behaviour of his youth. During the very first battle with dive bombers Krotkikh realized bitterly that in such a post he probably had no chance of becoming a Hero of the Soviet Union, and that the "Dawn of the Altai" collective farm would have no reason to be proud of him after the war was over.

It was precisely gun No. 2 that suggested to him the idea of the automatic scullery device. One day, while Krotkikh was washing the dishes, it dawned on him suddenly that plates too could be placed on their ribs, like shells in the tube. This would obviate the necessity of holding each plate under the stream of water, and burning his hands too, and also would make it possible to wash the whole lot at once with a powerful stream of water. He spoiled a mass of wire before his vague idea materialized, and later he learned to his disappointment that it was not new, but had long ago been invented and used in big dining halls and restaurants. This was told him by the destroyer's Battalion Commissar Filatov on the very first evening when, looking into the buffet for a cup of tea, he beheld the "automatic machinery" built by Krotkikh.

There is no cloud without a silver lining; and this disappointment had a pleasant sequel: the commissar began to talk to him, and Krotkikh gave vent to his feelings in a monologue which was a confusion of dishes and the "Dawn of the Altai" collective farm, the dream of becoming a Hero of the Soviet Union, and a certain Olga Chebykina, entirely unknown to the commissar, to whom he could not bring himself to write a letter about the war, in which all he did was wash dishes, and anyway words came so hard and writing had become so difficult a job that he could not even make out his own scrawl. . .

The commissar listened, a faint smile playing round his lips, looking into the shining clever eyes and keenly scrutinizing the broad face with its prominent Siberian cheek-bones and smooth clean skin. He smiled because he recalled his youth when he too, having joined the fleet, was tormented by the same misgivings, when instead of the fighting post dreamed of he was assigned to the irksome, dirty work of cleaning the hold of a battleship then undergoing repairs, how he could not bring himself to write his first letter to his friends and how outrageously he had lied describing distant cruises, storms and his own sailor's ribbons waving from the bridge (of course, he must always be at the captain's side). It was his youth long and irrevocably past which looked at him through these shining eyes, and he fully sympathized that one can't really write to Olya Chebykina about dishes: she is no doubt equally as mocking, as quick and biting of tongue as had been Valya, the textile worker from his native town, in her day.

And it was with wholehearted interest that he began to question Krotkikh about the "Dawn of the Altai" farm, about Olya, about his unfinished schooling; in fact it seemed to Krotkikh he was talking not to a middle-aged reserve officer, not to the commissar of the destroyer, but to a contemporary, to whom he had to confide all the thoughts that troubled him. And the eyes of the

commissar, attentive and friendly, urged him on and on, and but for the Political Instructor Kozlov who walked into the saloon this conversation would have lasted a long time. Pushing his glass away, the commissar had reverted to his former self, as Krotkikh was accustomed to see him: reserved and even somewhat dry.

"You've come in good time, Comrade Political Instructor," he said in his usual tone, speaking slowly and quietly. "And so you've decided that once there's a war on people will develop automatically, that they have neither to be taught, nor educated. . . War, it is said, gives birth to heroes. Of itself, is that it?"

"I don't understand, Comrade Battalion Commissar," replied Kozlov, sensing that something unpleasant was afoot.

"What is there to understand? Thank you, Comrade Krotkikh, you may go. . ."

Krotkikh quickly cleared away the glass and can of milk (lest the commissar should take it into his head to treat Kozlov to some milk), but on going out paused near the closed door; the conversation was apparently about him. The commissar asked whether the political instructor was aware of the fact that Red Navy man Andrei Krotkikh was rather backward in his general education and that he had no chance of advancement. He further asked whether there was not somebody who had come to the destroyer from a university, and named the chemist Soukhov, formerly a student of a pedagogical institute. Soukhov had his hands full with social work, the instructor argued; he was editing the ship's newspaper, and making reports, and certainly had no time for anything else. The commissar was angry. Krotkikh divined this as the conversation came abruptly to an end and silence ensued: when the commissar was angry, he usually sat there silently, slowly rolling a cigarette, now glancing at his companion, now turning away, as if waiting for his anger to subside. Then the cigarette lighter clicked and the commissar said quietly:

"I'm afraid it's you, Comrade Political Instructor, who have no time for thought. Why did you burden Soukhov with all this work? Are there no other people here! . . . You simply don't notice them, that's all, just as you've failed to see this young lad too. Arrange for his studies and look into the saloon once in a while to find out what's on his mind. . ."

Thanks to that evening new prospects opened up before Andrei Krotkikh. The war went on: there were battles, storms, cruises, night fighting and daylight raids by dive bombers, and the insatiable anti-aircraft gun greedily swallowed shell after shell. Krotkikh continued to carry the shells to the mat and to wash his dishes, but he saw everything in a different light now he had the prospect of a future before him: for not far in the offing was spring, when he would enter a naval school. He saw to it that not a moment was lost. Regulating his automatic scullery device with one hand, he held a grammar in the other. Polishing the brass in the saloon, he mentally recited the multiplication table. On duty at the shell cases he kept a notebook in his hands and solved mathematical problems. The notebook was presented by the commissar. Indeed, everything came from the commissar, the notebook, his study and his future.

And this calm, middle-aged man inspired a deep and growing devotion in the heart of nineteen-year-old Andrei Krotkikh.

He was happy merely in seeing the commissar and cheerful when the latter made jokes on deck or in the saloon at dinner. And his face darkened when the commissar looked tired and worried. He hated all those who caused the commissar to lapse into silence and begin to roll his cigarette slowly. It was then that anger swelled in his heart, and one day it found an outlet in an act which made the commissar silently roll his cigarette for a long time.

It happened on an anxious night. The Black Sea gleamed in the pale moonlight, and although the wind was rather mild and the destroyer rocking gently on the waves, it was bitterly cold on deck. The ship was close to enemy waters and any second bombs might be expected to fall from the skies: the destroyer was clearly visible in the moonlight. And the anti-aircraft crew spent the night at their guns.

The commissar came down from the bridge and was making his rounds of

the deck. Apparently he too was chilled to the marrow: approaching the stern where the automatic gun No. 2 was mounted, he suddenly began swinging his arms to get warm.

"It would do you good too," he advised the sailors. "Helps the circulation."

Krotkikh asked for permission to go down to heat some water and serve tea to the commissar and the captain on the bridge. Filatov smiled.

"Thank you, Andryusha," said the commissar, addressing him in the familiar way that he used in their long unofficial chats. "Thank you, my boy. I'm not in a tea-drinking mood. . . And then you can't get everybody warm, and they too are shivering. . ."

He turned towards the gun and began to make jokes, but his glance flitted here and there as usual to see if everything was in place, if the men were at their posts. Leaning back in their seats, the gunners looked up into the lit sky. Sitting with their backs to the wind, the gun setters were there, ready at any moment to leap to their feet and begin to limber up the gun, and the gun commander Sergeant Major Gushchev stood there in his telephone helmet with its tangle of cables, looking just like a diver. The gun was ready to open fire at a moment's notice.

Suddenly the commissar ceased to joke and frowned.

"But where's the second gunner? Comrade Sergeant Major, what has happened?"

Gushchev reported that Pinokhin had asked for leave to go to the lavatory, and quietly whispered to Krotkikh to find Pinokhin and tell him to come at once.

Pinokhin was not to be found in the lavatory. Instead, as he had suspected, Krotkikh found him in the orlop. Comfortably perched on the locker near the action bell, Pinokhin was asleep, having apparently decided that when the alarm went there would still be time to get back to the gun.

As Krotkikh looked at him, his heart filled with anger. He recalled how the commissar had resorted to gymnastics to keep himself warm, how he had refused a glass of tea, and now he was standing up there in the cold waiting in silence. And suddenly, clenching his teeth, Krotkikh swung his arm and slapped Pinokhin.

The incident was investigated in the saloon after the destroyer had carried out its assignment. The commissar was silent, rolling his cigarette, rolling it because of him, of Krotkikh, and the thought of this was unbearable. It seemed to him that his life had come to an end: now he would never again affectionately call him "Andryusha," never ask how much nine times nine was, never again smile and call him a "student of the war faculty. . ." Tears were ready to burst from his eyes, and the commissar clearly knew it. He laid aside his cigarette and began to speak.

His words came slowly and seemed rather cruel. Filatov presented the entire case in a remarkable way. He began by saying that had there been another commissar in his place, Krotkikh would not have taken Pinokhin's behaviour so much to heart. He said that he had long ago noticed Krotkikh's devotion and loyalty to him, but that all this was not quite correct. It turned out that he had noticed how one night Krotkikh had tip-toed into his cabin, closed the bull's eye, adjusted his blanket and stood there for a long time with a smile on his face watching the sleeping man (at this point Krotkikh blushed, for this had happened more than once), and he said that was boyishness and unworthy of a Red Navy man. If Krotkikh were to slap Pinokhin for deserting his post, thereby causing harm to the whole ship, betraying the country, the commissar could understand it. But Krotkikh had started a brawl for entirely different reasons, and these reasons he himself revealed when he shouted that his heart was aching for the commissar, that there was a man freezing on the deck, while this vermin snoozed away in the warm cabin.'. .

Filatov's words were sharp and stinging, and Krotkikh suffered as he listened. The commissar probably noticed it, because he finally lit his cigarette, and Krotkikh, familiar with his habits, understood that he was no longer angry. But Filatov exhaled and suddenly finished:

"You will have to be punished, of course. And I will have to transfer you."

The room seemed to whirl before Krotkikh's eyes.

"Comrade Battalion Commissar, I can't bear to live on another ship," he pleaded. And there was unexpected warmth in the commissar's voice as he said:

"But I have no intention of discharging you from the destroyer. Where would you find another Soukhov? All the time you have spent studying would be wasted. . . No, you will be transferred as orderly to the wardroom. And you may take your automatic device along to that saloon, it will come in handy. . . so that'll be all right?"

And although Krotkikh felt in his heart that it was far from all right, that the commissar did not realize his love and devotion, that life had become a dull, poor thing, and that going to the wardroom was terribly hard, nevertheless he stood to attention and replied:

"Yes, Comrade Battalion Commissar."

This was a real grief. Moreover, Krotkikh never thought that in addition to love there was also jealousy. For the first time in his life he tasted this bitter and painful feeling. Another man would be there now to look after the commissar, another and not he would listen to his jokes at dinner, another and not he would take part in the commissar's heart-to-heart talks in the evening as he drank his tea with canned milk. And certainly the new orderly would never think of hiding the milk from guests, would not take care to feed the commissar during a storm. . .

In his grief, jealousy and remorse Krotkikh grew more mature. He had become more reserved and serious, and, involuntarily imitating Filatov, forced himself to a moment's restraint when anger or offence urged him to immediate action. He had no occasion to roll his cigarette: you could not smoke everywhere. Therefore he trained himself in such cases to lift his fingers in turn (which was even possible when standing at attention).

He saw little of Filatov now, much less than before: at official meetings, sometimes in the wardroom or in the orlop when the commissar came there for a lecture. On deck he always tried to join the group surrounding the commissar, but Filatov addressed him in the same manner as everyone else, and not once did his eyes soften with that warmth and eager interest to which Krotkikh had grown so accustomed, and the absence of which he now keenly felt. And gradually Filatov, a man so close and dear to him, was replaced in his mind by Filatov the ship's commissar. But strangely enough, Filatov was now dearer than ever to him.

This was no longer the strangely boyish and at the same time touching and foolish love which had animated him before. No, this was a new, deep feeling, a feeling of love for one's comrade-in-arms.

The Black Sea showed its treacherous nature: the destroyer dived like a submarine, the deck was covered with icy water and a wet ice crust, but day and night there was hot coffee on hand, a drink of wine and a change of dry felt boots to be had in the orlops. The guards on deck were relieved every hour; and Krotkikh realized that all this was at the commissar's suggestion.

At the small base where they docked for repairs after the storm, a cart pulled up near the gangway bringing eight lambs, vegetables, two guitars, tangerines and cabbage. And people with shaggy caps asked in broken Russian how to present this gift to the brave sailors, about whom the commissar had told them yesterday in his talk at a collective farm.

In every event, big or small, that took place in the ship's life, in conversation with others, in battle and in storm, in the work of the machines and the guns, everywhere Krotkikh felt the presence of the commissar, the influence of his thought, his will, his solicitude.

On one of those capricious days of the strange southern winter, when the sun is scorching hot and the wind blows cold, all the men aboard the destroyer had gone about silent and frowning ever since the morning: news had come that the Germans had taken Rostov on the Don. Their thoughts, heavy and uneasy, took them to the Caucasus, to oil, to the railway that was cut. Men avoided conversation with one another and worked without any enthusiasm. But then heads began to lift, eyes flashed with hope and hatred, hands worked furiously, quickly: Moscow was on everybody's lips; there was talk of the blow to be struck by our troops, a blow prepared by Stalin, a blow which might at any time descend on the enemy, and Rostov receded into its place in the gigantic and intricate scheme of the war.

Krotkikh thought with pride that it was the commissar who explained all this.

He began to understand why the other Red Navy men, who had known little of the commissar in his private life, and rarely met him on familiar terms outside of duty, spoke of him with such respect and affection. He began to understand why everyone of them was ready to risk his own life to save the commissar in battle, that furthermore it was not a question of saving Filatov, a good, honest and attentive man, but military commissar Filatov, the Party's mind and conscience aboard the ship.

As before, Krotkikh stood by the shell case placing the shells on the mat, but did not get any farther. His boyish envy of the second gunner (not Pinokhin, who was handed over for trial, but Trofimov) no longer tormented him, however, as he did not regret that one could not perform a daring exploit at this post. A new conception, the ship, had become firmly and deeply rooted in his mind. He came to love the ship, her power and her men, her steel and her officers, her movements and her name. And even the dishes which he had recently hated so much, ceased to trouble his mind.

This new feeling for the ship as a living, strong and affectionate friend had taken such a profound grip of him that one evening he began to write his first letter to Olga Chebykina.

Nothing, however, came of it. The handwriting was good, a pleasure to look at, but he could find no words to convey this remarkable conception of the ship and his affection for it. He filled a full page with grey, inexpressive words and furiously tore up the letter, contrary to his usual habit, forgetting even to twiddle his fingers. For two days he walked about gloomily, trying to figure out how to describe the ship to Olga so that it should sink into her heart, but it was the ship itself that diverted him from his mental deliberations.

The ship was preparing a landing. The quota set for the destroyer was about fifteen men able to handle tommy-guns, bayonets and mortars. Krotkikh was not qualified for any of these tasks, and the commander of the unit did not so much as glance at him. Krotkikh moved his fingers as usual and passed it off in silence.

Nevertheless, at daybreak, when the destroyer was nearing the coast where troops were to be landed, and the men appeared on deck with arms, and a case of mortar shells was placed on the stern, ready to load it into a sloop, his heart sank within him. The shells lay there in the case in even rows, podgy and familiar, just like the shells of his anti-aircraft gun gleaming nearby; and, of course, there was no one who was better at transporting them from the case to the mortar. He sighed, but just then the destroyer veered and a sharp whistle came from the commander of automatic gun No. 2: two planes attacked, and they had to fight back.

The gun barked angrily, but something like dry peas was heard raining on the deck. Trofimov pitched forward, dropping the shell from his hands, and the gun choked and became silent: the dive bomber fired a machine-gun round. Krotkikh hurried to the gun, and quickly bending over the shells that he had laid out on the mat, stuffed the hungry barrel. The gun once more began to spit fire. His attention was so absorbed by the work and his efforts to get the shells quickly from the case to the gun, that he had no time to think that at last he himself was taking part in battle. A huge pillar of water and smoke rose alongside the ship, and something hissed past the gun. Following the bomb, the plane itself crashed into the water with a howl and roar. Krotkikh merely caught sight of the tail with the black swastika and realized that the German dive bomber, which brazenly swooped down on the destroyer when its gun was silent, was downed after all. But he had no time for either joy or astonishment, for immediately he heard behind him the cry:

"Shells! . ."

He looked back. The case of shells had caught fire and was emitting clouds of black smoke. It seemed as if the shells would begin to explode at any moment. Through the maze of smoke he discerned a human shape dash by, and a pair of hands trying to lift the case, and then the sailor (he could not make out who it was) leaped back. Desperately waving his hand, Gushchev tore the helmet from his head and cried:

"Clear the stern!"

The explosion of some two dozen mortar shells might have followed any second, and one of them would have been enough to destroy the entire gun crew. As soon as the case exploded, thought Krotkikh, the fire would immediately spread to his own shells and then to the munitions dump and to the whole ship, and he resolutely made for the case. At this moment the fourth gun boomed from the stern turret, and it seemed to him that death had already exploded in the blazing case. It was so terrifying that he rushed from the stern in the wake of the orders. The moment's delay when he had stepped to the case had caused him to be left behind, and despair gripped him: if he stumbled no one would help. His knees shook with panic. He made an effort to move, and suddenly in front of him, near the bridge, he saw the commissar.

Forcing his way through the throng which scattered in the opposite direction, Filatov was running to the stern, and Krotkikh realized what he was about to do. A light broke in on him. Two leaps brought him to the burning case, and although his palms were singed he gripped the bottom. The case proved too heavy for one man to lift. Another man was running to his aid. But this second man was the ship's commissar, and he must not be permitted to approach.

He squatted on his heels and seized the glowing hot stabilizer of the nearer shell. For a moment the sharp pain of his scorched palms caught at his heart, but the shell flew overboard. He immediately seized the second.

Perhaps he shouted something. His comrades told him that later: they said that squatting down he jumped round the case, dancing a horrible dance of pain and swearing loudly, senselessly and fearfully. But one after another the shells from the burning case were cast overboard. Straightening himself with one of the shells in his hands, he saw the commissar standing near the stern bridge, close to death. With a desperate effort Krotkikh lifted the half-emptied case. The flames licked his face. He turned it aside and with a terrific effort heaved the case overboard. Then he struck at his reefer with palms no longer sensitive to the fire.

From behind someone gripped him in a strong embrace. He turned round to look. It was the commissar.

"Never mind, Comrade Commissar, the fire is nearly out," he said, thinking that the commissar was trying to put out the fire on his burning reefer.

But when he met the commissar's eyes he understood: it was an embrace.

"2-U-2"

This s how Junior Sergeants Uskov and Utkin were listed in the code of friendly nicknames in the squadron. This nickname was born right under the wing of the plane, while the pilots lingered at the aerodrome waiting for orders. Someone asked:

"And here's another riddle: what should you say? Is or are the yolk of eggs white?"

"Gwan, that's an old one!" everybody cried.

"Well, here's a new one for you: is it 'Uskov and Utkov,' or 'Uskin and Utkin?'"

"'2-U-2' is simpler," said the squadron's navigator in a husky voice; and everybody liked it, even the sergeants themselves.

Hitherto they had been called "tigers," much to their annoyance. The nickname "tigers" had a history which they did not like to recall. True, "2-U-2" smacked somewhat of the circus, but it gave an exact definition of their specialty, emphasized that they were inseparable and carried no offence. They were both pilots, real war pilots, although neither was yet nineteen.

Nineteen. . . A remarkable age! You are not as yet aware of your own strength, and you are confident that you can do many a thing that would give an older person pause. Your heart is still as fiery as steel casting not yet cooled, and bubbling energy is seeking an outlet in action. And all this bursts forth with unconcealed frankness: love, daring, wrath, hatred, all these feelings may be read in shining eyes and swiftness of action.

Before they were given a plane, Paul

Uskov and Innokenti Utkin sulked for two months in a ground crew, and for two months they called now on the major, now on the military commissar, saying over and over again that both had come as volunteers before they were of military age, both had pilot's certificates from the Osoaviakhim [1] club and six independent flights each to their credit. Consequently, they argued, both should immediately get a plane. And every time the commissar took pains to explain to them that everyone must fight at his own post, that this was no time and no place for "taking them for joy-rides" on a war-plane, and that he'd readily send them to school. The major, however, dryly and abruptly sent them back to the aerodrome, and one day, losing patience, threatened them with the guard house for addressing him over the heads of their superiors. They marched in step out of the dugout where the headquarters were situated, without a word. And only when they reached the hangars Utkin said darkly:

"That's where we landed, pilot Uskov. . . Men are fighting, and here we are stuck in the mud."

"Forced landing," replied the other cheerfully. "We'll go up yet, pilot Utkin!"

"Perhaps not up, but out: from the squadron into the infantry," said Utkin with a gesture of despair.

Despite the threat of a "forced landing," however, Uskov apparently succeeded in cheering up his friend, because, after giving headquarters a week's respite, both again appeared before the commissar and the major. This time they asked not for two, but for at least one plane, each pleading not for himself, but for his friend. This was a tactical manoeuvre invented by Uskov, and both agreed that it was a stroke of genius.

"Pilot Utkin was a promising student at the air club, Comrade Major," reported Uskov. "His mother and sister remained behind in Simferopol. . . so that naturally he'll fight well. . ."

Meantime, leaning closer to the commissar, Utkin went on quietly:

"Comrade Battalion Commissar, Paul. . . that is, pilot Uskov, flies like a first class pilot. . . He has two brothers at the front, tankmen. . We wanted to ask to be sent to the trenches, but there's no sense to it, is there? Uskov alone can kill more Germans from the air, can't he, Comrade Battalion Commissar? That's obvious."

"Whichever one of us you choose, Comrade Major," concluded Uskov, rising, "we'll both fight without sparing our lives."

"Like tigers," added Utkin.

"Tigers, what kind of tigers?" asked the major, frowning.

Utkin drew back:

"Just tigers, Comrade Major. . ."

"And have you ever seen tigers in the air? Talking nonsense, that's what you are. . ."

The major's mind was far away from the youngsters and their request. That morning Savelyev did not return with the second flight, while Pankratov barely managed to reach the drome, having received two wounds. This was during the first German onslaught on Sevastopol, and day and night the squadron's planes attacked German columns on the highway, machine-gunned the enemy in the trenches, returning to the aerodrome merely to refuel and get more ammunition. The pilots made five or six attacks daily, came back worn out, and the squadron suffered losses. The major was already opening his mouth to tell them to get out, when suddenly the commissar asked Utkin:

"How many flights did you say you made at the club?"

"Six," hastily answered both in chorus.

"Six, you say?" marvelled the commissar. "I thought it was only five. . . Well, if it's six, that's that. We'll have to think it over. . . Now, suppose you two go outside for a while. . ."

He looked at them, smiling slyly, and both felt their hearts leap within them. The joke was obvious. They turned round sharply and walked out.

For five minutes they stood outside the dugout, speechless with excitement, wiping beads of sweat from their foreheads. At last they were asked to come in.

"We'll give you a plane, one for the two of you," said the commissar earnestly. "And you'll take turns flying it, understand?"

"Yes," they both replied, without as yet understanding how this luck had come to them.

[1] Society for Air and Chemical Defence.

But it soon became clear. The major said he had decided to utilize for active service a "U-2" training-plane used in the squadron for liaison and flights to the rear, just like the one in which they had both been training at the air-club. They were to fly at night to the German front-line, dropping bombs and grenades. The commissar would go up with each separately, test their flying skill, and after this they would be set a minimum time for practising night flying and then receive combat assignments.

"But see to it that you don't fight there like tigers," concluded the major gravely. "The tiger, you know, is a cowardly beast. He goes into attack only when hungry, understand? . . You should simply have said: 'We'll fight,' and every thing would have been clear. Think of it: tigers!"

The friends blushed.

"They read about it in the newspaper," the commissar came to their assistance. "I remember I myself read somewhere recently: 'Our winged falcons swooped down like tigers upon the nazi hyenas.' Regular zoo these writers make of it!"

The major laughed, for the first time that day, and lightly elbowed the commissar towards the door.

"Come on, get your tigers into the plane. . . I'll come and look at them. . ."

It was a hot time; the Germans encircled Sevastopol, and every plane counted, even a training-plane. The commissar's idea appealed to the major, and he himself found time to take the "tigers" on their night flights. Both tackled it with a furious passion which amazed him, and soon the old training-plane which in the squadron was nicknamed the "cart," or even more often the "graveyard croak," slowly took off on its first night "attack." It was piloted by Uskov, while on the second pilot's seat there was a basket filled with small bombs, grenades, "fire crackers" and batches of leaflets.

And every night the "graveyard croak" was heard moaning over the main German line, methodically, at long intervals, dropping grenades and bombs into the trenches. This could not, of course, be called an attack, as Utkin and Uskov proudly described their flights. But, as everyone knows, even a single mosquito may cause a sleepless night. And the Germans stayed awake, listening fearfully to the droning in the darkness, and from time to time bombs and bunches of grenades descended on their heads from the skies.

Both "tigers" were supremely happy. After ten flights they both received the rank of junior sergeant, and but for that biting word which had somehow leaked out of the major's dugout and spread through the aerodrome, everything would have been splendid. This word "tigers" reminded them of what now seemed very distant days, when both were mere youngsters.

Now they were grown up men, real pilots, engaged in an important and serious task which required patience as well as courage, and their romantic idea of a battle as a sweeping thrust has long been replaced by a clear realization that war is hard, persistent, tense and dangerous labour. The German assault had come to grief, and the Germans dug in, without making any headway; every other night one of the friends spent hours droning over the German lines, waiting for a chink of light in a dugout, for the flash of a gun or machine-gun fire, to drop from the dark skies a small but deadly bomb.

This was the skilled job of a night sniper. During the day the "graveyard croak" could not appear over the front, as it would have been shot down by the very first "Messerschmitt." But at night the old training-plane piloted by a youth with a flaming spirit, a heart filled with hatred, and with strong nerves, was master of the darkness over the German trenches. The Germans did not dare to use searchlights on their front-line; they took potshots at the plane, following the sound of the engine, and wasted a tremendous number of cartridges and shells. Sometimes the plane was caught in this scintillating net and then come back with holes in its wings. The friends patched them up, and the following night the plane again dropped bombs persistently, methodically, proving that every weapon is useful in war, provided it is cleverly and boldly employed.

But despite the fact that Uskov and Utkin won universal respect, the name "tigers" continued to stick to them and to be used whenever the two friends appeared; pilots like jokes and good-natured teasing, and to drop such a convenient nickname would have been un-

thinkable. On the aerodrome, by the plane, in the hangars the friends tolerated it to a certain extent. But in the mess. . .

"Dussya, the tigers have come, as hungry as winged falcons!" someone would announce on seeing them appear in the doorway. "Two extra big helpings, Dussya!"

This was the last straw. Dussya was the waitress and an uncommon girl, one in a thousand, most remarkable, clever, attentive. . . however, there is no need to pile up adjectives: let everyone recall all the good qualities that he himself saw in a girl he was in love with at nineteen and multiply all these by two. For the two of them were in love with her, and in heart-to-heart talks about her naturally found twice as many qualities to praise. And so, when "tigers" was finally dropped and a new nickname appeared on the drome both felt greatly relieved, for now in Dussya's eyes they ceased to be boys.

And this was very important. Dussya showed not the slightest inclination to understand that each one of them had long ago (three months ago!) realized how lonely his life would be if Dussya did not link her fate with his. This question was thoroughly considered and decided upon each. It was now up to Dussya to decide with whom of the "2-U-2" partnership she wished to link her fate. The game was played squarely, without any dirty tricks, each taking turns to see Dussya home on his "day off," and Dussya's attitude was equally friendly to both of them.

On these walks it somehow happened that each of the boys spoke not about himself but about his friend then in action, praising him warmly. And listening to all this, Dussya found herself compelled to give her heart to the "2-U-2" partnership as an integral whole: a choice was impossible. Perhaps poor Dussya's heart could have borne up with all this had not her instinct of self-preservation suggested a way out: Dussya fell in love with a third man, not a pilot, moreover, but a sergeant major serving on a cruiser, one which rarely called at the port of Sevastopol. Such is a girl's heart at the age of eighteen: it prefers a vague dream to close reality.

The first to learn about it was Paul Uskov. It was a quiet December evening. The cool, transparent air, rather unnatural for the Crimea, was refreshing, and Dussya's cheeks were charmingly flushed. For the first time Uskov was feeling like talking not about the daring and the remarkable qualities of Innokenti Utkin, but about himself, when a tall man in a sailor's reefer appeared beyond the sentry box, and with a cry of welcome Dussya rushed to the unknown sailor, whose enfolding arms almost hid her from the eyes of the dumbfounded sergeant.

Such an enthusiastic meeting was quite natural because the cruiser had not been in for more than a fortnight and there were all sorts of rumours current about it.

Uskov rushed to the aerodrome. Twilight was gathering, but Utkin had not yet taken off. Nevertheless, Uskov mustered sufficient courage not to upset his friend before the attack, and, asked why he had come back so early, said that Dussia was rather tired and had got a lift on a truck going to the city. He saw his friend take off and remained there to wait for him at the aerodrome.

They spent a sleepless morning in mutual complaints. When dinner time came, they were already wondering what precisely they had seen in Dussya? They decided unanimously that she had always been a heartless girl, light-minded, cruel, hypocritical, and there was nothing remarkable about her... however, there is no need to pile up adjectives: let everyone recall the bad qualities that he at the age of nineteen discovered in a girl who had spurned him, and multiply them by four. For the two were offended, and in addition each suffered for his friend. Such is the heart of a youth at the age of nineteen: from the heights of love it plunges into the deepest abyss of contempt.

But there was no time for suffering: the Germans had begun their second assault on Sevastopol. This did not fit in with the plans of the two friends, because just that week the major promised that while there was a lull on he'd permit them to be trained in piloting war-planes. Now there was again no time for it, and the "2-U-2" continued to take turns in flying to "attack" the main line, which they already knew by heart. And their friendship, which had withstood the test of love, was strengthened and tempered in the grim trials of war.

"2-U-2" had become a symbol of friendship, true, courageous, unbreakable.

The ring of the siege tightened, and as the aerodrome was already bordering on the enemy's main line, the squadron had moved to another, almost on the coast.

This aerodrome was built during the siege by the citizens of Sevastopol. Under fire from heavy enemy guns the people of Sevastopol cleared a rocky field on the cape which jutted out into the sea, the last refuge for planes should the enemy close in on the city. They removed the heavy boulders, levelled the hard layers of the rocky cape. And they spread the rocks removed from the field over the logs covering the reinforced shelters for planes.

Both the field and the rocks were of a strange red colour, like blood.

When the squadron landed on the aerodrome, it was a bright, sunny day. The small rocky field of the new drome cut like a red wedge into the bright blue of the winter sea, and the red stony bulks of the shelters towered over the field like strange monuments of hoary antiquity, primaeval cathedrals built by giants. But they were not built by giants: they were made by the men and women of Sevastopol, by old men and youngsters.

In the clear transparent air the red and blue gleamed brightly, and the sharp clash of colours was grim, solemn and tense. There was nothing to detract from the starkness of the picture, not a single half-tone. Everything was set off clearly, sharply.

The shadows were black with an inky blackness resembling the heavy clouds which hovered over the fighting city. The rocks were bright crimson, blood-red, as if they had been soaked in the noble blood of the city's defenders. The sea and sky were painted a bright blue, the pure virgin blue which refreshes the mind, with the great serenity of space, freedom and hope. And the sun, the eternal, immortal sun, shone in the sky, was reflected in the sea and splashed over the red rock. The generous, warm Crimean sun of rest and health had become a stern and cold planet of vengeance.

Such was this remarkable aerodrome as seen from the air, a monument erected by the people of Sevastopol to themselves, a monument to the courage and tenacity of Soviet people, determined to fight to the end for the city of valour, loyalty and glory: mourning, blood, hope and vengeance.

The squadron had barely landed when a flare soared above the field. Disturbed bees droned in the red stony hives scattered over the field. Droning they stuck their broad silver heads from the heap of rock, their glassy eyes flashing though taking in the scene. Then they pulled out their long strong bodies, spread their hard shining wings, and with a vengeful angry droning scared into the blue sky. The bombers took off on a raid.

The friends, for the first time flying together in their "graveyard croak," looked enviously at them and sighing piloted their "old man" to the edge of the aerodrome. They found no shelter for it, and the first thing that "2-U-2" undertook was to build a refuge.

The care of their plane brought them still closer together, but strange as it may seem, it was precisely here, at the aerodrome of glory, during the grim days of the second assault, that the "2-U-2" partnership met with serious disaster.

This was no quarrel. It was a rupture. And the worst of all was that it occurred in front of a big chief who had come by plane from Moscow.

The general was inspecting the new aerodrome, looking over the shelters. In the major's squadron he asked for the famous "graveyard croak," the news of whose exploits had reached him, and for the "2-U-2" who were cited as an example of friendship. He bent down to the major, saying it was time the boys were recommended for a decoration, that it must be a generous one, and that furthermore it was time to give them each a war-plane.

Thus talking they reached the shelter. It was quiet there, the droning of the planes that took off barely reached them. And in this quiet the general heard irritated voices and swearing.

"You are a toady, you hear? A toady and a worm!" cried a voice. "For two pins I'd lay you out."

"And you are an envious fool, you understand?" yelled another voice. "Think of it, a winged tiger! . . You're boasting, but there's nothing to boast of! Do I have to account to you? I'm a pilot, so I was detailed. . ."

"A pilot, you say, you are? An old leaking boat, that's what you are, and not a pilot!"

"And you won't even make a leaking boat! Standing on the ground's good enough for you!"

The general quickly stepped round the corner of the shelter and there beheld the famous "2-U-2" partnership in all its glory.

Something had clearly gone wrong with the firm. The sergeants stood there red-faced, furious, glaring at each other, clenching their fists. And there would probably been a fight but for the major who (nearly tearing his hair) called them by their names. They turned round, breathing heavily, and with great difficulty controlling their fury, stood at attention.

"Is this the '2-U-2'?" asked the general, hiding his smile. "Fine friendship in your squadron, I must say. And to think that you boasted about it. . . as far as Moscow. . . These are fighting cocks and not pilots."

There was silence, broken only by the heavy breathing of the two "cocks."

"Can you explain, Comrade Major? No? Go on then you, sergeants? What's the matter?"

Utkin stepped forward, and when he began to speak excitedly the astonished major saw before him not a sergeant, a daring and calm pilot, but an ordinary schoolboy, almost weeping with rage. There really were tears in his eyes. Stammering he told how last night when it was his turn to fly Uskov "dropped" in on the major, and told him that he had located a mortar battery and that it would be better for him to go since it was hard to describe its location, and Utkin would not find it; in a word Uskov took off yesterday when it was not his turn to fly. . . Utkin let that pass, one night doesn't matter. But today of course it was his turn to fly! And there was Uskov again brazenly saying that he will fly tonight again, because it was not his fault that he was sent instead of Utkin. . . In short, Uskov was a toady, making up to the command, wheedling assignments for himself, and it was a dirty trick, it was. . .

"That's enough," said the general grimly. "Well, Comrade Major, if they can't share the plane, then don't let them fly. Think of it, here's a war going on, and they start petty squabbles. . ."

The faces of both went ashen-grey, and Utkin took another step forward.

"But this is not a petty squabbie, Comrade Major General," he pleaded desperately. "Please permit me to report."

"Go ahead, report," continued the general as gravely as before.

But this was no report. It was the passionate cry of a flaming young heart, a heart bubbling with daring and eager for battle, filled with hatred for the enemy, burning with the thirst for vengeance and bitterly hurt; it unburdened itself to the command in all its charming, touching, slightly ridiculous but winning beauty. It was still as fiery as a steel casting not yet cooled, bubbling with energy which looked for an outlet in action, and all this burst forth: daring, wrath, offence and passion. . . Nineteen years! A remarkable age. . .

The general listened to his broken speech, looked into his eyes, where he read more than Utkin could tell, and the conquering vast strength of youth, which in anger seizes arms and will yield to no one, stirred his heart as well. He caught himself wanting to embrace this youth like a son, and quietly whisper in his ear: "Fine, sonny, fine! . . Fight tooth and nail for every opportunity to go to battle, never yield to anyone the right to beat the enemy. . . Strike the blows yourself while your heart is young and your arms strong. . . Fine, sonny, fine!"

But he lowered his eyes in which it seemed to Utkin he could already see understanding and sympathy, and said dryly:

"I see. But non-commissioned officers should not pick fights."

Then after a pause he concluded:

"Now, make it up. Right here, in my presence."

The "2-U-2" eyed each other sulkily. Then Uskov, after some hesitation, stretched out his hand. After hesitating a moment, Utkin accepted it. But there was such a sour expression on their faces that the officers involuntarily turned away to hide a smile, and the general waved his hand.

"You fighting cocks! Well, that's that. The plane we'll take away from you. Think it over in your spare time. Perhaps you'll make up your quarrel, after all."

And the plane was actually taken away from them. True, they each received a bomber instead, and both got the new nickname of "cocks." This was more suitable now for there was no longer

any need for the "2-U-2" partnership: each piloted his own plane, flying alongside in one formation.

Nevertheless, "2-U-2" was destined again to resound over the stony aerodrome. It happened in the spring. A lull had again set in at the front, but the "cocks" regularly left every day to attack German trenches, now in broad daylight, with the sun shining, showering the enemy with a hail of bullets and shells. From one such attack Utkin did not return.

Uskov reported to the major that Utkin's plane had probably been hit by a shell, because it began to emit smoke and made suddenly for the sea. He could not follow him because he had to support the counter-attack. He did, however, note that he was headed for the spit of land to the left beyond height 113.5, and that there were no Germans there. If a plane came down at that point, there was a chance of picking him up before the Germans get there (they would of course rush there after the plane).

Uskov furthermore stated that he knew the spit of land. There was no landing room there for either a bomber or fighter. He therefore asked for permission to fly after Utkin on the "U-2" which would have enough room there for landing and taking off. The major granted permission.

Once again the old plane felt the hand of one of its former masters. Obedient to his will, it turned towards the sea. Uskov decided to fly low over the water to avoid being spotted by enemy fighters. Over the sea the engine began to sneeze—a thing that never happened before, when it was in their hands and was taken good care of.

Soon the spit of land came into view. There was no plane, nor man in sight. Uskov landed, stooped the engine so as not to attract the Germans' attention by the noise, and listened. Twilight was thickening into night, and the rocky cliffs over the spit loomed gloomy and mysterious.

"Innokenti! You alive?" he called softly.

In response Utkin crept out from the rocks, his clothes wet, dragging along a rubber tyre.

"Paul? Is it you?" he asked. "I was just wondering who it was landing the cart here. Thanks!"

"Save that for later, now come and turn the screw, or they'll soon begin to pepper us," said Uskov hastily.

"There's no one here. If there had been, I'd be dead. But as you see, I'm alive. Only wet. I dumped the plane into the sea to prevent it falling into their hands."

He turned the screw, but the engine refused to move.

The pilots spent a good hour fussing with the motor, recalling all its whims. But the old plane, which at one time never failed them, had apparently grown feeble in strangers' hands. The engine would not move.

They sat on the shore, thinking. It was almost dark.

"Well, Paul, this means we'll have to swim just the same," said Utkin.

"Bit too far, perhaps," said Uskov. "And the water's cold too."

"We'll be picked up at sea. And I've got the tyre too."

"Dived for it?"

"Sure. Recalled that I had a spare one in the cockpit... With this tyre we'll probably get there."

"Perhaps we will," said Uskov. "Well, swimming it is!"

They inflated the tyre and stepped into the water. The water was unbearably cold, and they would hardly be picked up before morning. They swam for more than thirty minutes when Uskov began to swear:

"Innokenti, and why haven't we burned the 'graveyard croak'? The Germans will repair it. Whatever you may say, it's a fighting machine..."

Utkin swore.

"Let's swim back," he said. "We'll get pretty far before daybreak anyhow."

And they turned back towards the shore. They had barely emerged from the water when they began to shiver.

"We'll get warm when it begins to burn, and then swim away," said Utkin about to open the petrol tank. But Uskov stopped him:

"Shall we try one more turn for luck?" he asked.

Utkin turned the propeller, and with the fourth turn the engine began to hum. He quickly jumped into the cabin and cried right into Uskov's ear:

"Long live the '2-U-2'!"

"Down with the 'cocks'!" replied Uskov and stepped on the gas.

The "graveyard croak" rattled in the darkness and rolled towards the sea,

but Uskov felt that it was near the water and nosed up the old plane, the witness of their fighting glory, their boyish quarrel, and of the new, mature, strong soldier's friendship of the two naval pilots, each of them a mere nineteen years old.

Nineteen! A remarkable age...

HOLD ON, PETTY OFFICER!

This time the submarine commander found himself looking at the dial of the depth sounding apparatus to see what time it was. He shifted his eyes to the clock hanging alongside, but that wasn't any better. The hands of the clock swam and faded, and try as he might he could not compel them to show the time. When he finally succeeded, the commander realized that there were still three hours to go before darkness, and he felt that he could not hold out through those three hours.

He felt a sickening weakness in his knees. And once again—goodness knows how many times it had happened already—he lost consciousness. His temples throbbed painfully, bright circles swam and veered before his eyes, he felt himself stagger, his fingers clutching something hard and cold. He strained his will trying to figure out where he was, what it was that his hands were gripping and what his intentions actually were. And he suddenly realized that he was no longer at the clock, but at the exhaust lever, and gripped the handle. Apparently he again lost control of his actions and now, contrary to his will, was about to release the air to enable the boat to surface and fill with fresh air.

Air... The blessed fresh air, without this sharp, stifling accursed drugging smell which made him drowsy and sapped his will-power... Air, just a little air!...

There was so much of it there on the surface. Far too much. So much that there was enough even for the enemy too. Not only could they breathe it. They could even burn it in the cylinders of their engines, and their planes could use it to fly over the bay and over Sevastopol. And here this boat must lie at the bottom, awaiting darkness to be able to rise and absorb the fresh air through its wide-open hatches, to ventilate the compartments saturated with petrol fumes.

For thirteen hours the men in the boat had been breathing a dulling mixture of these fumes, carbon dioxide exhaled by their lungs and the scant rations of oxygen with which the commander, using up the emergency stocks, tried to kill the poisonous fumes. Bringing temporary relief to the men, the oxygen was burnt up in their bodies, but the petrol fumes continued invisibly to saturate the boat.

They streamed into the compartments from the empty tank which the submarine sailors carried at the risk of their lives to supply precious fuel to the defenders of Sevastopol. The tank had been emptied the night before, and the petrol taken away to feed tanks and planes. They still had to wash it (so that during submersion the pressure of the water should not drive the petrol fumes into the boat) and to air the compartments. But they did not succeed in doing this. Dawn brought one of those furious day-long bombings experienced by Sevastopol in the last days of its heroic defence. The boat was compelled to submerge to the bottom of the bay and lie there until nightfall.

The first few hours everything seemed all right. Later, however, the steel hull of the boat became a gigantic anaesthetic mask closed over the heads of a few dozen men. The satiating, sweet and sharp odour of petrol poisoned the human bodies, one after another the men in the submarine lapsed into unconsciousness. It resembled the unnatural dead slumber of one put to sleep with ether or chloroform at the operating table.

And just as an anaesthetic affects different people in different ways, some lapsing into sleep easily and submissively, others subconsciously afraid of the enforced sleep, so too the men in the boat before losing consciousness behaved each in a different manner.

Some walked slowly through the compartments stumbling over the apparatus, over their comrades, murmuring broken incoherent phrases. Others lay, patiently, calmly awaiting for the boat to rise, suddenly burst into a fit of crying sobbing with drunken tears, swearing, delirious, until the poisoned air extinguished the last remnants of consciousness and plunged them into silence. Some one rose suddenly and began to dance. Perhaps somewhere in the back of his clouded mind

there was the hope that this would cheer up the others, and there he was dancing and singing and yelling hilariously until he dropped exhausted alongside the senseless bodies of those for whom he was performing.

Most of the sailors, trying to save their strength until the boat would be able to rise, lay silent, inert, as the commander had ordered them. But they too finally succumbed to the coma which was irresistibly overcoming them. And only their eyes, motionless eyes no longer reflecting any thought, were stubbornly open, as if the sailors wanted by this to prove to their officers that they were trying to hold on to the last glimmer of consciousness, and that they were merely waiting for a whiff of fresh air to rise and take up their posts.

But the commander was powerless to provide that whiff of air.

To rise with full daylight still over the bay would mean to expose the boat to the shells from heavy guns, to bombs from planes which hovered over the waves. It was necessary to stay at the bottom and await nightfall. It was necessary to fight this intoxicating smell which plunged all the men in the boat into unconsciousness. The commander had to hold on to consciousness, to be able to rise to the surface, and save the submarine and its men.

But holding on was difficult. More and more frequently he lapsed into delirium and several times saw the clock pointing to nine p.m., the time when the boat would be able to surface. A whiff of fresh air, just one whiff, and he could have held on through these remaining three hours as well.

He envied those to whom he had delivered the petrol, the shells and cartridges: they fought and died in the fresh air. Even dropping with a bullet through their breast they had time to inhale this fresh, clear air, and this, probably, was bliss... If he could only turn the handle of the exhaust pipe, open the hatch and inhale once, at least once! and he could then stand a full twenty-four hours' stretch at the bottom... His fingers were already gripping the handle, but he found enough strength to let it go and move away from the hold station.

He took two steps and fell, straining his will to resist this advancing, evil nothingness. He had no right to lose consciousness. The submarine and all the men inside would then be doomed.

He lay in the control room near the scum valves, gnashing his teeth, groaning and shaking his head, as if this could clear it of the accursed poison. He bit his hands, so that pain might restore him to his senses. He struggled like one drowning, but the drowsy vacuum enveloped him like a slow strong current.

Then he felt that he was being lifted, and through the dim and radiant clouds beheld the face of another man, the only one of the whole crew who like himself was still capable of the thought and action. It was the petty officer in command of one of the compartments.

"Please drink this, Comrade Commander," he said putting a cup to his lips.

He swallowed. The water was warm and nauseating.

"Drink it, drink it, Comrade Commander," the P.O. insisted. "Perhaps you'll be sick. 'Twill bring relief, just wait and see."

With an effort the commander gulped down one cup and then another. He was seized by nausea, and a fit of vomiting shook his body. He lay back, and the heaviness in his head had really disappeared.

"You are a strong man, Petty Officer," he said, finding strength to smile.

"Been holding out, so far," he said, but the commander saw that his face was completely green and his eyes burning with an unnatural light. The commander tried to rise, but he was terribly weak, and the P.O. helped him to sit up.

"And I thought it would make you feel better," he said apologetically. "Of course, it produces different reactions in different people. It helps me, I drink a little, and it makes me feel better..."

With great difficulty the commander opened his eyes.

"I'm afraid I shan't stand it. I'll collapse," he went on thickly, reluctant and ashamed to utter these words, but they had to be said, so that the man still able to stand on his feet should know there was not longer a commander in the boat.

And as if reading his mind, the P.O. said with respect:

"No wonder, we've been out at sea for two nights and you haven't slept a wink. I wonder as I look at you

how you're able to resist as it is."

After a moment's pause he added:

"It would be a good thing, Comrade Commander, for you to have a nap now. Have three hours' rest, and I'll wake you when darkness falls. . . If you don't, perhaps you won't even be able to raise the boat. . ."

Actually the commander was already asleep, seated on the platform. Fighting his drowsiness he was thinking, weighing the situation. He realized very well that if he did not rest immediately he would bring down death both on the boat and the men. With an effort he lifted his head.

"Comrade Petty Officer," he said in such a tone that the P.O. involuntarily straightened his back and stood at attention, "you will temporarily take over the command of the boat. It seems I really am not quite myself. I will lie down. Keep an eye on the men, perhaps someone will recover, and take it into his head to open the hatch. . . or release the air. . . Keep them away."

After a moment's silence he added:

"And me too, keep me away from the levers before twenty-one o'clock. I might be drawn there, understand?"

"I understand, Comrade Commander," said the P.O.

The commander removed his wrist watch.

"Take it. Keep it near you all the time, you may need it. . . Wake me at twenty-one o'clock, you understand?"

"I understand," he echoed, putting the watch on his wrist.

He helped the commander to his feet and led him to the compartment. Apparently he was already losing consciousness, because he hung limply on the other's arm and mumbled something as if in delirium:

"Hold on, Petty Officer. . . Hold on. . . I'm entrusting the boat to you. . . the men too. . . Look at the watch, hold on! . ."

Putting the commander on his bunk, the P.O. began his rounds of the compartments.

II

He walked slowly and cautiously, avoiding unnecessary movement as it made him dizzy. He walked among the senseless bodies, now and then lifting an arm or leg suspended from the beds, from the torpedo apparatus, from the diesel engines. Sometimes he paused near a sleeping or unconscious sailor sizing him up: if brought back to consciousness, would he be of any help to the commander when the boat surfaced? He approached those who seemed stronger, more sturdy, trying to shake them out of their stupor. Nothing came of it. Only three recovered for a moment and lapsed back into their coma. He nevertheless took note of them; these men would be needed when the boat began to rise: they were the electrician, the engineer and one of the crew.

Three times in two hours he was obliged to resort to his own method of treatment. But there was nothing left in his stomach, and vomiting became torture. The third time he felt that he was being hopelessly overcome by drowsiness. To divert his attention he again began to make his rounds of the compartments, staggering as he walked. When he passed the commander he thought that it would perhaps be better to wake him: suppose he too should suddenly fall asleep. He paused in front of the bunk. The commander continued to mutter in his delirium:

"Twenty-one o'clock. . . Combat assignment. . . Hold on, Petty Officer! . ."

"Sleep, Comrade Commander, everything's under control," he replied, but the commander apparently did not hear him, for he kept on repeating quietly and monotonously:

"Hold on. . . Hold on. . ."

The P.O. looked at the sleeping man, stirred by the thought that in his delirium the unconscious commander continued to have confidence in the man to whom he had entrusted the command during those hours of sleep which were essential if the submarine was to be saved. He felt ashamed of his weakness. With an effort to control himself he passed into the control room.

Left alone for a moment, he was again seized with a longing for at least a short moment of rest. His head drooped on his breast, and he was afraid that he would, without realizing it, fall asleep. So he resorted to cunning: leaning against the door, he gripped the top bolt with his left hand and rested his head on his wrist, calculating that if he were to fall asleep his fingers would let go of the bolt and his head inevitably hit it, which would surely bring him back to his senses.

For some time he sat there in a daze, listening to the loud throbbing in his temples. Gradually this throbbing was succeeded by an even, lulling, regular and slow sound. It was the commander's watch on his wrist ticking close to his ear. It ticked as if repeating the same phrase over and over again: "Hold on, Petty Officer, hold on. . ." He realized that he was falling asleep, and immediately thought he had outwitted himself, that his fingers would surely give way as soon as he fell asleep, and that he could sit there calmly yielding to this blissful forgetfulness. But the watch ticked and ticked away, persistently driving home the same words: "Hold on, hold on,"—and the meaning of them suddenly dawned on him. . .

He raised his head with a jerk and tried to let go of the bolt. But his fingers clung to it convulsively and with such strength that he was frightened. He had to use his other hand to release their grip.

It became clear to him that he must not make any deals with himself: despite his cunning plan he could have fallen asleep just as all the others had, and that would be the end of the boat. To shake off the drowsiness he began to sing loudly and hopelessly out of tune. He had never sung before, being ashamed of his voice, but there was no one to hear him now. He sang, confusing both the music and the words, but the song helped him to collect himself a bit. Suddenly he quieted down: perhaps enemy submarine detectors would locate the sound. But then he remembered that there couldn't be any detectors, that the boat was lying at the bottom of its own bay.

From time to time the dull distant roar of explosions reached the boat. The nazis were probably bombing our ships. He recalled how just before the boat submerged after unloading the petrol and left harbour, the sky was alive with planes. Shining water spouts shot up to the rosy morning sky; when one of them vanished a destroyer had come into view behind. And with amazing clarity he saw the stern of the destroyer rising above water and one of its guns continuing to fire at the planes until the water closed over its red-hot barrel as well.

"Hold on, Petty Officer," he said to himself aloud, "hold on! . . Other men did. . ."

His heart was filled with pity for the sailors who were perishing before his eyes, and with burning fury he raised his fist and cried threateningly:

"Would you like to get the submarine too, you Huns? . . Just wait! . ." he said quietly but clearly.

His fury seemed to clear his mind and lend him fresh strength. He went to the compartments to find the men who would be needed and carry them to the central station so as to revive them when the boat began to rise. He was bending over the electrician when his attention was arrested by footsteps at the other end of the compartment. Bending down to peer through the tangle of tubes, pipes and instruments, he saw someone stagger towards the hatch and grab the lever. The P.O. quickly walked over to him.

"Are you mad? Who ordered you?"

But the man apparently was past understanding. The P.O. tried to drag him back, but the man clung to the lever with amazing strength, and shaking his drooping head murmured:

"Let go. . . one minute only. . . let go. . ."

He struggled with the P.O. desperately, stubbornly, and then suddenly giving way, dropped near the hatch.

The P.O. was also exhausted by the fight and had to sit down for a rest. But he had barely recovered when the man again rose and stretched his hand towards the lever. This time the struggle was even more furious, and the man would have perhaps overcome the P.O. and let water into the boat were it not for one small thing: the P.O. felt that his wrist with the commander's watch on it was pressed against the wall, and for some reason the thought flashed through his mind that if the watch were broken in the mêlée he would perhaps never be able to wake the commander in time. With a jerk he wrestled himself free from the strong embrace, and the delirious man again dropped in exhaustion. For safety the P.O. tied the man's hands with a towel and sat there for a long time near him, wiping the sweat off his forehead. When he managed to rise to his feet, the clock pointed to ten minutes past nine. He walked over to the commander and touched him on the shoulder.

"Comrade Commander, it's time, wake up!"

"Petty Officer?" immediately replied

the commander without waking up. "Fine! . . Hold on. . . Don't forget to wake me. . ."

"Time to get up, Comrade Commander, it's twenty one o'clock," repeated the P.O., looking up to the ceiling, where beyond the thick layer of water was the welcome darkness which had already set in, and the air, clear air, which would soon stream into the boat.

He was seized by impatience.

"Get up, Comrade Commander, it's time," he repeated, but the commander could not wake up. He raised his head, let it drop again onto the bed, and kept on repeating:

"Hold on, Petty Officer. . . battle order. . . twenty-one o'clock. . ."

It was impossible to wake him.

When the P.O. realized this, he spent about five minutes in thought. Then he approached the engineer trying to rouse him, but the man was completely unconscious.

In his desperation the P.O. tried to rouse anyone of the men whom he noticed earlier. But one after another they raised their heads like drunkards, mumbling nonsense, and he could do nothing with them.

He then decided to act.

Carrying the commander to the central station, he placed him right near the hatch so that the air could at once stream into his face. Then he walked over to the levers and opened up the central exhaust valve.

Everything was in order. The familiar blow of compressed air resounded in the pipes, water bubbled in the tank, and the dial of the depth sounding apparatus began to climb. The boat rose straight, and the apparatus showed that the hull was above water. He had but to open the hatch and let the air into the boat. Then, he thought, exposed to the fresh stream of air, the commander would recover, and everything return to normal.

With all this fussing around the P.O. grew very tired. And as always happens he felt that the last seconds would be the hardest to endure. He felt an immediate need of fresh air, that without it he would fall beside the commander, and everything would be over for both the boat and the men. His heart pounded away madly, his head swam. He crept up the ladder slowly as though going through one of those nightmares in which one's hands and feet are unable to move, unable to reach the thing that will save one. And his hands were actually so weak that when he gripped the wheel of the hatch he could barely turn it. It required one more tremendous effort to tear the hatch trap from the clinging rubber inlay.

The fresh, cool air hit him in the face. He inhaled it greedily, breathing deeply, his neck stretched, laughing and almost crying, and suddenly realized with horror that he was growing more dizzy. He was still able to realize that the hatch must be closed, or the rising waves would flood the boat and there would be no one to notice it. With ebbing consciousness he pressed his body against the wheel of the hatch which closed under the weight of his body, whereupon, losing hold of the thing, he fell.

III

He recovered from a choking sensation. Lifting his head with a jerk he tried to understand where he was and what had happened.

It was as before bright and quiet in the boat. He lay there alongside the commander, his face down in a small puddle which flooded the deck of the control room. The commander's watch on his wrist showed 21.50. This meant that he had just fallen, but where did this water come from, he was at a loss to understand.

He staggered to his feet and felt with surprise that he had grown stronger: apparently the air that he had inhaled had had its effect. But it was too dangerous to open the hatch again: the presence of water in the boat indicated that the boat had not as yet fully risen above the surface. Thoughtfully he looked round the control room, trying to figure out what could have happened. Then his eyes rested on the clock near the depth sounding apparatus. It showed eight minutes past twelve.

This meant that the commander's watch was out of order and that he had lain there more than two hours unconscious. And throughout this time the boat had drifted in the bay, and anything could have happened to it once water from the hold had reached the deck.

He went to inspect the compartments and realized where the water had come from.

The man whose hand he had tied with a towel had succeeded in loosening his bonds and opening the hatch. Fortunately he had merely loosened the bolts: whether he lacked the strength to open the hatch, or whether water pouring through the opening had brought him to his senses for a moment, and made him realize that he was doing a wrong thing. However it was, this alone had been sufficient for the water which flooded the upper deck over the hatch to get to the holds.

Realizing that he had waken in the nick of time, the P.O. immediately fastened the hatch, returned to the control room, put the pumps into operation and only then dared to open the porthole. Once again the air hit his head like a hammer, but this time he immediately bent over the edge of the port and clung to it with all his strength. Soon he recovered and went up on the bridge.

The clear, starry sky hung majestically and solemnly over the bay. The ring of gun fire flashing on the horizon was like a fiery halo of glory around the brave, wounded city. The waves splashed noisily against the nearby shore. The fresh sea wind blew in his face, clearing his lungs of the poisonous petrol fumes.

The P.O. stood there delighted with the wind, the air and life which had been restored to him. He stood there breathing, looking up at the starry sky and listening to the muffled roar of the waves and of the guns.

But the boat again reminded him of the fact that he was as yet the only man on whom depended the fate of the submarine and of the helpless, poisoned men imprisoned in it. It rose on the waves hitting the ground with its bow. He bent over and peering into the darkness realized that in these two hours the boat had been carried towards the shore and apparently its bow had run aground on the rocks.

Again the situation demanded action, and immediate action at that. It was necessary to get off the rocks and leave for the high seas while it was still dark, before nazi planes appeared above the bay.

He went down into the boat, set the ventilators going and with difficulty carried the commander to the bridge. Out in the air he recovered. But just as was recently the case with the P.O., he sat on the bridge inhaling the fresh air and was as yet unable to understand where he was or what had to be done. Leaving him there to recover, the P.O. brought up one more man without whom the boat could not move: the electrician, one of the three whom he had reckoned would be needed for surfacing.

Finally they were able to act. The commander ordered the main exhaust tank to be opened to enable the submarine to rise and get off the rocks. Still staggering, the electrician went to his engine astern, while the P.O. returned to his post in the hold. He opened the valves, and the dial of the depth sounding apparatus climbed upwards. When it reached zero, he went up to the deck to report that the air had been released. The commander telegraphed: "full steam reverse," to get the boat off the rocks. The engines hummed, but the boat for some reason moved forward and again ran aground on the rocks. The commander ordered "stop" and shouted to the P.O. below to learn why the boat was steered in the wrong direction.

He found the electrician standing at his engine, with an expression of tense concentrated attention on his face, looking at the telegraph, awaiting orders.

"What course were you ordered to steer?" he asked.

"Forward," the electrician replied. "Full steam. . ."

"Are you awake? You were ordered 'full steam reverse,'" said the P.O. frowning.

"But I've seen it, the telegraph's all wrong," the electrician retorted calmly. "How could the commander have ordered reverse? The nazis are behind us. We could only sail ahead. Out to sea."

He said it with such conviction that the P.O. realized the man was still in the grip of his petrol delirium. There was no one to replace the electrician, and there was no time to wait until the man had completely recovered. The P.O. thereupon went up the bridge and told the commander that the electrician was not yet quite right in the head, but that he could steer the boat: he himself would stand by the electrician's side to see that he didn't do any more funny things.

The boat again tried to rise. The electrician's mistake had placed it in a worse position: the main tank was already emptied, there was nothing to reduce its draught with, and its forward jerk had

firmly planted it on the rocks. Time did not stand still, and dawn was approaching. The boat tore back while the accumulators were charged.

Meantime the air streaming into the boat had done its work. The sailors were recovering. The first to recover were those stubborn submarine sailors who were the last to lose consciousness. Then one after another the men rose to their feet, and soon all the compartments teemed with energy and life. The engineers took their places at the diesel engines, the electricians went down into the hold and began to charge the accumulators. Holding his head and staggering, the boatswain went to the control room. The helmsman took his post at the rudder. Something hissed in the kitchen, and for the first time in many hours the sailors realized that in addition to breathing men must also eat.

Among this multitude of people who regained the ability to feel, think and act, the man who had restored this ability to them was completely lost.

At first he did things and helped the others, but gradually, as more and more men appeared at the machines, he felt as if one worry after another were falling from his shoulders. When finally a sailor appeared also at the post in the hold (the man whom—it now seemed so long ago!—he had tried to awaken) and, officially in accordance with regulations, asked for permission to go on duty, the P.O. realized that now he could get some sleep.

And he fell asleep right near the diesel engines, so soundly that he did not hear them bark with frequent explosions. The boat was again steered, but this time with the diesel engines, and moving full circuit the propellors dragged it from the rocks. It turned and headed for the exit from the bay. The diesel engines throbbed and roared, but this did not wake the P. O. However, when the boat turned and the wind began to drive the gas from the diesel engines into the port, he woke up. He sniffed, swore, and unable to stand a smell reminiscent of the one which had thrown him off his feet for sixteen hours, he resolutely walked onto the bridge and asked the commander for permission to stay there.

In the darkness the man recognized his voice and silently found his hand. For a long time, without saying a word, the commander pressed this hand in his strong grip, and then suddenly pulling the P.O. towards him embraced him. They kissed, a strong manly kiss which is like a vow binding soldiers to the death or to victory.

And for a long time they stood there in silence, listening to the roaring and humming of the boat restored to life, and exposing their faces to the fresh, free breeze. The Black Sea enveloped the submarine in darkness and sighing waves, guarding it against the enemy.

Later the petty officer said shyly:

"Of course, it all turned out right, Comrade Commander, but there's one trouble nevertheless. . ."

"All our troubles are finished," said the commander cheerfully. "Finished!"

"Well, I don't know," replied the P.O. clumsily stretching out the watch to him. "Your watch. . . it's bust. I don't suppose it can be repaired. . ."

ONE DESIRE

At Odessa, among the sailors who had come ashore to take part in the tremendous battle, I met an eight-year-old lad with blue eyes. Clear and wide, they looked out on the world with all the purity of childhood, curious and eager. He was the adopted son of a marine regiment. He had been picked up in a village from which the Germans and Rumanians had recently been driven as the result of a brief but terrific blow delivered by the marines. They fixed up a pea jacket for him, put a few tucks in a sailor hat and gave him a captured dirk. He poked his nose into everything, played tricks, ran around, picked up grenades and cartridges,—a real youngster of his age.

But sometimes he sat down near a gun, hugged his knees with his arms and froze stockstill. And his blue eyes became motionless and a deathly, adult horror stood in them, cold and unstirring. So cold, that the first time I saw it a shiver ran down my spine. Then the captain immediately walked over to him and tenderly raised him in his arms, holding him close. The lad spluttered and began to wail, and soon a child's tears washed the horror from his blue eyes.

These blue eyes had seen how men in alien uniform had bound his father, the chairman of a collective-farm board, to two tanks and torn him asunder.

II

Sorrow hovers over the world. A vast human sorrow envelops the globe with bitter ashes. The world is in flames. The greedy blaze of war thrusts its tongue across oceans, licks continents and islands, flares upon the equator and rages at the pole.

Sorrow hovers over the world. Flaming, groaning, smeared with blood and drenched with tears, the ancient globe revolves into a new year. For the billionth time the world begins its next revolution around the sun. But never yet since the time when men first began to take count of these revolutions, calling them years, has the world borne so much human sorrow.

There have been world cataclysms. Glaciers slid down mountains, crushing entire tribes. Continents sank into oceans, carrying whole peoples with them. But the blindest of elements have never caused humankind such suffering as it is enduring today through the evil will of men who are striving for world domination.

On New Year's day my first words were a curse. A curse on those who set fire to the globe, who prepared and began this war, who put horror into the blue eyes of a child.

If I could gather in one picture, in one word, all the human sorrow to which fascism has given birth, all the groans and plaints, all the lamentations in a hundred tongues, all the tears, the sufferings and mute glances of despair, all the last brief sighs of the dying, all the anguish of parting with life, all the horror of losing one near and dear, all the dreams that fascism has caused to crash in ruins—from the great creative thoughts of scientists to the everyday human longing for the lips one loves, for the warmth of one's family—all the fruits of human labour destroyed by the way, from the huge power stations of the Dnieper dam to the ingenuous model of an aeroplane made by childish hands and crushed under the jackboot of the German soldier,—if I could gather all the terrible migrations from native fields, from homes, factories, cities, all the defiled bodies of young women, the smashed skulls of infants, the grey beards steeped in blood, and show them to those who have plunged the globe into this sanguinary and tearful vale. . .

But what good would that do?

Even a beast would go mad with horror at the sight. But these people will not go mad. They have no senses to take leave of. In them are neither human minds nor hearts. The executioner's axe does not feel that it rends living tissue and cuts short a human life.

A machine gone mad would not be more horrible than these people: at least would not have the same refinement of cruelty. It would simply slaughter.

Let us abandon curses. They are useless.

III

A group of important Soviet military men were making their way to a city besieged by the Germans. Ahead of them the rails had been torn up by an air bomb. They had to walk three kilometres in order to find another locomotive across the bridge. The railway brigade lent the generals their coats and hats. "It's better this way," they said, "you never know, a dive-bomber might swoop out from behind the forest and spot the uniforms."

On the bridge stood a sentry, an ordinary old Russian with a grey beard and bushy eyebrows. He wore his rifle slung over his shoulder, just as if he were about to go hunting. The commander of the guard, also a partisan, in a quilted jacket and a peaked cap, signed him to let them pass. The old man silently took a step to the left. As he was passing the senior officer asked:

"Guarding the bridge, are you, granddad?"

The old man looked at him askance.

"I stand here."

"How about the Germans in these parts: done a lot of dirty work, eh?"

"Plenty."

"Well, granddad, we'll just have to give them the kind of thrashing they got in the old days, punish them, eh?"

The old man let his eyes wander over all of them. As to whether he recognized under the cap of the engine driver the gay and lively eyes of the unaging soldier whom the whole country knew, it was impossible to tell. There was no

change either in his tone of voice or his manner when he replied:

"No. We'll have to wipe them out."

And after a silence he added:

"Hand one over to each of us. The people are out for their blood."

And he took another step back, leaving the road open and giving them to understand that he had said all he had to say.

IV

Anyone who has so much as glanced at burning cities, at blown up factories, ravaged fields and vineyards, who has encountered on the highway mute waves of refugees, who has seen violated thirteen-year-old girls and hanged old men, who has even once had to convey the news of the death of a son, husband, brother, who has lowered into the grave his comrade, a bold, jolly, handsome lad who should have lived and lived, loved and worked, will understand the words of the old man with all his heart.

The blue eyes of a child, wide with horror, appear before me when I sum up the results of the year that has ended and consider what is most important to wish for the New Year.

Once upon a time, in this New Year's eve, among a million people there were a million wishes. Everyone sought to make his dream, his secrete desire, his dearest wish come true. 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 fascist hordse will draw 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!

They will not return, our brothers who have fallen, our fathers, sons and husbands who have given their lives in the battles for our country, for the freedom of the Soviet people. But if there is anything that can ease the bitterness of sorrow, it is only the smashing of the enemy against whom they fought. This means that it was not in vain they shed the blood so precious to us. That blood washes from the globe the spreading scurf of fascism and cleanses the world for new generations of free men.

POETRY

OLGA BERGHOLZ

LENINGRAD POEM

(Excerpt)

This evening was a landmark to remember:
I carried home my tiny piece of bread—
My neighbour stopped me: she looked ill or mad.
'twas dark and cold—fireless, bleak December.

She said: "Here, take my dress and give your bread,
Or, if you are a friend—just give for pity—
My little one is a fortnight dead. . .
Can't bury her. . . no coffins in the city. . .

And I am promis'd one if bread I pay.
Give me your bread: respect my grief and sorrow."
. . . I grasp'd my tiny bit, my morcel for tomorrow,
And answer'd: "No! I'll not give it," I say! . .

"Give me your bread," she asked me anew,
"For fear of hellish pains or heavenly powers!
Last year your little one you buried too. . .
I brought you then so very many flowers. . ."

We were alone. The street was black and wide,
It was a kind of fight—with awe and pity,—
We were alone just walking side by side—
Two women-mothers of the sieged city.

She was mad—she did not cease for pleading—
Her helpless words were bitter, sad and trying,—
But I was strong enough. I did not give my bread.
I knew: those, who survive, must leave alone the dead!

And I was strong enough to take her in,
To give her half of this my little piece
And tell her with a sad and friendly grin:
"Do eat! to those who live, I give with ease!"

And now, that winter strife is left behind,
I shall repeat with happy persuasion:
For those who live I'll venture, never mind,
All tears, all joy, all tenderness, all passion!

This holy oath, you, War, I do proclaim
A warrant for the Life, that never ends,
A warrant given me by dearest friends—
That did remain and shall remain the same. . .

They stand by me—all loving, kind and strong,
All friends and brothers of the sieged city—
We should have died and perished for long—
But for our mutual friendship, strength and pity!

BRYANSK FORESTS

(Stories about partisans)

The Bryansk forest. . . those virgin woods where in days of old the people of the warlike Slav tribes settled, guarding their borders with fortresses and outposts.

And there stand three mighty outposts;
The first of these lies in the woods, in the Bryansk woods,
Where there's mud that would drown, and quaking bog.

So ran the old song. These fortresses were the natural permanent settlements of the Vyatichi and covered an area of several hundred versts. In those dim and distant times the Bryansk forest was joined to the Murom forest and formed, as the old chronicles have it, "the land of forests."

The towns situated within the Bryansk forest boundaries are some of the most ancient in Russia, and originated as fortresses guarding the Slav settlements. It was over a thousand years ago that the first stroke of the woodsman's axe sounded in these virgin woods, and the giant trees that had stood for centuries swayed and fell at the feet of the powerful woodsman. Birds flew away with shrill cries, frightened beasts retreated into the depths of the forest, further from this awakening thickets. Sailing his boat along the quiet river, the native who lived a solitary life in a clearing would rest on his oars, and listen in amazement to the sounds that broke the silence of the forest. He would row nearer and peer through the green network of boughs, and see an earthern barrier crowned with a high palisade. Amazed, he would leave his boat and turn his steps towards the earthern bank. Before him there would be a bridge crossing a moat, and a narrow gate. Looking within, he would see a broad clearing on which several wooden huts had been built around a taller house with a steep pointed roof, with a big cross at the very top. Here then was the kernel of the future Russian town.

The very names of the towns testify to their ancient connections with the forest. Karachev comes from the words "Black Forest" in an ancient dialect, and Bryansk was once called Debryansk from the word "debri" or thickets surrounding it. Throughout the centuries, the Bryansk forest served as a sure defence for the Slav tribes living in that district. If the enemy was strong, they would take refuge in the thickets and from there launch their attacks on the uninvited newcomers. During the Mongolian invasion the Orel territory, protected in some measure by its forests, suffered less than other parts of Russia, though it did not escape the evil fate. Secret, elusive, the forest fighters struck terror into the hearts of the invading Mongolians from the steppe.

In Zagoskin's old historical novel *The Forest of Bryansk* we read: "And now, today, the Bryansk forests, so frequently mentioned in folk tales and legends, are still thought of by many as unexplored thickets, the gloomy, deserted habitat of shaggy bears, hungry wolves, wood goblins, werewolves and brigands. In this respect they outdo even the famous Murom forest, and if a peasant of the steppe wants to convey the idea that someone has disappeared altogether, he will often say: 'Who can tell what's become of him? You might as well look in the Bryansk forest for him.'"

But the Bryansk forests are not in the least like that today. . . Soviet people are living and fighting here as they are living and fighting wherever life has decreed that they should fight.

The Bryansk forests are now the domain of the Russian partisans.

GHENKA

That solid-looking little fellow Ghenka, with light and very slightly-tilted eyes, flaxen locks falling over his forehead and a rosy dimpled face, was for all the world like one of those toddlers in the advertisements with a caption informing the world: "I eat jelly and

Partisans. By A. Laptev

jam!" Now he clambered up onto the commander's knee and piped:

"But I was found long ago!"

"Ah, little foundling, you're our desperate dynamiter, and where have you been all this time?" asked the commander handing the boy his favourite toy, a cartridge belt.

But Ghenka was busy with his "bullets," as he called it, and in no mood for answering questions. The commander gazed at him thoughtfully, stroked his head and said:

"It's a terrible story that child has."

It began with a hideous German massacre in the village we shall call by the letter "U." After the punitive detachment had left, bodies of the local people were found in a cellar belonging to one of the houses: half-naked women, their tangled hair trailing in the dirt, old men with parchment-like faces, children with their eyes full of frozen bewilderment. All these people, old and young, had been tortured brutally by the Germans.

Ghenka's grandfather and grandmother had been among those slaughtered, and his mother took him to live in the neighbouring village of M.: so much could be gathered from the child's inarticulate narrative.

The tragedy of this second village is well-known to the partisans. Once a week the Germans used to come and ransack the cottages for grain, meat and eggs, and disappear again. But once,—it was a big church holiday when many of the women and the old people were at early service,—three lorries filled with soldiers appeared on the western outskirts of the village. The Germans jumped down and scattered among the farm-yards. They were carrying torches, petroleum cans and straw. Soon the first cottages were ablaze. . .

The Germans were burning and destroying all the villages in the districts where the partisans were active, and now they had come to M.

Two grey pillars of smoke, reaching up to heaven like imploring hands, were the first warning the people received of the fire. Old Matveich the bell-ringer noticed the fire, crossed himself and reached for the bell ropes; next moment the air vibrated with a hollow clang. One after another, the alarming echo of the swinging brazen tongues filled the alert silence of that Sunday morning.

"The Germans are burning us out!" the people cried, running out of the church-yard.

It would be hard to say what happened then in the soul of the old parish priest Pamphili. In the whole village not one remained who could have organized the people and told them what to do. And Pamphili made up his mind to act he knew how.

"Let us go out in solemn procession and shame the evil-doers," he announced to the congregation.

A few minutes later, the procession issued from the gates, with a dipping and rustling of church-banners, an undulation of rich brocade, a sparkle and

vibration of filigree and finely-chased silver in the clear blue air of morning. The great processional cross caught the light; and high above the bared heads glided the gold-wrought ikons.

At the last moment Pamphili must have felt in his heart a vague suspicion of tragic uselessness of what he was doing; so, calling the strongest of the old men around him, he whispered to him:

"Try and get to the partisans. They'll save us if they get here in time."

Mikheich nodded comprehendingly and ambled away towards the ruined barns, in the direction of the woods that darkened in a scarcely-visible ridge. But even this was no longer necessary. There were two partisan-scouts in the village. From hiding places in the gardens, they kept an attentive watch on all that happened, and as soon as they saw the flames, one of them raced off to the forest.

Meanwhile the procession started along the street to meet the Germans. The fire spread swiftly from one cottage to another and had already seized more than half the village, so that the procession seemed to be moving along a narrow corridor between the raging flames. Black clouds of smoke eclipsed the sun, it seemed as though dusk was gathering, and the dancing flames piercing this thick murk cast a wavering crimson light on the gorgeous vestments of the priest and the faces of the age-darkened ikons.

At first sight of the procession the Germans seemed taken aback or bewildered for a moment. They saw a slowly-approaching crowd of old men and women and at their head, beside the priest under the banner, a woman, no longer young, but stately and beautiful, carrying a child in her arms. But their confusion lasted only a moment; what followed was incredible.

The officer's command rang out, the Germans pressed the butts of their tommy-guns to their bodies, and shots rattled. The front rows of the procession fell. The woman with the child fell before any of the others. But the priest continued to advance, and after him, rallying around the great cross, came old Russian men and women who believed that they could quell evil-doers.

Again the officer barked a command; and this time it seemed as though the firing would never stop. The Germans fired into the procession point-blank. The splintered ikons wavered and sank to the earth as their bearers were mown down. And then all was over. Within a few moments, the procession of the holy cross had ceased to exist, only a heap of bodies remained.

The Germans went over to the priest, and found him wounded but still living. Two burly tommy-gunners set him on his feet, tore off his vestments and, swinging him high in the air, tossed him into the fire. For a moment his grey beard and grief-stricken face, clearcut as though carved in wood, stood out among the flaming logs, then the rafters caved in with a blinding shower of sparks that hid the last sight of the church procession. Choked with the bitter smoke, Khariton, the partisan scout, crawled away. He had seen everything. . . The village had become a gigantic bonfire, and the sound of the retreating lorries, taking the Germans away, could be heard in the distance. . .

It was night when the partisans arrived in the village. In the cold ghostly light of the moon, they could see the pile of human bodies between the rows of smouldering ruins. It was not the first time the partisans had stood silently beside the victims of German atrocities, not the first time they had stooped to look into the dimmed eyes of people mutilated and tortured to death; but here a sight awaited them to make the hair on their uncovered heads stir with horror. Over the bodies of the dead crawled a little boy, shivering with cold. His face was red with blood. His mother's blood streamed down his forehead and cheeks. He moaned softly and, pressing his little hands hard on the stiffened bodies, tried to climb down to the ground. The partisans picked up the boy and wrapped him in a jacket.

"Who are you? What is your name?" they asked.

"I'm Ghenka," he replied in a thin treble.

Ghenka and the old man Mikheich, whom the priest had sent to the partisans, were the only people left alive in the village. Mikheich did not know Ghenka's surname, the boy and his mother had only come there recently: they fled from the village of U. which had been burnt down by the Germans.

What was to be done with the child? The column was in pursuit of the puni-

tive detachment, there was no time for long consideration; so they simply took Ghenka with them, and while they were smashing the German garrison of a neighbouring village, the boy lay on a sledge in a little copse, where the sound of battle was plainly audible. When they returned from a successful operation, the partisans saw Ghenka with a Bickford cord round his waist, blissfully occupied with an anti-infantry mine which was luckily empty. From that day on, the child was nicknamed "Ghenka the Dynamiter." And though none of the people from the other detachments had ever seen him, they invariably asked after him:

"Well, how's your Ghenka-Dynamiter going along? Getting big?"

"I'll say he is! Plenty of nurses to look after him!" was the usual reply.

Reports of this hideous German crime in M. spread throughout the district. The partisans distributed hundreds of leaflets, giving an account of it, among the survivors in the villages round about. The cup of endurance was filled to overflowing, and the number of those working for the partisans increased. Old grey-bearded men refused to answer the questions of the village elders and would say nothing but: "You wait, you servant of the devil!"

But let us return to Ghenka. A campaigners' life was likely to be harmful for the little boy's health, so after a great deal of wondering and pondering the men decided to leave him at the partisan hospital: he would be better there, with women to look after him. Ghenka was soon quite at home and everybody's pet. The wounded men would wait for a sight of his little figure entering the roomy dugout, hung with silk from captured parachutes, that served as a hospital ward. Ghenka was always busy making something and crooning to himself, but whenever he saw a bright light, a campfire or the reflection of fire on the horizon, his face would cloud over with an expression of unchildlike sadness. The memory of that flaming, incomprehensible night still survived in his soul.

There was one wounded partisan who was particularly fond of Ghenka, called him "Sonny" and spent hours playing with him and telling him stories.

Time passed. One day the people in the hospital heard distant firing. A breathless runner came to the doctor and told him that a battle was going on about two kilometres away, the Germans were pressing the partisans back and getting nearer the hospital.

They must leave at once. The hospital sledges were brought out, the nurses swiftly placed the wounded on them, the doctors collected their instruments and other belongings. The sound of battle was approaching. But where was Ghenka? Several people started hunting for him. Again they searched the dugouts, ran to the dairy farm. . . But in vain. The wounded man who had called Ghenka "Sonny" could not repress his tears. The doctors and nurses were frantic, but not a moment could be lost. The hospital column started off for the depths of the forest. They kept looking back every minute: perhaps even now the little figure would appear somewhere on the path. But no, there was nobody behind them. . .

Ghenka had disappeared.

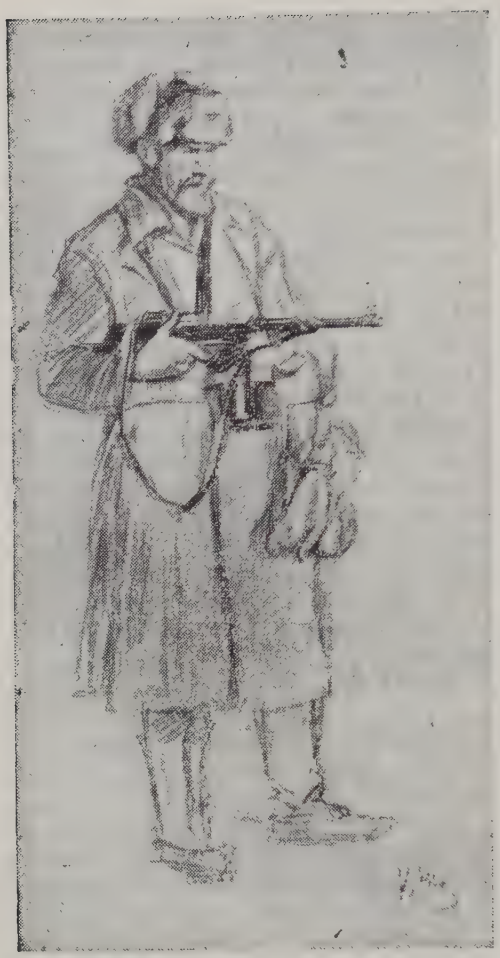
THE WRECKED TRAIN

Ghenka had disappeared. . .

But here he was now, sitting with us on the boarded floor of the hut, playing with his machine-gun belt. We were all burning with impatience to hear the rest of the story. . . A three-year-old boy alone in the Bryansk forest was like a needle in a haystack, but all the same Ghenka had turned up again. Here he was among the partisans. However, the commander's story was interrupted by the creak of the opening door. A man in a short jacket entered and leaned wearily against the door post.

"Semyon!" the commander cried joyfully. "How's everything? You're alive, not hurt? . . And what about the bridge? This is great! . . Today's a lucky day, all right, everything's coming out. First Ghenka turned up, and now here's our second dynamiter. Well, let's hear all about it, Semyon!"

Four days previously Semyon, one of the most resourceful dynamiters among the partisans, had received orders to disrupt traffic on a main railway line, one that was of the greatest importance for the Germans. The plan had been not only to blow up the track, but at the same time to wreck an enemy military train. But the question was, which was the best place to choose.



A Partisan. By K. Finogenov

Semyon was accustomed to consider the Germans' communications as threads converging or interlacing here and there into large or small junctions. Usually it is large stations that are looked upon as such centres, but the dynamiter regards the network of arteries feeding the German army somewhat differently. What can three partisans coming out of the forest do in a large, brightly lit station, with people coming and going all the time? A bridge is another matter. This is also a junction in the network of enemy communications. Make a cut here at the right place, and dozens of threads will dangle helplessly in space.

But not every bridge is suitable. Best of all is a bridge at the entrance to a large station. By blowing up such a bridge, one can cork up all traffic in the enemy lines converging here, and create a fine target for Soviet bombers.

It was a bridge like this that Semyon had "fancied" for himself. True, it was not a large one; but it was quite near to the big station of P. Semyon and his three comrades would have to act under the very noses of the Germans.

But this was not the only difficulty with which they were faced. How were they to approach unobserved? This was the question over which Semyon racked his brains. The bridge spanned a small river, which was really a mere stream. Just under the bridge it left its low banks and flooded the land on both sides of the railway line. Since the melting of the ice, this land had become a swamp, overgrown with bushes, reeds and flags. This area around the line was at a lower level, and every inch of it was clearly visible from the bridge.

The forest stopped short at the edge of the swamp, and Semyon, ensconced in the branches of a pine tree, gazed long and thoughtfully at the marsh below and at the humped bridge before him, near but as yet inaccessible. Hiding in the branches of the tree, he gradually calculated the number of German guards. There were ten or eleven of them, a whole detachment; and from the sentry-box he could see machine-gun barrels.

"Well, that's enough of standing staring, we're not at a theatre!" said Semyon, as he jumped down. "Let's get to the bridge."

The partisans fastened on their boots with string, divested themselves of everything not absolutely necessary and set about camouflaging themselves. An hour later, they looked like water-sprites from some gruesome old tale; they had water-flags twined round them, their faces were smeared with greenish mud, and their heads crowned with erections made of twisted twigs and leaves. The only thing left was to see that the dynamite was hermetically sealed and to fasten it on.

Dusk fell. All was in readiness. Leaving the shelter of the last trees, the partisans dropped to the ground and began crawling towards the swamp. Semyon was the first to enter the liquid mass, more like a thick stew than water. The splashing and squelching that followed sounded like thunder claps in his ears. Up to the neck in water, he stopped and studied the figures of the sentries standing on the bridge. No, the Germans had not yet noticed anything.

But how were they to advance further?

Dynamiters are lovers of silence. The crack of dry twigs, the grating of rubble, the crunching of ice—the chaos of sound becomes intolerable when one is pressed close to the ground, cautiously wriggling towards the objective. In that instant one longs to become an immaterial shade in order to avoid all contact with the material world. Experience gives skill, and the dynamiter knows how to move soundlessly, slipping along, invisible and inaudible, in a blessed silence, a dreamlike quiet that may awaken at any moment. He knows by heart all the gamut of possible sounds and avoids them with superhuman care. He hears only the beating of his own heart, and it beats like a metronome. And the deeper the silence around, the louder will sound the roar of the explosion,—the only sound which rejoices his heart when at work.

And now here was this accursed splashing and sucking! Impossible to move like that: the Germans would discover them long before they could ever approach the bridge. . . What was to be done, where could they find a way out? Give up the plan? Of course, the line could be blown up somewhere else, lower down. The thought flashed through Semyon's mind for a moment, and he glanced sharply at his comrades. No, such a suggestion was the last thing on earth they expected from him. A train roared past. It was just here that they must blow up the line—at the bridge!

Semyon thought all this out when they climbed out on dry land for a conference. It was a curious one. Not a word was spoken, for five or ten minutes the men sat silently, smoking behind their caps so as not to betray themselves, and in the same silence crawled back to the swamp after Semyon. But now he had thought out what to do, and informed his comrades in a brief whisper.

Noise! Noise! What if they made it their ally? Rusty water. A moon hung in a grey sky. The cold light shimmered on the camouflage of tangled water-flags and twigs, stirred by the night wind. Huge pines cast their fantastic shadows across the dull mirror of the water. The dynamiters waited in silence. An hour passed, and the sound of an approaching train was heard, coming nearer and nearer. Semyon pulled one foot out of the mud and began to move forward, the others following him. The splashing and sucking were all drowned in the rumble of the passing train. As it disappeared westwards, and silence fell once more, the partisans again stood rooted to the spot, up to the chest in water, immobile, waiting. Thirty minutes passed, an hour. . .

Again the sound of an approaching train, and four mysterious hummocks in different parts of the swamp began to move. Again the partisans advanced fifteen or twenty yards. . . Dawn was approaching, day broke reluctantly. It found the partisans benumbed. For a long time there had been no trains. Silence and water all around. . . Then again the saving engine whistle was heard; the bridge was several yards nearer. What a long day it was! Cautiously the mists of evening descended on the swamp. German guards paced to and fro on the bridge, near enough now for their faces to be clearly distinguished. For a moment Semyon even thought that their eyes met. Four pairs of eyes were fixed unwaveringly on the bridge. One wanted to shout, to brace the whole body, and, dragging one's feet from the clinging mud, make a dash for the bridge. But it couldn't be done, one had to wait. At long last came the clatter of the wheels over the rail-joints, and the dynamiters, crouching still deeper in the water, advanced a little further.

Now they were under the bridge. Again they awaited the next train, and under cover of the sound of its passing set to work. They distributed the explosives on the piles supporting the bridge, on the structure of the span, and connected them.

They meant to do the job thoroughly while they were about it, so that there should be nothing left. The main mine was intended for pull action; the clatter of three trains was required for the laying of that one. The dynamiters were retiring when they heard the sound of another locomotive. Peering cautiously out from under the bridge, Semyon distinguished the distant form of a super-powerful engine. There could be no doubt about it: this was a long train carrying important freight.

The train had full steam on. It had only just left the station, and on a well-guarded stretch, in the immediate neigh-

bourhood of the town, was racing ahead at terrific speed. The partisans had just time to crawl fifteen or twenty yards away, when Semyon twitched the cord. They saw nothing. All that they had imagined in those exhausting hours of stealing up to the bridge was now behind them. Plunging down, head under water, they deadened the blast, then they stood upright, and floundering with difficulty through the water, hastened back. It took them twenty minutes to make their way from the bridge to the edge of the forest. Stumbling, choking, they fought through the jungle of flags and rushes, until they reached the first trees, then threw themselves on the ground, panting. And it was only then that the machine-guns began to stutter. . .

"Well, that was how we blew up the bridge. . ." Semyon ended his tale.

Ghenka popped up again and gazed with interest at the dynamiter.

"Get a rub down and some sleep at once," the commander ordered Semyon.

Ghenka, astounded to learn that not he, but someone quite grown up, was to be put to bed, gazed round-eyed, uncomprehending. But now it was time to hear the rest of his story.

. . . For half that day, German mortars and guns had been raking the forest. Beside himself with fear, Ghenka, who had left the hospital to look for "a nice branch," had fallen into a deep hole beside the roots of a huge fir, and that saved him. When the firing ceased, he clambered with some difficulty out of his refuge.

This sector of the forest had been riddled with shells, the headless treetrunks stood there, as though sliced off with a tremendous razor. It was as if some gigantic cyclone had swept the place. Every bird had disappeared. Partisan scouts from some distant column, attracted by the sound of firing, were carefully examining the surroundings—there might be Germans about still—when a faint crackle broke the stillness. The partisans were about to fire in the direction of the sound, but at that moment from under the branches of a tree lopped off short by a shell, emerged a little fellow, all bruised and scratched and wearing a torn sheepskin coat.

"Halt! Who goes there?" The words jerked involuntarily from the leading partisan, taken completely aback at the unexpected sight.

"It's me, Ghenka."

And that was how the partisans found Ghenka and adopted him for the second time. The column was going on a raid, and decided to take the child along with them. So here he was, sitting on the floor, playing with his cartridge belt, and waiting for some "Uncle" to come and take him back to the hospital from which he had disappeared a fortnight previously.

. . . We met Ghenka once more. This was on the partisan aerodrome. He was standing by a stretcher, wearing his sheepskin coat which had been mended, and with his mittens hanging on a string over his shoulders. On the stretcher lay the wounded partisan who had called him "Sonny." The man's life was out of danger, but he needed an operation that could be performed only on the "mainland." And the wounded man had begged that Ghenka could come with him. "He's like my own son to me," said the partisan.

. . . The wounded man and Ghenka were put into the aeroplane, and the machine took off. . .

Ghenka is now on the "mainland." Where is he? Rumour has it that the wounded partisan who called him "Sonny" is in Tambov. But perhaps he's no longer there. We know only his name: Ivan Drozdov. The partisans are very anxious to know what "Ghenka the Dynamiter" is doing. . .

THE PARTISAN HUT

The partisan hut. . . Not even the latest topographic map of the Bryansk forest shows such a name. But here everybody knows it. If you tell the commander of a column to "concentrate his forces one kilometre north of the partisan hut," he will not be in the least perplexed, but will lead his column to the exact spot. Scouts, both men and women, come here to report on the enemy's movements, a collective-farm woman who acts as liaison between villagers and partisans comes to the hut to receive the Soviet Information Bureau communiqués, leaflets and newspapers.

Friends throughout the surrounding district pronounce the words "partisan hut" in a tone full of meaning and affection; enemies pronounce it with bitter hatred and fear. Many a time the Germans have burst into the forest from this side,

torn down similar huts, burnt them to the ground and scattered the ashes to the winds, so that not a trace would remain. Yet the "partisan hut" stands as it stood, shelters its own people and preserves their secrets.

Our horses carried us along the narrow forest path; then turning right, we found ourselves in a long cutting or lane that led to a glade. Crossing this, we plunged once more into a thicket of firs. The path wound in and out between the trees. Twigs caught one's clothes, rebounded in one's face, and forced one to crouch low every minute or so over the horse's neck. A hundred yards from the outskirts we saw a rusty-looking pile of withered branches. We rode up to it.

"Here we are," said the commander. He dismounted, tethered the horse and approached the rusty pile. "Here's the 'partisan hut.'"

What was there special about this erection? It was just an ordinary forest hut, such as are scattered everywhere in the woods. They are all alike, all made of shaggy-looking conifers and differ in nothing save, perhaps, size and colouring; one may be quite green, still another grey, a third russet. But all that we had heard about this had stimulated our curiosity, and we asked Mikhail Vassilyevich, the commander, to tell us its history.

"Let's light up first," said Mikhail Vassilyevich. "I've got plenty of our homegrown green tobacco today, let me treat you to some."

The commander drew in the smoke with great satisfaction, and began his story.

"Who the good fellow was who first built this hut, I can't tell you. We came here in November, 1941, when it was still quite new. We had come from another district, and been wandering about in the forest through snow and slush for several days. . . But whatever village we approached was crawling with Germans; they'd get you before you'd time to look around you. We were in summer clothes, wet through, and the wind would cut you to the bone. We were living on grain, the rye that hadn't been reaped yet, peas and lentils from the stacks, we ate nuts and acorns, anything we could get, with ashberries for dessert. And we were mad for a smoke, we smoked oakleaves. And then we came upon this hut. We entered and thought we were dreaming. Three men were sitting beside a wireless-set and listening to Moscow, to the Red Square. It was November 7th, early in the morning. They were from a near-by village, and they'd brought their set with them to the forest when they left. . ."

The commander inhaled the tobacco smoke deeply. The memory of that day still moved him profoundly.

"Only one who was in the enemy rear during the first days of the occupation could conceive what that meant. There were no newspapers, and the most foul rumours were going about: that the Germans had taken Moscow long ago, and were even over the Urals. And here was Stalin's speech! . . We had tears of joy in our eyes."

Mikhail Vassilyevich's cigarette had burned down unnoticed, and began to scroch his fingers. He tossed it aside, blew on his fingers like a child who has hurt itself, and sat silent. It was Vassili Andreyevich who continued the story.

"This hut was the first to take us in then, to warm and comfort us. It seemed like paradise to us. And then everything began to sort itself out. We established our connections, and the hut became a meeting place for scouts. And some day later we joined the 'For Soviet Power' column. Our handful of people attracted all the inhabitants of the district, new ones came to join us, young folks, adolescents, old people as well.

"Life became organized. We built dugouts and became more active. Of course, not everyone acquired courage and skill all at once. Experience was wanting. But the column had blown up its first German lorry on the highroad already on October 20th, 1941: the lorry and sixteen Germans had gone up. Dynamiting was doing quite well. Then once we sent a group to lay an ambush. They were all volunteers, they'd asked for the job themselves. They lay there, waiting. At last a German motor column showed up. The soldiers sitting on the lorries were firing from tommy-guns. They were only making a noise to keep their courage up, but our lads were taken aback, they just lay there and never let out a peep till the column has disappeared round the bend in the road. I was mad, I can tell you! And the commissar kept grumbling and growling,

then at last he looked at them and said suddenly: 'No, ours are plucky chaps, but it's just that they're not used to it. They need to get their hand in.' And then he thought of something: look out there, through that hole. . ."

At first we could understand nothing. No matter how long we stared at the spot the commander pointed out. But then, just as in a child's puzzle picture, a semicircular cutting seemed to extend from the hut through the thick forest,— a "cut," as the commander called it. It was a kind of tunnel driven through the forest, through which the highroad could be seen.

"That's the road to the siding," the commander said by way of explanation. "It's exactly two hundred and seventy-five yards from the hut. And this was where Sergeich decided to get our young folks' hand in. He got skilled woodcutters and cut that hole. . . in one place he'd cut down some trees, in another break some branches, and there you were, a huge telescope in the forest, only lacking the glass. When it was all ready, Sergeich sent for the lads to come here. . . There was a young fellow lying there beside me that day, an Ossetian, who'd worked as a clerk in the collective farm before the war. For some reason or other everyone called him by the Russian name of Vanya. The dying glow of that day was over everything, and it looked wonderfully beautiful in the forest. Nightingales were singing, as though trying to see which could do it best. One was particularly lovely, somewhat just above our heads. I lay there listening to its trilling. Then Vanya whispered:

"'Do you hear it?'

"'What?'

"'How that nightingale's singing?'

"'It's a good singer.'

"'It's like a machine-gun. Listen. . . There's a short burst. Another short one, and now a long one. . . eh, that's the whole disk he's letting off. Fine!'

"I laughed and wanted to listen again, tried to fix my mind on something, but found it impossible. . . However, we did not have long to wait: within a few moments a group of Germans appeared on the road.

"'They're coming,' a breathless scout reported.

"'Get ready,' Sergeich ordered. 'Aim at those thick firs, neither higher nor lower than the dark spots on them. Fire!'

"There was a salvo, then another. Vanya's machine-gun spoke up, scorching the Germans with a stream of hot lead. Sergeich dashed forward, the fallen twigs crackling under his feet. The others followed close at his heels.

"'Did you hear how my machine-gun sang?' asked Vanya. 'Just like the nightingale!'

"We all returned safely to the hut, bringing the Germans' documents and the first captured tommy-guns. The rejoicing was unbounded, the men's eyes glowed with a new light. It turned out that each German had been struck by six bullets, and only two of them had managed to escape. That meant that the young partisans were splendid shots. The next day was the last in the lives of some more Germans, and after that, the lads were always thirsting for a fight. They had got their hand in. Later on, we carried out a couple of dozen assignments, besides ambushes, and the Germans left off roving the forest. The people in our villages took heart and began to arm, self-defence groups were organized; out of these more partisan columns emerged. . . Much water has flown under the bridges since then, but this hut still stands, a memorial to our first partisan nights."

. . . We left the famous hut and took the road back. Coming along the narrow path, we met two young partisans, their tall caps perched at a perilous angle. The air rang with lively couplets. They hailed us cheerfully and, winking at each other, continued their song:

A pleasant study, forest lore.
Jerry trembles in affright.
Dmitri S. sends one train more
Away on wings of dynamite!

It is a long and hard path that the partisans have traversed. Now the forest fighters have become a large, organized force.

"Look here, I copied down in my notebook two unposted letters."

Vassili Andreyevich opened his capacious notebook at one of the first pages. We read:

"My dear, there's no war here any more, the war is over. We are the absolute masters and our lives are in no danger whatsoever. True, they say that some partisans or other have appeared in the forest,

but they are isolated. We shall soon make an end of them. . .” This letter was written by Alfred Werner of Hamburg, and dated October, 1941.

“And now here’s another,” said the commander, turning the pages, and on one of the last we read:

“I was in the forest today with my company. I got back alive, my luck hasn’t deserted me yet. Tomorrow I have to go to another sector, also in the forest. How much longer am I going to tempt fate and get away with it? Once one’s here, there’s no escaping one’s destiny, it’s either sooner or later. None of you can even conceive how terrible these Russian partisans are. It is a war that is being waged here, and one no less fierce than at the front. Don’t any of you think that I’m having a quiet time in the rear.” This letter was written by Sergeant-Major Hans Dauskart of Berlin, and was dated February, 1943.

. . . On the way to the aerodrome we recalled all that we had seen and heard these days. Before the mind’s eye passed stirring scenes of the difficult lives of these people who have concealed themselves in the forest that they may daily and hourly deal blows at the enemy, giving him no rest either day or night. . . Some time later we talked with the partisan leader. As we touched on the tactics of partisan warfare, he observed:

“Actually, if it were not a secret, we could already write a bulky text-book of tactics—how to fight in the German rear. Our operations know few rules and many exceptions.”

This was a particularly interesting conversation, but much that he told us can be made public only the day after the final victory, when the forest is once more deserted and the partisan fighters kill the last German in the territory.

. . . Here was the familiar aerodrome, the light of the fires arranged according to a new system. The “air sentry” was sitting by the fire, listening intently for any sound from the skies. Engines roared, and a light plane slid out of the drifting fog to land on the runway, covered with a layer of dark thawed-out earth. . . The plane had brought Alexei Dmitryevich, Hero of the Soviet Union, and commissar of the partisan column. He was returning from the “mainland” where he had spent several days.

“Well, here I am, home again,” he said as he stepped off the machine, and the words sounded as simple as though the man was opening the door of his home in Moscow with his latch-key.

. . . And now we were in the air again; we had the same navigator, Leo Eirojan, but the pilot was a new one: instead of Yaroshevich there was Major Sushkov, an old “air wolf,” who knew the partisan airways as well as his own hand. Again we looked down at the huge map spread out below the wings of the plane, again saw the sea of lights along the line of the front. We sat there silent, each thinking of the same thing. . .

The aeroplane started and trembled as its wheels touched ground. We were on the “mainland.”

A. KRIVITSKY,
P. KRAYNOV

KOK-SAGYZ

THE AUTHOR EXPLAINS

After the establishment of the Soviet State, the new Soviet industry, set squarely on the rails of a planned national economy, rapidly got under way and soon began to forge full steam ahead. One consequence of this was that the demand for rubber increased by leaps and bounds. Rubber was required by the chemical industry and by the electrical, automobile and aircraft industries. The more up-to-date the factories became, the greater was their demand for rubber.

Owing to its peculiar qualities, rubber was considered as being absolutely irreplaceable.

In Russia there were neither rubber trees nor factories producing synthetic rubber, and the commodity had to be imported. The price of rubber was constantly rising.

The Soviet government announced an All-Union competition for the best method of achieving the industrial production of synthetic rubber.

The winner of the competition was Professor Lebedev, who devised a method

for producing synthetic rubber from spirits.

Things were not allowed to rest here, however, and the search for a more satisfactory solution to the problem went on. Potatoes, the raw material used by Lebedev, were far too valuable, and so the production of rubber from limestone was begun. The Soviet Union became one of the world's largest manufacturers of synthetic rubber.

But the rubber problem was not yet settled. Natural rubber was still required for the manufacture of quite a number of things. Apart from this, synthetic rubber is several times more expensive than natural rubber.

At last the solution was found. Quite unexpectedly a simple weed was discovered which might replace the exotic rubber tree.

. . . When I showed a root of kok-sagyz to a friend of mine, he took it doubtfully in his hand, sniffed at it, laughed and said:

"Well, I can't see anything wonderful about this. It smells a bit like old galoshes. Nothing very interesting about it, as far as I can see."

This is what many people say when they are faced with an unusual phenomenon. And kok-sagyz is a very unusual phenomenon. It is a plant strangely like an ordinary dandelion and, in fact, a close relation of that plant.

During the past ten years the history of this plant has been closely interwoven with the destiny of many millions of Soviet people, and in the present war it is playing a role of no small importance.

How can one remain indifferent to a story written by life itself?

RUBBER HUNTERS

In the 30's of this century, when the problem of industrial independence was in the forefront of the order of the day, the guaranteeing of a home supply of rubber for the Soviet Union became a vital question. [1]

At that time, about fourteen years ago, "rubber hunters" made their appearance in the steppes of Kazakhstan, in the mountains of the Caucasus, in the desert regions of Kirghizia, scrutinizing every "suspected" piece of ground whenever there was any hope of finding rubber-bearing plants. During these years more than 1,000 varieties of the plant were studied.

Rubber had become a sort of noble sport for many people. The search for it was engaged in mainly by amateurs.

The scientists, for their part, believed almost without exception in the dogma that plants having a high rubber content, such as, for example, the rubber tree (hevea), could grow exclusively in the sub-tropic zone. They considered that the natural conditions obtaining in the Soviet Union were such that any attempt at finding or acclimatizing such a plant was doomed to failure from the outset.

It turned out to be the dilettantes and dreamers, however, who were in the right. As early as 1929 the assistant manager of Kara-Chokat Station in Kazakhstan and an assistant surgeon, Karys, in Azerbaidjan, discovered hondrilla. In the same year, Zaretsky, a worker from the Rubber Trust, found a plant called tau-sagyz ("chewing-grass") in the Kara-Tau mountains.

The gulf was bridged. It was now necessary to find a plant with a high rubber content which answered to the requirements of industry.

In July, 1931, six young people occupied a carriage on the Moscow—Frunze express.

Their sportsman-like physique and capacious rucksacks might have led one to suppose that they were tourists or mountaineers. The documents they carried, however, stamped them as something different. The senior of the six passengers was only too willing to display, whenever he got an opportunity, a certificate to the effect that this was a scientific research expedition on its way to central Tien-Shan. These were rubber prospectors.

[1] The events of the war have fully confirmed this. The rubber plantations of the Malay Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula have been temporarily occupied and cut off from England and the United States of America. The only rubber supply left them is that of Ceylon which produces only 100,000 tons per annum. Even including the output of South America and Africa, this is far too little to satisfy the needs of the allies, even if we do not take into account the needs of the Soviet Union.

Bukhanevich, the leader of the expedition, was twenty-two years old. By trade he was a worker in a Moscow aniline factory. True, he had distinguished himself there as an accurate, painstaking and conscientious worker, but none of his comrades ever suspected that he had in him the makings of a research worker and explorer.

For some time people had noticed that Bukhanevich was in the habit of disappearing into the library immediately after work, and sitting there for hours on end. Nobody was particularly surprised at this, for there are many youngsters whose striving for self-education takes the form of reading, often enough indiscriminate and haphazard.

Bukhanevich, however, was not a reader of this sort. He read according to a definite plan: geology, geography and botany. In addition to this he attended the lectures at the Rubber Institute. All this had a mysterious flavour to it, particularly as Bukhanevich began at the same time practising sport and outdoor activities. Horse riding and long hikes took up all his time on his days off.

Bookworm and sportsman—this was certainly an unusual combination.

In spring the bomb-shell burst. When one of his friends asked him how he intended spending his summer holidays, Bukhanevich said:

"In the Tien-Shan mountains."

"What are you going there for?"

"For rubber-bearing plants."

Bukhanevich was no dreamer, nor had he any great craving for adventures. When he set out for the mountains thousands of miles away, he was not inspired by either Jules Verne or Mayne Reid. Bukhanevich knew that there was no natural rubber in the country, that it was difficult to do without it in peace-time, and impossible in war-time.

At Frunze, Bukhanevich and his comrades got out of the train, and, passing the picturesque Issyk-Kul Lake fringed round with impenetrable forests, plunged deep into the trackless Tien-Shan mountains.

The young prospectors put plenty of energy into their expedition. They climbed steep mountain slopes, descended into deep ravines. Not a blade of grass escaped their attention. The herbarium of the expedition swelled to unheard-of proportions. But, frankly speaking, the results were not imposing. The herbarium contained only a few unknown plants, and the rubber content of these was small.

The end of their holiday was drawing near when the honour of the expedition was saved by the keen eyes of Bukhanevich and. . . a lucky chance. He noticed that all the plants which the local inhabitants used to chew contained rubber. They used them like chewing-gum. In the village where they were due to spend their last night in the mountains, they noticed some children chewing away at a certain plant with particular relish. This aroused their suspicions. A test for rubber gave excellent results. The unknown plant had a higher rubber content than any other plant yet discovered.

"What do you call this plant?" asked Bukhanevich eagerly.

"It hasn't got a name, it's just ordinary chewing grass—kok-sagyz," was the indifferent reply.

SCIENTISTS, ORGANIZERS AND THE PLANT ITSELF

Scientists and workers of the Rubber Trust were given the task of carrying out the first large-scale planting of kok-sagyz in 1933. It was not a question of acclimatizing a known plant. The English had taken more than twenty years to acclimatize the Brazilian hevea in Ceylon. The Mexican shrub guayule had been studied, many years before rubber was obtained from it, on the Firestone plantations in Liberia. Ford's laboratories also worked many years before they were able to establish new plantations in Brazil.

But how much more difficult was the task with which the Soviet scientists were faced! Kok-sagyz, krym-sagyz and tau-sagyz were quite new plants, unknown even to the botanists. In a word, the problem was one of cultivating an entirely wild plant and transforming it into a plantation culture capable of providing raw material for mass technical production.

Soviet scientists handled the task with which they were confronted in a brilliant manner.

In record time they forced the new plant to disclose all its secrets: the process

of its development, the conditions required to adapt it to climate and soil, and its resistance to various blasts. They established the most favourable seasons for planting and gathering, the best principles of selection, etc.

The bloodless war for one of the most important raw materials had been won. The rubber problem, whose history is one long list of conflicts and crises, had been peacefully solved in the Soviet Union.

The achievement of this success was due to the unity of theory and practice, a unity which remains the corner-stone of all research work in the Soviet Union, where scientists not only teach the masses but also learn from them. Such scientists as Lyssenko, Vavilov, Grishko and Yakushkin do not disdain the advice of rank-and-file collective farmers, for it was amongst these experienced practical workers that they found the "first-class specialists" who are now gathering bumper harvests of kok-sagyz; such are Shkorov, a collective-farm chairman, Parmuzina, a collective-farm brigade leader, and many others. The combined results of the research work of the scientists and the observations of the practical workers was that kok-sagyz had won the championship. What were the qualities which enabled kok-sagyz to outdo so many rivals?

In the early years the most important question was one of seeds. The rubber-bearing plants previously tested produced but small quantities of seeds, and this was a serious hindrance to cultivating them on anything like a large scale. This was a time when the agronomists insisted on every single seed being collected.

Suddenly the position was reversed with the discovery of kok-sagyz. Bountiful nature had made this new plant exceptionally fruitful (there were no less than three to three and a half million seeds to the kilogram). Planting over a large area now became feasible.

This, however, was not all. Whereas, for example, tau-sagyz demanded a high-quality soil and grew best of all in black soil, kok-sagyz would grow anywhere. The exotic guayule, in its turn, was too sensitive to frosts and could not, therefore, compete with kok-sagyz which is just as hardy in frost and heat. Nor are blasts dangerous to this astonishing plant, which displays a high power of resistance in combating them. All this led to a considerable portion of the thousands of acres set aside for rubber cultivation being planted with kok-sagyz.

NATALYA ARTEMYEVA'S GALOSHES

"Kok-sagyz is a plant that requires plenty of looking after," says agronomist Vorontsov, the district kok-sagyz specialist.

The plant requires great attention, especially during the first period of its development. If the seeds are planted too deep, they don't come up. Weeds easily choke them, and for this reason land relatively free from weeds has to be selected. Frequent weeding and a constant struggle against the encroachment of weeds are the conditions by which a good yield is ensured. A good crop also depends on the promptness with which the proper times of planting and gathering are observed. If you are a bit late in gathering the seeds, the wind carries them away and all your work has been in vain.

Vorontsov, however, does not say how difficult it was to popularize kok-sagyz amongst certain collective farmers, who listened incredulously to the stories that were told them about this new plant, with which they had never come into contact before. During the first year the men were obliged to wage a constant war against the weeds which threatened to choke out of existence the frail newcomer from the Tien-Shan mountains.

Vorontsov remembers that time with a smile.

Natalya Artemyeva said:

"Oh, kok-sagyz means a lot of work."

But Artemyeva does not grumble. Kok-sagyz is not capricious. Of course, it has to be nursed, but if you put in the necessary amount of work it will never let you down.

"You can learn to love kok-sagyz."

Perhaps it was just because it demands such an amount of work and such careful attention that Natalya Artemyeva and her children became kok-sagyz enthusiasts. This love was foster-

ed in them by Ivan Artemyev, the head of the family, who devoted considerable time to discovering the secret of obtaining a good crop of seeds and roots.

When the rush periods of the weeding or harvesting seasons were on, Ivan Artemyev drew his whole family into the work. Even his daughter Vera, who lost her leg in an accident, took part in the threshing.

The Artemyev family together worked 1,300 labour days last year, and by way of a prize for their excellent work in cultivating kok-sagyz were awarded twenty pairs of galoshes. Ivan Artemyev is now at the front. At home there are only women; the work has not been held up for a minute. The whole family remembers Ivan Artemyev's lessons, and they are continuing to work with an energy which shows they have lost nothing of the enthusiasm with which their tireless leader succeeded in inspiring them.

THE SILENT CHUVASH

On the Pushkin collective farm the harvest was in full swing. The cottages were empty, everybody was in the fields. There seemed to be no hurry. In the offices of the management we met the chairman of the farm, Titov. It seemed as though there was nothing on earth that could ruffle this even-tempered individual. It was hard to get out of him how it was that the collective farm was about to fulfil its plan for harvesting kok-sagyz by 200 per cent.

Titov himself does not say much, but there are others who say a lot for him.

When I was in the Kuibyshev Agricultural Department, I announced that I needed information concerning kok-sagyz, and the first words I heard were: "Pushkin collective farm. . ." At the sorting station of the Rubber Trust in Shental they showed me some seed that had been gathered by the Pushkin farm.

"There's quality for you!"

Silent Titov knows how to select his workers and knows how to organize his work. It was, apparently, due to these two reasons that the Pushkin collective farm provided the State with its crop of kok-sagyz seeds and roots several days ahead of schedule.

Kok-sagyz is not only bringing large incomes to the collective farmers but it has also proved a stimulus in the cultural growth of the village. People working on the cultivation of kok-sagyz have acquired new qualifications in agriculture.

A few years ago, for instance, Vorontsov was a brigade leader. He had no other education at that time but what he had managed to glean during four years at an elementary school. This 42-year-old peasant, coming up against a new crop in the course of his work, set stubbornly to work to master it. Today Vorontsov is a man whose knowledge of the business and whose organizational talents have advanced him to the post of agronomist.

POSTSCRIPT

In Number 7 of the *British Ally (Britansky Soyuznik)* of February 14th, 1943, C. Ridley writes:

"The Soviet Union has sent us some kok-sagyz seed which is now being cultivated in the London Botanical Gardens. It will subsequently be planted in various parts of Great Britain on and that has already been selected for this purpose. Kok-sagyz, unlike the rubber tree, grows freely in the latitude of Moscow and can, therefore, be cultivated throughout the territory of Great Britain.

"The Soviet Union, after only twelve years work on kok-sagyz, has been able to send seeds to many allied countries: to India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America."

My article was already written when I learned of this, but it occurred to me that Ivan Artemyev and many other kok-sagyz enthusiasts of his type would be interested to know that the allied countries, which formerly enjoyed a world monopoly in rubber, are now cultivating rubber-bearing plants imported from a country which twelve years ago produced absolutely no natural rubber of its own.

FLING

BOOKS AND WRITERS

ADAM MICKIEWICZ THE POET *

Adam Mickiewicz occupied a place of honour in world literature along with its finest representatives. The high appreciation of his famous poem *Dziady* (*The Ancestors*) given by George Sand is well-known. Gorky placed the poet's name on a level with that of Pushkin and Shevchenko.

The works of Mickiewicz have long been part of the heritage of civilized mankind; they have been translated into Russian, French, English, German, Spanish, Swedish, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Czech, Croat, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, Italian, Persian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Serb, Yiddish and other languages. Russian literature may well be proud of the attention its most outstanding masters have devoted to Mickiewicz. His poems were translated into Russian before any other language by the country's greatest poets headed by Pushkin, and Russian literature also takes first place in the number of translations of the Polish poet's works.

This is explained above all by the spiritual affinity which brought together the finest representatives of Russian culture with the first poet of Poland, and the friendship which sprang up between Mickiewicz and Russia's leading men of letters during the poet's five years' sojourn in Russia in 1824—1829.

Mickiewicz was a poet who devoted his whole life and creative work to the struggle for the freedom of peoples, to the struggle against despotism, against social injustice. His *Ode to Youth*, written in 1820, was a manifesto rallying progressive Polish society to the struggle, it was a banner in this struggle. The poet's verse is imbued with a deep poetical fervour, a lofty striving for freedom and for the happiness of mankind. It is quite natural that Mickiewicz should have found close friends in Russia's men of letters who were moved by the same ideals and aspirations. In a letter to the poet Tumansky the Russian poet Ryleyev, who took part in the famous 1825 revolt against tsarist despotism, recommended Mickiewicz and his friends as follows: "Love Mickiewicz and his friends Malewski and Jeżowski. But there is no need even to mention this: they are already friends in sentiments and ideas, and Mickiewicz is in addition a poet well beloved by his people."

Mickiewicz, a Slav poet in the broadest sense of the word, saw the main danger obstructing the development of Slavdom: the Teutonic danger. Already in his poem *Grażyna*, one of his earlier works, Mickiewicz brands the brutality and barbarity, the haughtiness and perfidy of the Teutonic knights. In his epilogue to the poem Mickiewicz writes "about the unjust and brutal behaviour of the knights," and adds: "One cannot read of their actions without a shudder." He then quotes an instance, confirmed by historians, when the Grand Master of the Order of the Crusaders ordered the right arm of every villager of the Kurland diocese to be hacked off, and concludes with wrath: "Such were the knights of the Teutonic Order, exclusively composed of Germans. It is for this that the Lithuanians and Slavs hated them and called them curs. Bandtke was of the opinion the Field of Curs is so called because of the many Germans that perished on it." In the poem *Grażyna* the courageous Rymwid turning to the prince says he would rather touch a red-hot iron than shake the hand of a Teuton.

The same sentiments are expressed in the poem *Konrad Wallenrod* written in Russia which proclaims duty to one's people as man's highest duty. The songs of the old bard Wajdelota tell of the devastating German incursions into his native land, and are filled with wrath. The bard tells of the Germans who are more terrible than the plague, who leave ruined towns and villages in their wake wherever they set foot, of the whole country being turned into a cemetery.

In his wonderful poem *Pan Tadeusz* a lasting impression is made by the lines in the book VII, which express the joy of the Poles at the defeat inflicted by Napoleon on the Germans. Mickiewicz draws a true picture of the habitual transformation that the Teutonic robbers undergo: only yesterday vaunting their alleged invincibility, now they are cowardly and pitiful "like whipped dogs."

* Adam Mickiewicz, *Selections*. Moscow, The State Literary Publishing House, 1943.

All his life Mickiewicz burned with a sacred hatred for the invaders and enslavers. In his *Book of the Polish People*, written after his departure from Russia, we find the following lines:

"The Germans have made smug wellbeing a deity, reviving the very same idol whose name was Moloch or Kom... The German has made Craft his father and the Beer Hall his mother. Friedrich, whose name means peace maker, plotted wars and brigandage all his long life, and, like Satan, eternally breathed enmity..."

During one of his "Lectures on Slavonic Literature" given in Paris, Mickiewicz, referring to the historic battle of Grünwald, spoke with a shudder of the fate that would have befallen the Slav peoples had they not repelled the enemy. "In the event of victory over Jagiełło," said the poet, "the Germans would have drenched all the Slav lands in blood. The Crusaders stretching out their hand to the Knights of the Sword, would have spread their power from the Vistula to Riga and even right up to the outskirts of St. Petersburg."

Mickiewicz speaks with pride of the high moral qualities of the Slavs, of their great creative abilities, not only in his poems but also in his historical works and his books of literary criticism. "Certain discoveries which the West considers exclusively its own have been made by the Slavs," wrote Mickiewicz, and cited a number of indisputable facts to prove this.

Mickiewicz refuted the age-old falsehood of the Germans who always tried to depict themselves as the standard-bearers of progress and the Slavs as barbarians. "The writers of the Middle Ages and of ancient time," declared Mickiewicz in one of his lectures, "have nothing but praise for the gentle disposition and nature of the Slavs. The Greeks affirm that the words 'cunning' and 'treachery' did not exist in their vocabulary, and that their hospitality was such that they used to leave the doors of their homes open so that the passing traveller could find shelter and food." The poet quotes German scientists who were not afraid to speak the truth about the Slavs and their compatriots. "The philosopher Herder," writes Mickiewicz, "says the Slavs were a blessing to the land which flourished wherever the Slavs appeared. Herder reproaches the Western Europeans, and in particular his compatriots, the Germans, for their continual injustice towards the Slavs." Mickiewicz was proud of the fortitude displayed by the Slavs in the defence of their native soil, and recalled the words of an ancient historian who wrote about them as follows: "They would die to the last man but would never surrender."

In calling for the unification of the Slav peoples, Mickiewicz looked to the Russian people first. In his *History* he wrote that the Polish people "always saw a brother in Russia." His five years' sojourn in that country cemented the poet's ties with the Russians. He was an enemy of despotism, an enemy of tsarist autocracy, he fought for the freedom of his people. But Russia and her people did not personify tsarism to him. In Russia he found supporters and allies. In Russia he found a deep understanding of his poetry, of his talent. At the time when "Warsaw critics and reviewers" whom he sharply attacked were slandering his best works, in Russia he received high recognition from Pushkin, Zhukovsky, Delvig, Vyazemsky, Sobolevsky and many other representatives of Russian society.

In his obituary on Pushkin in which Mickiewicz called the author of *Eugene Onegin* "the greatest writer of his country," he signed himself "A Friend of Pushkin." This friendship was not confined to personal sympathies. In his *Appeal to the Russians*, written by him in 1832, Mickiewicz, expressing his attitude to the Russian people, wrote about "the noble and honest sentiments of the Russians."

The ties that linked Mickiewicz with Russian culture did not weaken with the years. When, in 1940, the Soviet Union honoured the memory of the Polish poet on the occasion of the 85th anniversary of his death, the late Professor T. Boy-Żeleński [1] spoke of this as a new and promising stage in the further study of the heritage of the great poet. Boy-Żeleński stated that a number of works by Russian authors throw a clear light on Mickiewicz as poet and man. A big event was to be the publication of a new four-volume collection of his works; unfortunately it had to be interrupted owing to the war.

The friendship between Mickiewicz and Pushkin became a symbolic expression of the friendship between the two Slav peoples.

In this connection it is useful to examine the Mickiewicz' anthology recently issued by the State Publishing House of Literature in Moscow.

The selection speaks of the desire of the authors of this small volume to show the varied aspects of Mickiewicz' creative work.

Mickiewicz' ballads brought him his first fame as a poet; in these ballads the popular character of his poetry found fine expression. Aleksander Chodźko, a friend of the poet, recalls how Mickiewicz, after reading in Paris a volume of Slav folk songs and tales, said: "Wonderful! With very few exceptions I heard all these songs in Nowogrudok when still a child, in the home of my parents... I knew them all by heart at the time and even now can sing the melody of any of them and correct the errors in the book." And true enough, adds Aleksander Chodźko, the copies which are still extant bear the corrections made by the poet's hand.

In the volume considerable space is rightly devoted to the ballads. Among them is one of Mickiewicz' first ballads *Romanticists*, which, in its time, was a poetical declaration by the author; it expresses admiration of the deep faith in the hearts of the people, the strength of the people who know the truth and believe in it. "If you do not know the living truth, miracles will not be yours. You must have a heart and gaze into it." The volume includes the ballads *Lilje* and *Świtezianka*, written during his stay in Russia in 1827—1828, the Ukrainian ballad *Wojewoda* and the Lithuanian ballad *Budrys and His Sons*, and also his last ballad written in the '30's, *Escape*. *Wojewoda*

[1] Boy-Żeleński was known far beyond the confines of Poland. A Polish writer and critic, and an authority on French literature, he was captured by the Germans in Lwow and died in a concentration camp.

and *Budrys* are known to the Russian reader from the brilliant adaptations by Pushkin.

The ballads take a third of the volume, and lyrical verse is the section most affected by this. But here too, we find Mickiewicz' earlier poems such as the *Song of the Philarets* which rang out like a cry calling on people to struggle against the cold logicians, to struggle for lofty ideals ("Make your strength equal the aim, and not the aim your strength"); the collection includes one of his first sonnets *To the Nieman*, poems dedicated by the poet to his first love, Maryla Wereszczakówna; the section closes with the later poems of Mickiewicz *Death of the Colonel*, dedicated to the hero of the Lithuanian struggle for liberation, the girl warrior Emilja Plater.

A small section is devoted to the poet's *Crimean Sonnets* which won high praise from leading representatives of Russian literature. Pushkin recalls these sonnets in the following words of friendly admiration: "Here Mickiewicz sang, inspired."

Mickiewicz' poem *Farys*, written in Russia and dedicated to the Russian poet Ivan Kozlov, is given in full in this volume. This poem expresses most strongly the romantic aspect of the poetry of Mickiewicz, the passionate impulses of his then troubled and fettered soul. The volume acquaints the reader also with the other longer works of the poet, among them two extracts from *Konrad Wallenrod*: the introduction translated by Pushkin (who meant to translate the whole poem but unfortunately never did so), and the *Song of Wajdelota* earlier mentioned. A small extract is given from book IV of Mickiewicz' epic *Pan Tadeusz*. One of the poet's greatest works, his dramatic poem *Dziady*, which can be ranked with Goethe's *Faust* and Byron's *Manfred*, is represented only by his message *To Friends in Russia*. This extract in itself is most significant since it strikingly defines Mickiewicz' attitude at the time to Russian society, with whose circles he established close ties of friendship. The volume closes with excerpts from Mickiewicz' articles and letters.

Mickiewicz' works are given in the volume both in the old and new translations. In addition to the afore-mentioned brilliant translations by Pushkin, we find the well-known translations by Fet, Shchepkina-Kupernik, Bunin, and the new translations by I. Aksyonov, B. Levik, D. Gorbov, O. Rumer and G. Shengeli.

Not all the new translations are very satisfactory, nor for that matter is the selection of the poet's works of the best. It would have been better, for instance, to include *Ode to Youth* and the whole of the cycle of *Crimean Sonnets* instead of some of the other works. Instead of the excerpt from the book IV of *Pan Tadeusz*, it would have been more to the point to print the afore-mentioned extracts from book VII, which today have acquired a profound meaning. The selection of articles is somewhat casual. Mickiewicz' letters from Russia and about Russia could have been used with success. However the material gives the reader an idea of Mickiewicz' great talent as a poet, the lyricism of his poetry, its popular character and strength of thought.

The authors of the volume have prefaced the translations with Pushkin's famous verse dedicated to Mickiewicz: *He lived among us.*

The volume contains a short but constructive article about the creative path of Mickiewicz. It was written by Helen Usiejewicz, one of the editors of the Polish literary magazine *Nowe Widnokręgi (New Horizons)*, published in Moscow.

This volume published in the Soviet Union will be like friendly fraternal greetings to the Polish people who are courageously fighting against the brutal German oppressors.

MARK ZHIVOV

SOMETHING ABOUT THE WRITERS OF UZBEKISTAN

One day the Uzbek poet Gafur Gulyam invited me to pay him a visit. He did not give me his address but said: "Walk to the 'old town,' ask anyone where I live, and you'll be led to my very door."

There are over a million inhabitants in Tashkent, a good half of them living in the "old town." Yet everyone knows Gafur Gulyam's house, for in Uzbekistan to love and esteem the poets is an age-old tradition. The poet's words are passed from lip to lip, repeated and learnt by heart.

The path of Uzbek poetry through the centuries was no easy one; there were periods when it soared to great heights, and there were periods when it fell into decay. But under the Soviets it blossomed forth anew. Particularly is this true of the last decade. At present several mature and accomplished poets of outstanding originality and individuality, of wide range and variety of form flourish in Uzbekistan. And the war has given the sharpness of propaganda and purpose to their art.

Of Gafur Gulyam, who is descended from several generations of poets, it may indeed be said that he had imbibed poetry with his mother's milk. Life's truth breathes from his works. A poet of his people, he feels his close kinship with all humanity. Whatever the theme, Gafur Gulyam elevates it to the heights of poetic generalization. In speaking of woman and her importance in the world he exclaims:

Thou—all mankind's eternal mother,
Thou—pledge of unending terrestrial life!

And the poet moulds a beautiful, monumental image wherein mother, sister and companion are blended. In Uzbekistan, where for ages woman has been a slave, a chattel, man's plaything, his lines, pervaded with biblical simplicity and forcefulness, carry great impact.

Gafur Gulyam has gone through a hard school. In his boyhood he sold newspapers, was a cobbler's apprentice, a labourer in a tobacco factory and an attendant in an opium den. Having passed through the temptations and evils of the streets, he emerges, under the Soviet system, as an able school-teacher with a profound understanding of the child's

soul. Later he turns active, pointed journalist, and finally professional poet.

Deeply interested and well-versed in foreign and Russian literature, he has made excellent translations of Pushkin, Tolstoy and Shakespeare. Gafur Gulyam's Uzbek version of *Othello* has been on the repertory of the "Khamza" dramatic theatre in Uzbekistan for several years already, and to his pen belongs the translation of Vladimir Maykovsky's poem *At the Top of My Voice*.

A witty narrator, Gafur Gulyam also writes prose; he is the author of subtle, short stories and an autobiographical novel called *The Mischievous Boy*. The spirit of folklore lives in his writings.

Upon presenting General Rokossovsky with a golden goblet, gift of Uzbek people, the poet Khamid Alimjan said: "May this goblet, a token of love, be filled with the wine of victory." Thus does the metaphor, the traditional poetic medium in the Orient, express the sentiments of today. This is characteristic of modern Uzbek poetry. Close affinity with folklore and classical forms is plainly apparent in the writings of the majority of Uzbekistan's poets. With masterly skill Alimjan clothes poignant modern substance in classic form. Khamid Alimjan is probably one of the first of the Uzbek poets to introduce the topical poem wherein political themes are presented in a lyrico-romantic manner. To the latter group belongs *Zeinab and Aman*. It is a poem of young love, eternal, all-absorbing, reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet, and Tristan and Isolde, but with a happy end. "Of friendship and loyalty this is a tale," says the poet. The lovers are indebted for their happiness to their country, where the fetters of Moslem medievalism that spelled slavery to woman were shattered.

Deep attachment to his native country underlies all the poet's creations:

As upon my native earth I tread
A fuller feeling lives in me,
And the ground of its blossoming gardens
At every step I am ready to kiss.

And this feeling of love for the country is particularly strong in his war-time poems: *Moscow, Trick-riders Go to the Front, We Will Conquer, Mother* and many others.

In his historical drama *Mukanna*, Khamid Alimjan also draws inspiration from the theme of devotion to the homeland and freedom, and man's struggle for them.

This play, dealing with a national hero of the eighth century, is written in verse. It is a heroic tragedy with Shakespearean approach to character and human passions, and is dedicated to the struggle of the peoples inhabiting present-day Uzbekistan against the Arabs who had enslaved the land in the seventh and eighth centuries. The second half of the eighth century saw a popular movement against the Arabs rise in the country; at the head of it stood Hashim, nicknamed Mukanna, a man of great will-power, keen, piercing mind and big soul.

Mukanna, as drawn in the play, is profoundly human and manysided. His wife Gulayin is depicted as a Jeanne d'Arc of the East. Her fortitude and prowess, coupled with touching femininity and tenderness, make her an admirable and charming character.

Miniature of Babur, by an unknown artist, dating from the middle of the sixteenth century

"The strong romantic colouring of Uzbek poetry does not, however, deter realistic principles from triumphing," says the poet Sheikh-zade in characterizing the chief tendencies of his native poetry.

Sheikh-zade himself is a poet of peculiar mould. He was born in Azerbaidjan near Ganja (now Kirovabad), birthplace of the great Nizami [1], and has absorbed the influences of two cultures—the eastern and the western. From his schooldays he is familiar with the finest specimens of world literature: Shakespeare and Byron, Pushkin and Lermontov, Racine and Hugo, Navoi [2] and the Turkish writers of the nineteenth century. He knows and deeply appreciates the "Parnassians."

Sheikh-zade, a poet and scholar, a theoretician of literature and a historian, is the author of several monographs on world classics, including Rust'haveli, Goethe, Pushkin, Lermontov, Mayakovsky, Navoi and Babur [3]. He has also written a survey of Uzbek folklore.

Sheikh-zade's verse is philosophic. In one of his poems on the present war, *Wherefore*

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[1] Great Azerbaidjan poet of the twelfth century (1141—1203).

[2] Classic of Uzbek literature (1441—1501).

[3] Founder of the Great Mogul dynasty in India (1483—1530), Tamerlane's great-grandson and one of the classics of Middle-Asian literature.

the Struggle, Sheikh-zade gives vivid utterance to what man must fight for in order to preserve life and dignity.

For childhood, youth, old age, blood and vengeance!
For our safety, freedom, honour,
For the songs of tender mothers,
For the beauty of sisters and daughters
Who know not the shame of the paranja [1];
For our lands and boundaries,
For cotton, bread and Aktash honey,
For each orchard's sweetest fruit,
For our grand Ferghana canal,
For ancient palaces, for Samarkand,
For Ulug Bek's [2] *tomb, for the fate*
Of science we wage this struggle.

Miniature of Alisher Navoi by Makhmud Musakhib, dating from the middle of the sixteenth century

[1] Black horse-hair veil worn over the face by women in the East; a symbol of woman's servitude.

[2] Ruler of Samarkand (1394—1449); well-known astronomer and mathematician.

The monumental poem called *Joseph Stalin*, in which the poet draws a vivid picture of the leader, friend and defender of toiling humanity, is one of Sheikh-zade's finest works.

From Sheikh-zade's writings also rises the figure of his favourite poet Navoi.

Alisher Navoi has proved an inspiration to other poets besides Sheikh-zade. Eminent Uzbek poet and prose-writer Aibek makes him the hero of one of his novels. Aibek, who began his literary career as a lyric poet, writing symbolic and romantic verse, has in recent years produced broad realistic canvases in prose.

Aibek is in the habit of saying that he has learnt a great deal from Balzac, his beloved writer. In his first novel *Sacred Blood* Aibek portrays the life of pre-revolutionary Uzbekistan, a tsarist colony. Contemporaries, the scene and pattern of life are reproduced with genuine realism. *Sacred Blood* presents a complete gallery of types: merchants, artisans, servants, intellectuals and the town poor, with an artless village lad Yulchi as the central character. After his father's death Yulchi, in search for a means of livelihood, is driven to the city, where he is hired by his own uncle, a rich Tashkent merchant. Mirza-Karim-Bai is a rapacious man who exploits his nephew and robs him of his beloved Gulnar, daughter of a labourer also in Karim-Bai's employ. Gulnar has caught the fancy of the merchant, and he buys and marries her. Without paying him for his labour, he drives Yulchi out of his house.

Aibek has been to the front of the Patriotic War. With the meditative gaze of a thinker and poet he surveyed the terrible destruction wrought by the fascists. He saw blood, the earth stripped bare, orphaned children. He saw heroes, simple courageous folk. He saw the strongly-knit brotherhood of all the peoples of the U.S.S.R., and in their midst his own people who had given the world many legendary heroes like Kuchkar Turdyiev, like Sirojeddin Valiyev who was killed in action, and many others. War and the country's defenders form the theme of Aibek's latest novel. And in his art he has attained the maturity of a man to whom it is clear that to live calmly so long as a single enemy tramples Soviet soil is impossible.

Alimjan, Gafur Gulyam, Sheikh-zade and Aibek are of the same generation in literature and form one group. In recent years young poets have come to the fore. Their works, written prior to the war, are joyous and optimistic. War has charged their voice with passionate wrath and hatred. It has made them more poignantly and profoundly aware of themselves as citizens of the Soviet Union. Their fathers and elder brothers had shed their blood to establish the Soviet power. So young and old must defend their Soviet homeland. Many of these young writers are at the front, and each may apply to himself the words of Sultan Babur, poet-soldier of the sixteenth century: "I take the sword when need demands, I take the pen when possible."

For the poet Davron, Moscow is a symbol of his mother country: "Moscow, you are our mother." This attitude to Moscow is very

typical, there being hardly an Uzbek poet who has not written poems on Moscow.

"Through the ages the heroes of the Patriotic War and the courage of the Soviet warriors will be chanted," the poet Timur Fattah said once. In his short poems (dastans) he sings of the heroes and their deeds. The epos and the intimate lyric are like two currents that blend harmoniously in his poetry. One of his poems, which bears the name of an Uzbek national string instrument, the dutar, speaks of bygone ages; the voice of the dutar is as lasting as the voice of glory.

The dutar is the friend of the story-tellers and minstrels, the so-called "bakhshi." They visit distant mountain villages of Uzbekistan and its sunny steppes, every place of human habitation, and no scene of festivity is complete without them.

His figure stoops like a bent saz [1],
His cheek by the grey wind is scorched;
All poesy's anguish pours into his heart,
And lo! with the dawn a song for the singer is born.

This is how Sheikh-zade describes the bakhshi. It is said of these story-tellers that there are more lines of poetry in their memories than stars in the sky. From olden times, Oriental peoples claim that the poet's memory holds forty thousand lines by other poets (he must know his own thoroughly), forty long poems, four hundred stories, four thousand anecdotes and four thousand sayings.

The Uzbek national epos has existed for ages, and contemporary poets draw from the rich reservoir of folklore. Folk poetry finds vivid expression in that peculiar poetic genre come to birth in original letters in verse, addressed by the Uzbek people to Stalin, to the Red Army, to collective farmers, etc.

These letters of the Uzbek people acquire special significance in war-time, showing how Uzbekistan, the sunny republic of the Soviet Union, is doing its utmost for the front.

New irrigation canals water the parched expanses of Uzbekistan, and thousands of acres of what was formerly desert have borne a rich harvest. Uzbek youth has gone to war. There are families with five or more sons in the ranks. Women, children and old folks work selflessly on the home front.

An age-old custom after the day's work is for the old men to gather in the "chaikhana," local tea-house, and take a leisurely cup of tea. They drink from the gay tea-bowls called "pialas" and discuss the war, share the latest news and read letters from dear ones at the front.

Often the bakhshi are present at these gatherings. Among them are many famous story-tellers such as Fazil and Yolam-Shair. Here, in the tea-houses, they come into close touch with the burning topics of the day, improvise new songs that form a new current of strength flowing into the national treasury of poetry.

Behold a new dastan is sung
Of the new times and the new heroes,

Sheikh-zade writes.

And today Uzbek poetry is nurtured by the new times and the new heroes.

LYDIA BATOVA

THE MEMOIRS OF A SCHOLAR*

Just as Constantine Stanislavsky called his famous book *My Life in Art*, so might Academician Krylov's reminiscences be called *My Life in Shipbuilding*.

For, like Stanislavsky's book, this is the particular type of autobiography in which the writer speaks less of himself than of the work to which he has given his life. Nevertheless, the man himself, the great Russian scholar, the technician, stands out—vivid, unforgettable—from its pages. Krylov has done everything to give his particular branch of Russian science a place worthy of it in the progress of science and technology.

Very marked in this book is that trait of the Russian character so often noted abroad: the capacity for selfless devotion to one beloved speciality, without becoming a narrow, practical expert or a dry-as-dust scholar aloof from the changing world. Like the scientists, mathematicians, and ship-builders who are brilliantly drawn in his book, Krylov is endowed with the versatile and what Gorky has called the "fantastic" talent of the Russian.

Talent of this order is shown by the remarkable self-taught ship's engineer, Peter Titov who could make the most complicated plans, judging by his eye alone. Some of the most outstanding Russian and foreign specialists marvelled at Titov's original and fruitful methods of work.

The book is interesting from another aspect, too. It is a literary memorial to the creative collaboration of Russian military and scientific thought in the struggle for the country's defence power. From his youth, the author had the opportunity to follow in the finest traditions both of Russian science and of the Russian army's heroic struggle for his native land. The boy who was one day to become famous as a builder of Russia's ships, grew up in a family closely connected with I. Sechenov, the great physiologist. As a child he visited the Sechenov estate and was present at the lectures given for the benefit of relatives and friends. Young Krylov, by the way, contributed to these lectures by providing an unfailing supply of frogs for them. He says that at the age of eight or nine he knew the anatomy of the frog very well, and, in his turn, delivered lectures on the subject to his playmates, dissecting the frogs with a pen-knife after his own fashion.

Krylov's father served in the army as an artillery-officer for several years, which included the Crimean war period. In the seventies of last century the family resided in Sevastopol, and here, from the lips of those who had taken an active part in its defence,—retired naval officers and admirals who visited his father,—he heard, as a boy of eleven, thrilling stories of this heroic episode in Russia's military history. It should here be pointed out that his

[1] National Uzbek stringed instrument.

* *My Reminiscences*, by Academician A. N. Krylov. Published by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., 1942.

father, an energetic, active, much travelled man who was one of the first conciliators, had considerable influence on the whole course of Krylov's life.

But it was the war of 1877—1878 and the exploits of the Russian seamen that inclined Krylov, who, at fourteen, had already been abroad with his father and visited France and Algiers, as well as various parts of Russia, to consider the question of entering the navy.

"You love the sea yourself. . . I don't want to spend my time grinding at Latin and Greek. Put me in a naval school," he said to his father.

His father gave his consent.

In the naval school of the time the spirit of progress that was in the traditions of the sixties and of the Russian social movement; the spirit of enlightenment and desire for self-education; the spirit of inquiry that led to keen interest in new scientific ideas, researches, and bold practical experiments, were still potent. Krylov's native ability throve in this atmosphere and permitted him, while still at the naval school, to turn out work that, according to his teachers' testimony, was not produced even in the Naval Academy.

As his autobiography develops, Krylov gives a detailed account of this scientific and practical work that yielded results of such consequence for Russian science and the Russian Navy.

Of particular interest is his description of the theory he founded of the "capacity to survive" and the "unsinkableness" of war-vessels. In his creative work in this field he was the direct successor of the well-known Russian Admiral S. Makarov. This theory had great and far-reaching practical effects.

He can be justifiably proud of the vessels built under his direction. One of his achievements was that an ironclad "retained her power and fighting capacity as long as possible." The viability of the ships-of-the-line constructed according to the principles he worked out, far exceeded that of their foreign contemporaries, and they are to this day in good fighting form, serving their country.

Since, however, Krylov's book gives a picture of much more than the results of the author's technical work, it is of interest to wide circles of readers. The *Reminiscences* trace the whole course of his life, of that "means of living" that rendered his life so fruitful. Here we recognize that perseverance and consistency, those untiring efforts to deepen the knowledge acquired, to test it by experience, that were characteristic of the great physiologist Ivan Pavlov. These are characteristics that were bound up indivisibly with the traditions of Russian science.

Upon graduating from the Naval Academy and becoming a lecturer, Krylov, at twenty-seven, attended lectures in higher mathematics at the University of St. Petersburg—"so as not to waste any time."

Twenty-five years later, in 1914, when the Naval Academy was not enrolling students, Professor Krylov employed his spare time in translating Newton's *Principia* and writing a commentary to it. Another twenty-five years passed, and found Academician Krylov, now over seventy years of age, and prevented by ill-health from conducting his usual course in the Naval Academy, working out scientific problems concerning compasses. For this work he was awarded a Stalin Prize of the first grade. It is typical that the book under review, a work of 234 pages, was written by the author in Kazan between August 20th and September 15th, 1941.

Krylov has been able to combine theoretic depth with practical "shrewdness"; his scientific work is distinguished by the concrete, sober quality, characteristic of the Russian mind, which Byelinsky termed "practical." Krylov is a true representative of that progressive science of which Stalin spoke. He knew how to deal with old routine methods of work that ran in grooves, and how to fight masterfully, purposefully, against those who clung to them. He trained a whole school of theoreticians and practical ship-builders, inspired with the daring spirit of the innovator that found full scope in the conditions prevailing in the Soviet State.

Krylov had faith in the talent of the Russian. Racily and not without sarcasm he describes his struggles with the ill-will and routine methods of the tsarist ministers and officials. It cost him no small effort to clear the path for the inventions—military inventions among them—of gifted Russians who were to a great extent self-taught, had no diplomas to show, or stood too far down the social ladder, in the opinion of the bureaucracy, to be deserving of attention. Barriers of this kind were swept away by the Soviet State. Under the Soviet regime, Russian shipbuilding was given unheard-of scope and scale. Instead of the twenty-four students who enrolled for the shipbuilding course at its inception, there are now, as Krylov points out, three hundred.

One can name few volumes of autobiography and memoirs, either Russian or foreign, that give so vivid an account of a life devoted to science and technology as Krylov's *Reminiscences*. The book's high qualities are determined by the author's interest in talented people, in his ability to sense and to convey peculiar traits of character; by his humour, by the ripeness, the finish and pointedness of his language; by his gift for stating clearly and simply the essence of most complex technical problems.

J. YEFIMOV

WHY U.S.A. IS FIGHTING GERMANY

The book under review [1], which has aroused widespread interest among the Soviet reading public, is the work of a former Soviet ambassador to the United States of America. In it Alexander Troyanovsky deals with the fundamental principles of American foreign policy, with the origin of the Monroe Doctrine and ist application during the past 120 years. The author stresses the fact that the Monroe Doctrine rejects the right of any non-American State to

[1] Alexander Troyanovsky: *Why the U.S.A. Is Fighting Against Hitler Germany*. Amalgamated State Publishers, Moscow, 1942.

extend its possessions in America and moreover regards as intolerable any attempt on the part of the European powers to impose their political systems on any part of the American continent. Troyanovsky goes on to outline the development of American foreign policy from Monroe to Franklin Roosevelt, going so far as to include the latter's own statement on the changes that have taken place in the world situation during these 120 years. As Roosevelt himself pointed out, from 1812 to 1914 no war in Europe or Asia constituted any threat to the U.S.A. But, as early as the beginning of 1941, Roosevelt drew attention to the fact that with the use of modern methods of conducting warfare, an attack on the United States of America was brought well within the bounds of possibility. And in December, 1941, it will be remembered, the U.S.A. was attacked.

The historical section of Troyanovsky's book deals briefly with the way in which Imperial Germany interfered with the United States in her pacific policy and how the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II also intervened in American affairs. We are reminded how Wilhelm II's government brazenly intervened in the affairs of Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, and that Germany, indeed, violated time and again the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine.

We then come to the circumstances leading up to the war between the U.S.A. and Germany in 1917, the Zimmerman telegram, the sinking of the "Lusitania" and the organization of sabotage in the U.S.A. by the German diplomats von Papen and Boy-Ed.

Defeated in the first World War of 1914-1918, Germany seized avidly on the Wilson programme, only, as Troyanovsky points out, to begin later on—after Hitler's accession to power in 1933—to violate all her treaty obligations and prepare for a new war in which she set herself the goal of world domination.

The book lays bare to the reader the methods used by Germany in gaining a foothold in Latin America—the economic penetration of the thirties of the present century, and the establishment in Latin America of a number of fascist strongholds which constituted a threat to the U.S.A. from both the political and the military points of view. A list is given of the conspiracies, terrorist acts and sabotage perpetrated or inspired by nazi agents in the American countries, including the U.S.A.

The author next examines the rise of isolationism in the United States Congress. He explains the tremendous significance of the neutrality laws operating from 1935 to 1939, which greatly hampered the president and prevented the United States from taking part in the international struggle against aggression. President Roosevelt was fully aware of this danger and frequently called his fellow-citizens' attention to it. He never lost an opportunity of speaking in favour of peace and against the use of force in international relations. But his efforts to dissuade the aggressor countries from resorting to violence met with failure, and the U.S.A., in her turn, was compelled to take up arms in self-defence against nazi Germany and her satellites. The United States could not but realize that the struggle of Great Britain and, later, that of the Soviet Union, against nazi Germany was of vital importance to her. The United States might well find herself in a catastrophic situation in the event of Germany being victorious in Europe. For this reason the help which the United States afforded Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. prior to her own entry into the war was in her own interests. This fact is now a matter of common knowledge, the truth of which is acknowledged by the vast majority of the American people.

In this connection the author points out that Hitler, when he launched his treacherous assault on the Soviet Union, intended to utilize the tremendous resources of the latter country in order to renew his attacks on the two great Anglo-Saxon powers, the United States of America and Great Britain, with redoubled strength. Hitler counted on having an isolated Soviet Union to contend with; upon his speeches about a "Crusade" against Bolshevism temporarily drawing over the U.S.A. and Great Britain to his side so that he might defeat them later.

Hitler, however, deceived nobody and, far from achieving his object, he found himself faced with the establishment of the Anglo-Soviet-American coalition.

Alexander Troyanovsky shows how this coalition grew stronger, mentions the important diplomatic negotiations which made this possible and traces the steps that led the aggressor powers to throw down the gauntlet before the U.S.A. in December, 1941.

Then we come to the role of the U.S.A. in strengthening the power of the anti-hitlerite coalition. In the past American war industry had lagged sadly behind her general economic power. The United States, a country of the greatest economic power, did not possess weapons commensurate with her size and strength. From 1941 to 1943 this disproportion had to be liquidated in the shortest possible time.

And so the author brings us to the events of the present day, when confirming the prophetic remarks of Marshal Joseph Stalin, the war for the freedom of the Soviet Union is linking up with the joint struggle of the nations of Europe and America for their independence and democratic liberties.

The 11th of June, 1943, marked the first anniversary of the Soviet-American Agreement on the principles and methods of mutual aid and the conduct of the war against aggression. This agreement, as V. M. Molotov pointed out in his report to the session of the Supreme Soviet on the 18th of June, 1942, is not only an acknowledgement of the fact that military cooperation in the present war against hitlerite Germany has been firmly established between U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., but that the joint line of action of both countries in the post-war period has been mapped out. Agreement has been reached between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. on the question of improving international relations after the war in the interests of permanent peace.

The Soviet reader will find much of interest in Alexander Troyanovsky's book. It is written in simple, popular language and gives an adequate general picture of the fundamentals of American foreign policy.

I. ZVAVICH

CARTOONS BY BORIS YEFIMOV

WILD BEASTS DOG-WHIPPED

The Berlin lie mongers are busy engineering denials in a frantic effort to conceal at all costs the fact that Hitler issued an order for a "General Advance" on 5th July.

Newspaper cutting

THERE...

...AND BACK

VIEW OF THE "ATLANTIC WALL"

The prohitlerite newspaper *Newe Rotterdamske Currente* which is circulated in Holland publishes the impressions of their special correspondent after his visit to the "Atlantic Wall." A suppressing "richness" of expression characterizes these impressions which contain such pearls as: "Your correspondent sensed an invisible, threatening danger as he stood there inspecting that which, as a matter of fact, was quite invisible..."

DUTCH EYE-WITNESS AT WORK

SOVIET CINEMA ENTERS THE THIRD YEAR OF WAR

The Soviet cinema has always fostered in the Soviet film-goer the feeling of selfless love for country, readiness to fight courageously for its honour and independence, understanding of the community of interests of all the freedom-loving peoples in the face of aggressive and misanthropic Hitlerism. "If tomorrow bring war, if tomorrow the clash, be today for the battle prepared," runs the refrain to a popular pre-war song written for one of the films by the well-known Soviet poet Vassili Lebedev-Kumach.

From the beginning of the war Soviet cinema adapted its repertory to the needs of the country's defence, depicting and popularizing in various forms the most outstanding events taking place on the front and in the rear. Soviet newsreel workers have produced films destined to become historical documents from which future generations will learn the story of the defeat of the nazi tyranny. Beginning with miniature newsreel pictures, known as "cinema magazines," they produced the now world-known documentary films *Moscow Fights Back*, *Stalingrad*, etc.; such is the path traversed by the Soviet newsreel in two years war.

The same development is true of Soviet cinematography as a whole. Beginning with short films depicting front-line episodes and life at the front, Soviet cinema workers, despite wartime difficulties, have already produced a number of important pictures illustrating the life and struggle, thoughts and feelings of the Soviet people in war-time. One of the most successful films of this type is the Stalin Prize winner *Partisans*, produced by Ivan Pyryev. Since then many other films dedicated to the war have come to the Soviet screen.

According to all indications, this war has witnessed the growing popularity of Soviet newsreel films abroad. This, it seems to us, is due not only to the natural interest in the major events of the war, but also to the selfless work of Soviet cameramen who proved worthy companions of the Red Army. Cameramen are at work all along the vast front from Murmansk to the Kuban. The cameramen may be found advancing with the infantry or accompanying pilots on their flight. There have been frequent cases of cameramen taking part in air battles. Recently, for example, the cameraman Sher accompanied pilots on a flight to bomb German trains. The plane with Sher aboard was attacked by a group of enemy fighters. Abandoning his camera for the machine-gun, Sher shot down one of the nazi fighters. It is a pity that he could not simultaneously operate his camera to record this interesting battle.

Soviet cameramen are frequent guests of partisan detachments operating deep in the enemy rear. Incidentally, the term "guests" is hardly correct. For example, cameraman Joseph Veinerovich who spent a considerable time with one of the partisan detachments, came in for mention by its command. "We considered him a partisan like ourselves," said the commander of the detachment, referring to Veinerovich. "He displayed remarkable courage in action when the detachment was locked in battle with two German regiments, and managed to record a number of interesting episodes from these military operations."

The labour front and fighting front are the dominant themes of Soviet newsreel pictures. The spectators see the Red Army on the offensive, its soldiers overcoming powerful enemy fortifications, taking German blindages by storm. Fighting for every inch of Soviet soil, the advancing Soviet units hurl the enemy back to the west. Battles produce heroes. One of the incidents shown on the screen, for example, tells the story about courageous women collective farmers. This was during the fighting in the Kuban, when one of the field guns ran short of shells. The women, whose village had just been liberated by the Red Army, volunteered to help the artillerymen and, defying enemy fire, brought up the shells, enabling the gun to keep up steady fire at the nazis.

The screen immortalizes the name of the hero wherever it is impossible to show him in action. There was the case of Ilya Shelunov, private of a sapper battalion on the Volkhov front. During the German offensive he was wounded by a mortar bomb-splinter. Another splinter tore off his left arm. But the hero continued to fight, and only collapsed when he sustained the third, mortal wound. He died with the words: "I'm dying, but you carry on and win the victory." Not in vain was the idol of the German imperialists, King Frederick of Prussia, reported to have remarked: "It is not enough to kill a Russian soldier. He must be knocked out. . ."

The name of Ilya Shelunov is forever recorded in the list of his unit. The screen shows the roll being called in the unit where the hero once served. When his name is called, the man on the right flank salutes: "Red Army man Ilya Shelunov died a hero's death in battle for his country."

Thanks to the cinema the names and deeds of many distinguished soldiers will forever remain in the memory of the people.

Many Soviet newsreel pictures are dedicated to the Soviet Union's Allies in the war against Hitlerism. This is the second principal theme of Soviet newsreel films of the war. Many stills depict the Czechoslovak unit under the command of Colonel Ludvik Svoboda, successfully operating on the Soviet-German front. Other films show French airmen of the Normandie Squadron in action against the Germans on one of the sectors of the Soviet-German front. A prominent place is held by films showing Anglo-American operations in Africa, air raids on military objectives in Hitler Germany and Italy, and the growing fighting capacity of the Allies of the U.S.S.R.

The third principal subject of Soviet newsreel films is life in the Soviet rear—millions of people selflessly working for the front. A permanent feature is "Contributions to the Special Fund of the High Command" which shows the exploits of the Soviet patriots on the labour front.

Galina Oginko, a Ukrainian girl, had no previous experience in industry. Her beautiful country is suffering under the German yoke. There in the inferno of Hitler's "new order" is her father. The feelings that prompt this girl as she works at her machine, fighting for her country, for her father, are comprehensible to everyone. Galina produced hundreds of shells above plan. The spectator can see the shells ready for shipment to the front.

The screen tells the story of how the entire Soviet country is taking part in the restoration of heroic Stalingrad where the factories will soon begin production for the front.

The newsreel gives an idea of the various forms of aid received by the Red Army from the Soviet people. There are gifts from collective farmers, and not only in the form of produce, but also planes and a lot of tasty foodstuffs; there are parcels neatly wrapped by Soviet youngsters; there is blood given by donors to save the life of wounded men. Some of the donors, as for example Nikolai Ivanov, veteran donor of the city of Sverdlovsk, have donated blood more than fifty times.

The greatest number of stills perhaps is dedicated to the Urals—backbone of Soviet defence. Much space is devoted to the country's cultural life. Naturally, however, every field of life is closely connected with the prosecution of the war. Leningrad is celebrating: the Gorky Dramatic Theatre has come back here to stay. And immediately the memory reverts to the brilliant successes of the Red Army during the great winter offensive, when it pierced the blockade of the City of Lenin.

The war has greatly complicated the work of Soviet cinema studios. The majority of them have been evacuated to the interior. This has to some extent retarded the production of new pictures, but, on the other hand, has proved rather beneficial in many ways. It brought closer the various studios in the national republics of the Soviet Union, and many films were produced by combined efforts. The most successful joint production is *Jan the Elusive*—a product of the combined effort of Russian and Georgian cinema workers. The Kiev Technical Film Studio, evacuated to Central Asia, very soon became "acclimatized," and produced the interesting scientific film *In the Sandy Deserts of Central Asia*.

The art film *She Defends Her Country*, produced by Stalin Prize winner Friedrich Ermler—a pioneer in Soviet sound cinema and well-known by the film *Great Citizen*—shows the war in action and the making of a Soviet partisan. In this film Ermler had the cooperation of skilled cinema workers, his collaborators of many years. It is a story of partisan detachment under commander P. This initial stands for the name of a Russian woman who had become a terror to the German invaders. The value o fthe picture consists precisely in that it unfolds the drama of human suffering and pride which transforms a peaceful Soviet peasant woman into a partisan commander.

A still from the film "She Defends Her Country"

There are special favourites of fortune whom success accompanies in every undertaking. Such was the pre-war life of the heroine of this film, a happy wife and mother, famous Stakhanovite decorated for her successes at work; her sparkling wit, sense of humour and cheerfulness made Praskovya a favourite in her village. And this bright life was rudely broken on the tragic morning of June 22nd, 1941. Hitlerite planes cast sinister shadows over Praskovya's native country, her collective farm and her home. War entered her home. Her husband had been wounded at the front and during the evacuation to the rear was killed together with a group of other wounded Red Army men by German motorcycle skirmishers. But a still heavier blow awaited the heroine. The truck in which she travelled with her child was overtaken by the nazis. Praskovya was rudely thrown onto the highway, and her child was crushed under the caterpillars of a German tank while his mother looked on.

It seemed as if the tragedy would crush her. The mother's heart seemed turned to a lump of ice. Wild-eyed, half-crazy Praskovya escaped from the enemy's clutches, roamed the forest. In her wanderings she came upon a camp set up by a group of peasants from her native village in a remote spot in the forest. A collective farmer sent out to reconnoiter returns back with the warning shout of: "Germans!" A voice behind the screen cried menacingly: "Where?" It was Praskovya in whom the word "Germans" seems to arouse the greatest hatred and lend clarity and determination to all her deeds. The peasants, unarmed and frightened by the German atrocities, are at first dismayed. Panic ensued, with people dashing from pillar to post, children crying. A sudden command from Praskovya calmed them. A small detachment spontaneously gathered around her, ready to rush forward at the enemy. She herself was impelled on by one dominating feeling. Thus Praskovya became an avenger for her desecrated country, for her child crushed to death, for her ruined happiness. In the natural course of events she became the leader of her fellow-villagers. Armed with pitchforks, axes and fowling-pieces, the farmers under the command of Praskovya scored their first victory over the Germans. Thus a partisan detachment was formed under commander P.

The effectiveness of this part of the film, on the whole rather uneven, is primarily due to the brilliant performance of Vera Maretskaya who plays the part of Praskovya. She is an actress of rare talent and sincerity. The spectator frequently finds it hard to believe that the character of the heroic woman collective farmer is played by the same Maretskaya who gave such a striking and faithfully convincing presentation of the sprightly and cunning Spanish woman in Goldoni's *Mistress of the Inn*, or of the modest, shy Soviet girl in Afinogenov's play *Mashenka*. The actress brilliantly conveys the passion, the suffering of the mother whom grief had turned to stone. Praskovya's experience is reflected in her every move. As presented by Maretskaya, Praskovya becomes a symbol of the ruthless vengeance of the people upon their bitterest enemies, the murderers of civilians, of women, children and aged. Anyone who read Gordon Boshell's book *John Brown's Body* can get some idea of what the human will is capable when it is concentrated upon one aim. It is precisely this noble obsession by one thought, one feeling, that Maretskaya portrays in the role of Praskovya.

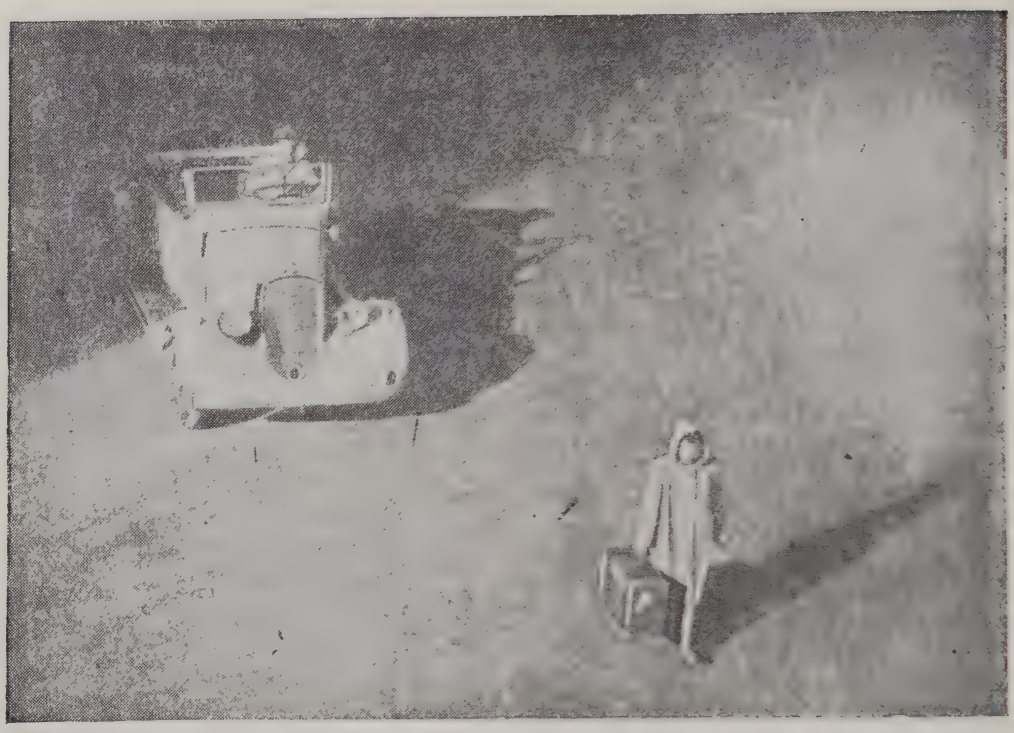
A still from "Jan the Elusive." E. Samoylov in the title role

There is no need to review the picture in detail. Everyone who wants to know and understand why all the enemies of the Russian people, beginning with the Polish gentry who attacked Russia in 1612, including Napoleon's army and now the Hitlerites, have always been and still are so mortally afraid of the operations of Russian partisans, must see this film. Soviet critics do not consider it perfect, nor do they consider it one of the best achievements of the Soviet cinema. There was much criticism expressed about the authors of the play. There is no continuity of plot. The unfolding of Praskovya's character and the changes wrought in it by the war, are the main factors which should have determined the development of the plot. There is no doubt that Maretskaya's performance would have been even better were it not for the limitations imposed by the scenario.

The picture has many tragic moments. There are scenes which cannot be recalled without a feeling of horror. Nevertheless even this film does not fully reflect the atrocities of the hitlerite cannibals. This task still remains one of the most important problems of the Soviet cinema. The difficulties of its solution naturally evolve from the fact that a normal human being, with even unlimited powers of imagination, cannot conceive what the hitlerite two-legged beasts are doing in the temporarily occupied Soviet districts.

The tragic character of some episodes of the film does not nevertheless detract from its optimism. Characteristic in this respect is the end. At a moment when the Hitlerites are tightening the noose around the neck of the heroine who fell into their hands, she is freed by the partisans who come to her aid. Such a happy end to a tragic situation seems neither artificial nor deliberately modelled on the specifically happy-end cinemas. It is based on the profound faith of the people in final victory over the vindictive enemy, on the irresistible desire of the Soviet people to see their favourite heroes safe and ready for new battles for the country.

For its ideological purposefulness the film *She Defends Her Country* has much in common



A still from the film "Jan the Elusive"

with *Jan the Elusive*, which may serve as an example of the successful treatment on the screen of another leading theme of the Soviet war-time cinema. The heroes of *Jan the Elusive* are also defending their country, Czechoslovakia, one of the first to fall a prey to the onslaught of Hitlerism. Beginning with isolated struggle against the enemy, the heroes of this film end by joining the ranks of the organized partisan movement.

Jan the Elusive is a story about the courage of Czechoslovak patriots fighting against the inveterate enemy of the Slav peoples, the enemy of all freedom-loving mankind. The film teaches that in this struggle courage and hatred of the enemy are not enough, that the highest level of organization, endurance, caution, combined with courage and fortitude, are needed to achieve the successful overthrow of the nazi tyranny.

The solemnity of the moment is conveyed to the spectator as stills from the life of the Czechoslovak unit fighting on the Soviet-German front are flashed on the screen. Colonel Ludvik Svoboda is shown reading to his troops the Edict of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. awarding decorations to Czechoslovak soldiers and commanders who have distinguished themselves in action. "The friendship of the peoples of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union," adds Colonel Svoboda, "is indissoluble. It has been sealed with blood."

Jan the Elusive gives a graphic picture of this friendship and joint struggle of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia against the common enemy. The independence of Czechoslovakia has been destroyed, its culture trampled underfoot, its intelligentsia ruthlessly persecuted and deprived of the possibility to openly serve their people. But throughout the world there is a growing feeling of sympathy and affection among the peoples of the United Nations for the oppressed Czechs and Slovaks. One of the towns in U.S.A. has adopted the name of the Czechoslovak village Lidice barbarously wiped off the earth by the Hitlerites; an American film dedicated to Lidice has been produced. Morris Hindus, American author, dedicated his book *To Sing with the Angels* to the struggle of the Czechoslovak people. Heinrich Mann, German anti-fascist writer, has also made the tragic fate of Lidice the subject of his new book. *Jan the Elusive* represents a contribution of Soviet art to the common cause, immortalizing the glorious deeds of Czechoslovak patriots and heroes of the anti-Hitler struggle.

The leading character of the film Jan Smudek is historically faithful character. The plot is based on true facts. Nevertheless *Jan the Elusive* is not a historical film. The principal hero of *Jan the Elusive* seems an embodiment of the best features of progressive Czechoslovak fighters against the nazi yoke.

The film opens with tragic scenes. Hundreds of nazi planes are flying in formation over Prague, over the square where the monument to John Hus stands. They meet with no resistance. This is the result of the Munich deal. Meantime hitlerite gangs enter the disarmed capital of Czechoslovakia. Haughty Prussian soldiers are goose-stepping through the streets of the betrayed city. The inhabitants of Prague seem to have been chilled to insensibility. Stills from

German war newsreels are skilfully introduced by the producers and lend conviction to the picture. Yes, there was a time when hitlerite air brigands could fly unhindered over the capitals of invaded States. Times have changed, and their own cities have become targets for retaliatory raids. But it is too late to repent. Who soweth the wind reapeth the whirlwind.

The spectator is fascinated, carried away by the events unfolding in *Jan the Elusive*. He sees tortured, desecrated Czechoslovakia, and anger sweeps over him at the sight of the vandals converting Prague University into barracks for Hitler's storm troopers. One cannot look on without hatred at the scenes showing the humiliation of the national dignity of a brother people.

The plot develops around the underground activity of its hero, Jan Smudek, a student of Prague University. Thrown by the Hitlerites into a labour camp where, as the nazis mockingly say, university education is not needed, Jan finally obtains freedom. He had tasted oppression, acquired the experience which tells him that recklessness and haste are poor weapons in the struggle against a strong enemy. And Jan evolves and carries out a plan of secret struggle against the oppressors of his country. He keeps his plan secret even from his closest friends.

Jan is enabled to carry out his plan: his teacher, a professor of Prague University, died and bequeathed him his fortune to be used for "their destruction." At first glance it would seem that Jan was violating the will of his late teacher. He buys an automobile to all appearance intending to lead the life of an idle rich making pleasure trips in his own car.

Soon however the truth is learned. Jan needs the trip to organize a secret radio broadcast in the Czech language addressed to the people. In a small hotel Jan sets up the "Freedom" broadcasting station. "Today, July 18th," he begins his appeal to the unsubdued Czechoslovak people, "is a significant date in our history. It was on July 18th that Jan Masaryk signed the treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union, restoring those ties of friendship with the great Russian people which were broken off by Munich against our will. On this day Great Britain solemnly recognized our independence. The sons of Czechoslovakia will fight by the side of their friends in the East and in the West."

The Hitlerites are infuriated. All the forces of the Gestapo and storm-troopers are dispatched to locate the secret broadcasting station. But Jan is elusive. The film shows all the intricacies of this unequal combat in which the hero emerges victor. The voice of "Freedom" rouses the people, inspires them to struggle. Trains carrying shells to the German troops on the Eastern front are blown sky-high. This is the work of the partisans in whose ranks Jan continues his gallant fight.

Jan the Elusive shows how the methods of the adventure-genre can be used for the benefit of the anti-Hitler struggle. It was produced by Stalin Prize winners Vladimir Petrov and Isidor Annensky in the Tbilisi Cinema Studios, with Stalin Prize winner Michael Chiaureli as the art director. Russian and Georgian cinema stars play the main characters.

Many prominent Soviet screen stars are now collaborating in the production of war films of direct value for the front. *Medicine and War* is an example of a film which has direct value for the front. It is much broader than its title suggest. It shows Soviet humaneness in a field of endeavour as important as the struggle for human life. The film shows Soviet doctors at work on the front. Medical aid is brought almost to the battle itself. The film shows the heroic work of nurses, orderlies, who under enemy fire carry the wounded to safety from the battle-field. It shows the treatment of wounded, their transportation to the immediate and, in case of necessity, to the distant rear. It illustrates the methods used against tetanus, the extensive use of transfusion, the blood for which is supplied by hundreds of thousands of donors in the rear.

The picture makes it possible to understand how Soviet medicine succeeded in restoring 70% of the wounded to the ranks. *Medicine and War* tells about the attention and care lavished by the Soviet people on the country's wounded defenders.

Despite its specific designation, the picture evokes wide interest. Credit for this is undoubtedly due to Soviet cinema producers.

The documentary film *Iran* is in a way symbolic of the solidarity of the freedom-loving peoples in the struggle against the hitlerite menace. This film guides the spectator through this ancient Eastern country with a culture over 3,000 years old. It opens with scenes of lyrical peacefulness, a flock of sheep grazing in the meadows against the background of

Stills from "In the Sandy Deserts of Central Asia"

A still from the documentary film "Iran." Guarding an aerodrome

mountain ridges. A shepherd is playing his horn, and the air is filled with the drawling sounds of an old folk melody. These pastoral stills are profoundly symbolic. Iran enjoys the benefits of peace ensured by its friendship with the democratic powers, with the freedom-loving peoples. The Soviet and the British people saved the country from being plunged by hitlerite agents into the abyss of war.

The film takes the spectator on a trip through this beautiful country. He sees its ancient relics, the pride of its culture. Iran has given the world such brilliant poets as Firdousi, Hafiz, Saadi. The film shows Iranian cities associated with the work of these famous bards of the East. Of great interest are the ancient monuments of the country: the tomb of the legendary "King of Kings" Cyrus, the founder of the ancient Persian kingdom; the remnants of Persepolis, the ancient capital of Persia, laid waste by the will of Alexander of Macedon; the swaying minaret, that miracle of architecture built over the tomb of the scholar Amu-Abdullah.

This guide-cinema takes the spectator through modern Iran. Scenes of the finest Iranian cities are flashed on the screen. Many of them have a great and glorious history. There is Isfahan, in the past an important trading centre, which in the 18th century had a population as big as London of that day.

The stills showing the first Iranian train, which brings to mind the famous stills from *Our Hospitality*, are succeeded by stills showing the trans-Iranian express which crosses the country from border to border, passing through 224 tunnels and over 5,000 bridges on its way. Yet until a short time ago the total network of the country's railway amounted to a mere 9 kilometres.

The film carries the spectator farther to the Iranian seaboard, to port of Abadan. This plays an important part today in the war effort of the United Nations to bring about the downfall of the hitlerite tyranny. Ships from the U.S.A. call there with important war supplies. The S.S. "Robin Sherwood" is flashed on the screen. It has brought valuable cargo. Planes with long wings and well-built trucks leave its deck. American engineers and workers in port assemble the war-planes. Soviet airmen receive the planes to fly them far to the north to fight the common enemy.

Hundreds of trucks are stationed all along the vast grounds. They were carried over 22,000 kilometres of water before reaching Iran. Scores of enemy submarines lay in wait for them en route. But the Allied convoys saved these valuable supplies. British and American officers hand over the trucks to Soviet commanders. Thus Iran contributes its share to the combined effort of world d mocracies.

The picture shows the tremendous interest among the people of Iran in the U.S.S.R. and its heroic struggle against Hitlerism. It shows thousands of parcels collected by the inhabitants of Teheran and delivered to the Soviet consulate as presents for the men of the Red Army. Moscow newspapers are being sold on the streets of the Iranian capital. Soviet films are shown to crowded houses.

This interesting newsreel gives the spectator a good idea of present-day Iran, of the life of its people, the cultural and economic progress of the country and its important role in the present war.

In the Sandy Deserts of Central Asia is a documentary film which acquaints the spectator with a different field of endeavour. The film, as we have already mentioned, was produced by the Kiev Technical Film Studio, successfully continuing its work in evacuation. This new film shows life among the sand dunes of Central Asia. It is a film about the war that never ceases in the animal kingdom of the desert which has its victors and vanquished.

The cameramen shot the film with exceptional skill. Such stills as the battle of scorpions, a rattle snake swallowing its prey, a battle of the poisoner of sand dunes, the snake efa, with the porcupine known for his love of snake-flesh, are followed with rapt attention. Nevertheless the film becomes monotonous. After all, the sandy deserts of Central Asia are more than a mere animal kingdom. They have experienced the effects of man's intrusion. Soviet people have long since intervened in the life of the desert, but there is hardly anything to show it in the film. True, the final scenes give some hints of it: blossoming trees and water are there to symbolize the desert coming to life by dint of human labour. But this is merely a symbol, a hint of what should have asserted itself more fully in this film. In its present form the film is no doubt interesting and at any rate useful, particularly to those who are interested in rare types of the flora and fauna of little-known regions.

It is impossible within the limits of this article to dwell on all the subjects and genres of Soviet cinematography. In particular we made no mention at all of the historical-biographical films that are so popular with the Soviet public. A number of these, now being produced by Soviet film studios, are built around the lives of great Russian soldiers, the founders of the Russian State, outstanding representatives of Russian culture. The best Soviet cinema workers, including the famous Sergei Eisenstein, are engaged in work on these films. A number of other pictures in course of production include these dedicated to the life of the Soviet rear, to the heroism of Soviet patriots on the labour front. These will familiarize the readers of *International Literature* with new aspects of the work of Soviet cinematography in war-time.

TIMOFEI ROKOTOV

A still from "She Defends Her Country." Meeting in a liberated village.

NEWS AND VIEWS

From the first day of the war Soviet scientists have placed their work at the service of the country's defence.

In his opening speech at the Second Anti-fascist Meeting of Soviet Scientists in Moscow, Academician Nicholas Derzhavin said:

"In these trying days for our people, Soviet science has shown the whole world that it keeps in step with the people, selflessly serving them. Germans, in their turn, have learned something, and will learn still more about the strength of Russian science from the blows inflicted upon them by the Red Army, for to the force of these blows the labour of Soviet scientists has contributed its share."

As Chairman of the Anti-fascist Committee of Soviet Scientists Derzhavin appealed in his speech to scientists in all freedom-loving countries:

"We call upon the scientists of Great Britain and America, upon the scientists of the world, to do everything to bring about the merging of the efforts of the armies of the United Nations with the heroic efforts of the Red Army."

The Soviet Government has shown its high appreciation of the endeavours of Soviet scientists. In 1943 a number of mathematicians, physicists, chemists, technologists, biologists, historians and representatives of other fields of scientific endeavour were awarded Stalin Prizes. Academician Nicholas Burdenko, Chief Surgeon of the Red Army, had the title of Hero of Socialist Labour conferred upon him. The day following this anti-fascist meeting the newspapers carried a report which brought a thrill of pride to the heart of every Russian scientist: Academician Alexei Krylov, the oldest of Russian shipbuilders, received the title of Hero of Socialist Labour.

Speakers at the meeting traced the achievements of Soviet science during the war.

Academician Nicholas Tsitsin, the eminent scientist known for his contributions to Soviet agriculture, took the war effort of Soviet agricultural science as the subject of his speech. He described how Soviet scientists facilitated the quick transition of important agricultural crops eastward. This was a problem no less vital and urgent than the transference of war factories to the east of the Soviet Union. Scientists helped the peasants to bring new land under cultivation and to raise record crops.

Academician Nicholas Burdenko, Chief Surgeon of the Red Army, Lieutenant-General of the Army Medical Service, was unable to attend the meeting, but he sent a letter describing some facts about hitlerite crimes. He concluded it with a passionate appeal to the scientists of all countries:

"Scientists of the world! As a representative of Soviet medical science I appeal to you. By directing all our knowledge, by supreme devotion to the people let us contribute to the speed defeat of German fascism, most inveterate enemy of freedom-loving mankind, of culture and life itself."

With closest attention the scientists listened to V. N. Pertsev, member of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences. He reminded them of the progress of culture and science in Soviet Byelorussia before the war. There were twenty-two institutions of higher learning in Byelorussia. Some two hundred newspapers and twelve million books were annually published in the Byelorussian language. The Hitlerites ruined this prosperous, cultured country. They plundered fine collections of rare historical documents of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences, destroyed libraries, institutes, picture galleries, schools. German fascism is trying to obliterate every trace of Byelorussian statehood, but the free people of Byelorussia are carrying on their struggle, and the Soviet scientists are with them in this struggle. The well-known Byelorussian chemist, Academician Prilezhayev, has joined the partisans; he has exchanged retorts and test tubes for rifle and tommy-gun. Fighting in the ranks of the partisans is also the Learned Secretary of the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences, Ivan Gutorov. Other Byelorussian scientists help the cause of liberation of their native republic by their selfless labours in the rear.

The meeting was addressed by the famous aeroplane designer S. V. Ilyushin, the strength of whose fighter-planes the Luftwaffe has occasion to feel every day. He spoke of the aid rendered by science to designers and inventors. Armaments designers have the assistance of physicists in problems of ballistics, aerodynamics, military acoustics, of chemists who evolve new technological processes, develop new steel alloys for planes, tanks and guns, of metallurgists, geologists, astronomers and mathematicians.

On behalf of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences the anti-fascist meeting was addressed by Academician E. O. Paton, who painted a frightful picture of German plunder of the cultural treasures of the Ukrainian people.

Speeches by Academician Sergei Vavilov, by Hans Kruus, dean of Tartu University (Estonia), Professor Alexander Mikhailov, Chairman of the Astronomy Council of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., Academician Alexei Shchussev, the architect, and Maxim Rylsky, the Ukrainian poet, were on the same subject, namely that the vanguard of cultured mankind, the scholars and scientists, must serry their ranks to win the victory over Hitlerism.

Telegrams from two eminent Soviet scientists, Vladimir Komarov, President of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., and Alexander Bogomolets, President of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, were read at the meeting.

Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., Vyacheslav Volgin, tabled a motion to address an appeal to world scientists. The audience unanimously approved the text of the appeal. It was also decided

to send a message of greeting to the meeting of British scientists in London.

"The time has come when every Russian scientist must do all that lies in his power to hasten the victory over nazism," reads the appeal. "Hitler Germany has brought countless disastres upon mankind. German barbarians are exterminating millions of people and leading millions more into captivity. They are ruthlessly destroying centres of national and world culture. The Hitlerites are consciously and systematically laying waste to all that has been made by man to the glory of man's genius. . .

"German vandals want to extinguish the torch of knowledge. They have substituted the vague instincts of a beast for reason, they want to enslave mankind, and therefore they see in culture their main enemy. . ."

The appeal speaks of the severe punishment which fascist wreckers of culture must suffer, of the long score to be presented to them by world science. This score is lengthening daily, and there can be no complacency among world scientists while the brown plague of fascism continues to ravage cities and villages of Europe.

"In these decisive days of the struggle against Hitlerism," the appeal concludes, "it is the sacred duty of men of science in all freedom-loving countries to help by their selfless endeavours to lighten the labour of the soldier and worker, general and statesman, help with all their strength to hasten the final victory of the United Nations over the common enemy. We, Soviet scientists, representatives of all the peoples indissolubly welded into a united Soviet nation, call upon you, dear friends and colleagues, progressive men of science, to dedicate all your powers to the struggle against Hitlerism."

With immense enthusiasm the meeting of Soviet scientists sent greetings to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army, Marshal of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin. Soviet scientists pledged themselves to continue the glorious traditions of their great forerunners, the men whose names had become landmarks in Russian science: Michael Lomonossov, Dmitri Mendelyeev, Clement Timiryazev, Ivan Pavlov, who had devoted their lives to the service of their people.

The Anti-fascist Meeting of Soviet Scientists was broadcast, and in every corner of the Land of the Soviets thousands of scientists, from old gray-haired professors down to young people at the outset of their scientific career, joined mentally in the protest of human thought against the obscurantism, violence and injustice into which German fascism would plunge the world.

On July 18th, traditional day, Soviet sportsmen assembled for the Second Anti-fascist Meeting in Moscow.

Wrestlers and tennis players, skiers and weight-lifters, swimmers and soccer players, young men and women, sun-tanned, muscular, alert, they filled one of the biggest halls in the Soviet capital.

They gathered to express once more before the whole country, before their colleagues—sportsmen and sportswomen of the whole world—their implacable hatred for fascism, to voice their unwavering determination to pursue the struggle for the liberation of mankind from the menace of nazism.

Addressing the anti-fascist meeting, Soviet sportsmen, the majority of them in Red Army uniform, told of their experience in battle, of the grim school of war they had gone through.

"We have learned much in the two years of war," said Hero of the Soviet Union, Captain Michael Ryabov. "I took part in 160 combat assignments. I bombed Berlin, Warsaw, Bucharest and Budapest. Before the war I worked as a locomotive engineer. There was a law among us that whatever happened we must deliver the freight in time. Flying my bomber, I adhere to the same rule. We deliver our bomb load to the German aerodrome to schedule time. And we discharge the load ourselves! . ."

Sports Master Peter Strods, now fighting in the ranks of a Latvian guards division, painted a striking picture of the struggle of the Latvian people. He spoke of the Latvian athlete, Hero of the Soviet Union Jānis Vilhelms. A splendid sniper, he wiped out hundreds of hitlerite soldiers. He spoke of Erika Gailis, Latvian skiing champion, whose courage had won her the Order of the Red Star, of thousands of young men and women prominent in Latvian sports circles, who are fighting a life and death battle to free their country from the German invaders.

Honoured Sports Master Klavdia Aleshina, swimming champion, received an enthusiastic welcome when she rose to speak. She spoke of Leningrad, of its heroic youth, of the part played by Leningrad sportsmen and sportswomen in the city's defence.

The meeting was addressed by Honoured Sports Master Jacob Kutsenko, an Ukrainian, who holds the world's record for weight-lifting. There was tenderness in the voice of this Hercules when he mentioned the word "Ukraine!" He spoke of the hard trials which have fallen upon his people, of their implacable struggle against the Germans who have drenched the soil of the Ukraine with blood.

It was with bated breath that the audience heard Honoured Sports Master Gregori Yermolayev, a partisan. His words, broadcast over the radio, were addressed first and foremost to his comrades in arms, the partisans. He called them by their Christian names hoping that each would hear his message of greetings from Moscow. He could not of course mention their last names, for his friends are fighting deep in the enemy rear, and the slightest lack of caution may mean mortal danger to them.

The international character of the anti-Hitler struggle was illustrated by the speeches of representatives of two national units fighting together with the Red Army on the Soviet-German front. The speakers were Lieutenant Albert Durand of the Normandie Squadron and N.C.O. Gruska Boguz of the Czechoslovak unit.

The French airman Albert Durand, decorated with the Order of the Patriotic War of the Second Class and with the French Military Cross, was loudly applauded when he declared:

"We vow to the Russian people and to the people of Fighting France that we will continue to fight the enemy until the struggle

against the nazis ends in the victory of truth, reason and freedom!"

Colonel Vassili Snegov, chairman of the All-Union Committee of Physical Culture and Sports, named Soviet sportsmen who had won special distinction in battle and had been honoured with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. He called upon all sportsmen of the U.S.S.R. to strengthen their blows at the enemy in order to speed the final rout of the Hitler armies.

Telegrams of greeting were read at the meeting to the Anti-fascist Committee of Soviet Youth from the World Youth Council in London, as well as messages of greetings from sports clubs in Great Britain and the U.S.A.

The meeting adopted an appeal to sportsmen the world over and a message of greeting to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union, J. V. Stalin.

The Anti-fascist Meeting of Soviet Sportsmen was timed for the traditional sports holiday in the Soviet Union—Physical Culture Day.

In all the cities of the U.S.S.R.—from Kalinin, only recently a frontline city, to far-off Siberia—the day was marked by sports parades and meets. On that day tens of thousands of sportsmen and sportswomen joined with their colleagues who from the platform of the Anti-fascist Sports Meeting in Moscow issued the call:

"Down with fascism! Long live the free man, full-fledged citizen of the world!"

Moscow schools have conducted among the schoolchildren of the capital a history and literary competition on the subject of "Hero Cities."

The young competitors were set high standards. It meant a good deal of hard, serious work.

The Moscow schoolchildren had to prepare for the competition unaided works dealing with heroic Russian cities of the Great Patriotic War (Moscow, Leningrad, Sevastopol, Stalingrad, Odessa). The children were enthusiastic. Several thousand of them studied long and zealously in the libraries and museums, visited exhibitions and attended lectures. The children themselves arranged meetings with participants and witnesses of the events. In the schools you might often have seen a crowd of children around a man on whose chest glittered the medal "For the Defence of Leningrad" or "For the Defence of Stalingrad."

The subject of their own city of Moscow was particularly dear to many of the children. A Moscow school sent in thirty-three works, the personal impressions of children of Moscow in the front-zone in 1941. Many of the competitors had remained in Moscow in those grim days, had helped to protect their homes from incendiary bombs, had done duty at fire-fighting posts, in bomb shelters, or armed with fire-hose and shovels on the roofs. . .

The competition judges under the chairmanship of Major-General A. A. Ignatyev, assisted by prominent teachers, professors and writers, drew up the results of the first round of the competition. In all 306 works were examined; of these 45 were awarded first and 88 second prizes. The best of the young authors were given a reward of which they could never even have dreamed: they are to go by plane to visit Stalingrad, the city on the Volga, every stone of which tells of the Russian people's unparalleled, heroic struggle with the Hitlerites. They will see for themselves the hero-city about which they wrote so lovingly and exhaustively in their compositions. The rest are to go by car to Borodino, a place twice famed in the history of Russia's defence: in 1812, during the war with Napoleon, and in 1941, when the fascist hordes were routed near Moscow.

The State Academic Maly Theatre, the oldest dramatic theatre of Moscow, has produced Leonid Leonov's play *Invasion* (see No. 6 of our magazine for 1943), which earned a Stalin Prize.

The numerous reviews all note the moving sincerity of the play, the skill of the producer, and the talent of the actors among whom are some of the oldest of the theatre's, shall we say, middle generation and its youth, right down to a young student of the actor's school who made her first appearance on the stage of the oldest Moscow theatre: she played the part of Aniska who was brutally tortured to death by the Germans.

The play *Invasion* has been accepted for production by many theatres of the Soviet Union.

The plays of Richard Sheridan are welcome guests at Soviet theatres. The plays of the famous English dramatist unfailingly grip the audience with their skilful dramatic intrigue, the rapid succession of unexpected situations and the brilliance of the humorous dialogue. It is no wonder that for several seasons running the Moscow Art Theatre has staged Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (produced by Nicholas Gorchakov) to crowded houses. Before the war the Moscow Kamerny Theatre, under the direction of Alexander Tairov, staged Sheridan's brilliant comedy *The Duenna*.

At present one of the youngest of Soviet theatres, the Stanislavsky State Opera and Dramatic Studio, has revived this comedy for the summer season.

The Studio that bears the name of Constantine Stanislavsky was founded by that great master of the Russian theatre in 1934—1935. Constantine Stanislavsky devoted the last years of his life to it, was indefatigable in training young actors, endeavoured to give them the whole of his long experience. Now the Studio has become a theatre. Stanislavsky's work is being carried on by Mikhail Kedrov, Artist of Merit and one of his closest colleagues and followers.

The Duenna, which was written in 1775, has preserved its freshness and sparkle to this day. This is excellently conveyed to the audience by Stanislavsky's talented students. The play received a warm welcome from the public and favourable reviews in the press.

"*The Duenna* has been staged in such a way," writes Professor A. Djivelegov, a connoisseur of the Western-European theatre, "that Sheridan himself, if he were to see the play, would probably have no complaints."

"In the play everything hurries, rushes,

A scene from "The Duenna" at the Stanislavsky Studio

takes the obstacles of comedy, surmounts the unexpected barriers raised by Sheridan's intrigue; everything is jolly, songs, dances, quips, jokes and laughs. . ."

The critics note the happy decorations of artist Igor Nossov, who was thought of a host of amusing details facilitating the development of the entertaining situation on stage: moving screens, swinging inn sign, balconies with flights of steps. . .

Sheridan wrote *The Duenna* as a libretto to an opera by the composer Linley. The Stanislavsky Studio treats it as a musical comedy. The music has been specially written for it by the Soviet composers Grigori Kreitner and Alexander Ghin. This music throws into relief Sheridan's sparkling dialogues and dramatic situations.

The performance of the young actors is easy, care-free and never laboured. It has the lightness which has been achieved through the hard intensive work that Constantine Stanislavsky insisted upon. The critics note the more outstanding of the young performers, but the greatest attribute of the show is the high level of the ensemble. Credit for this is due to the producers George Malkovsky and Grigori Kristi under the artistic direction of Mikhail Kedrov.

The Central Theatre of the Red Army has returned to Moscow after an eighteen-months tour of the Urals.

"In the atmosphere of that powerful wave of enthusiasm which has gripped the Soviet Urals in these days of war," says A. D. Popov, Stalin Prize winner, the art director of this theatre, "the personnel of our theatre has worked intensively, rising to the standard set by the splendid people of the Urals, the gigantic smithy of powerful and formidable Soviet arms."

In the Urals the theatre renewed its entire repertoire and also staged seven new productions: the classics Schiller's *Love and Intrigue*, A. N. Ostrovsky's *No Man so Wise but Has a Little Folly*, and plays of the Soviet playwrights A. Korneichuk, A. Gladkov, A. Arbuzov and others, on historical and modern themes.

The theatre gave 557 performances in all, besides 1,324 concerts for army units, in hospitals, mills and factories. While working in the rear, the theatre did not lose touch with the army in the field even for a single day: two-thirds of the actors were participants in the eleven concert-parties regularly visiting the front.

The words of the Latvian playwright J. Rainis—"Fire will conquer Night"—might serve as a motto for the Latvian evening gatherings held in Moscow. In the Soviet capital Latvian actors and singers gave two big concerts which showed the high achievements of the art of Soviet Latvia. Latvia's entry into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was an event of great historic importance in the lives of the Latvian people. The concerts of Latvian art show what possibilities were opened to the Latvian people who had succeeded in doing a great deal in the fields of economy and culture in the comparatively short time that elapsed after their return to the family of Soviet peoples.

At the beginning of the war, the art organiza-

E. Rubtsova as the duenna

tions of Latvia were evacuated into the rear where they were reorganized into a single State Ensemble of Latvian Art. It is already working successfully and fruitfully for the second year. Its concerts in Moscow have become festivals of Latvian national art to which great attention is paid. The programs of the evenings consist of one-act sketches, scenes from plays, important choral compositions, old folk songs, and works written by Latvian composers during the war. The Latvian artists' performance shows a high level of culture and skill.

On the 15th of June, 1943, Soviet musical circles observed the centenary of the birth of Edvard Grieg, the great Norwegian composer.

In Moscow the date was marked by two big concerts with programs comprising Grieg's symphony and chamber compositions. Participants in the concerts were the State Symphony Orchestra of the U.S.S.R., conducted by B. Khaikin, the Beethoven State Quartet (which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary) and the soloists: G. Ginsburg, T. Talakhidze, Hugo Titz, D. Ossipov and F. Mileykovskaya. They performed: the suite *Peer Gynt*, symphonic dances, the concerto for piano and orchestra, two Solveig's songs from the music of the play *Peer Gynt*, the suite *Sigurd Jorsalfar*, a nocturne, *The Wedding Day in Troldhaugen*, *The Procession of the Gnomes*, and the romances *Sleep*, *The Swan*, *I Love You*, *At Sea*, *A Farewell* and *The Roses*.

The Urals in Defence is the title of a book recently completed by the authoress Mariette Shaginyan.

"In this book," writes the authoress, "I tried to show those new qualities that are characteristic of work inspired by patriotism. The spirit of innovation and technical inventiveness have become widespread in the Urals. The Urals gun-smiths struggle steadily to raise the standard of production. The people's awareness of the times they are living in is strengthening. . ."

The fostering of these high qualities in the people of the Urals is the main subject of the book. Through its pages pass people of various strata of the population from schoolchildren to academicians, from housewives to the renowned workmen of the Urals factories. Their devoted unselfish labour is the guarantee of the growing defence might of the Urals.

The State Literary Publishing House has printed collections of poems by P. Antokolsky *(Iron and Flame)*, S. Shchipachov *(Motherland)*, I. Selvinsky *(Ballads and Songs)*, V. Zakharchenko *(With Blood of This Land)* and of the Lithuanian poet L. Gira *(Word of Battle)*. The war poems, which form the main part of these collections, are charged with a high sense of patriotism. Many of the poems in the collections were written at the fronts of the Great Patriotic War.

At the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow an exhibition has been opened of the works of the old Russian artists: V. N. Baksheyev, V. K. Byalynitsky-Birulya, I. E. Grabar, E. E. Lancéré, V. N. Meshkov, C. F. Yuon and I. N. Pavlov the engraver.

In the main, the exhibition is devoted to landscape. Stage decoration (Yuon, Lancéré), portraits (Meshkov) and other works are also represented.

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