INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

6

1945

THE STATE LITERARY PUBLISHING HOUSE
PRINTED IN THE SOVIET UNION

MARSHAL J. V. STALIN'S MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE

Comrades, fellow-countrymen and fellow-countrywomen!

The great day of victory over Germany has come. Fascist Germany, brought to her knees by the Red Army and the troops of our allies, has acknowledged her defeat and surrendered unconditionally.

On May 7th a preliminary protocol on capitulation was signed in the city of Reims. On May 8th, representatives of the German High Command, in the presence of representatives of the Supreme Command of the Allied Forces and of the Supreme High Command of the Soviet troops signed in Berlin the final act of capitulation, the execution of which began at 24 hours on May 8th.

Being aware of the wolfish habits of the German ringleaders who regard treaties and agreements as mere scraps of paper, we have no reason to believe their words. However, since this morning in pursuance of the act of capitulation, the German troops began en masse to lay down arms and surrender to our troops. This is no longer a mere scrap of paper. This is real surrender of Germany's armed forces. True, one group of German troops, in Czechoslovakia, is still evading surrender. But I hope that the Red Army will be able to bring it to its senses.

Now we can state with full justification that the historical day of the final rout of Germany, the day of the great victory of our people over German imperialism has come.

The great sacrifices we have made in the name of the freedom and independence of our homeland, the incalculable privations and sufferings experienced by our people in the course of the war, the intensive work in the rear and at the front which we have placed on the altar of country—have not been in vain and have been crowned by complete victory over the enemy, the age-long struggle of the Slav peoples for their existence and their independence had ended in victory over the German invaders and German tyranny.

Henceforward the great banner of this freedom of the peoples, and peace among the peoples will fly over Europe.

Three years ago Hitler declared for all to hear that his aims included the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the wresting of the Caucasus, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic Republics and other regions from it. He declared bluntly: "We will destroy Russia so that she should never be able to rise again." This was three years ago. However, Hitler's crazy ideas were not fated to come true—the progress of the war scattered them to the winds. In actual fact something directly the opposite to the Hitlerites' ravings has taken place. Germany has been utterly defeated. The German troops are surrendering, the Soviet Union is celebrating victory, although it does not intend either to dismember or destroy Germany.

Comrades! The great Patriotic War has ended in our complete victory, the period of war in Europe is over, the period of peaceful development has begun.

I congratulate you upon victory, my dear fellow-countrymen and fellow-country-women.

GLORY TO OUR HEROIC RED ARMY WHICH UPHELD THE INDEPENDENCE OF OUR HOMELAND AND WON VICTORY OVER THE ENEMY!

GLORY TO OUR GREAT PEOPLE, THE VICTOR-PEOPLE!

ETERNAL GLORY TO THE HEROES WHO FELL IN THE BATTLES WITH THE ENEMY AND GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THE FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS OF OUR PEOPLE!

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL'S BROADCAST ADDRESS DELIVERED MAY 8th, 1945

Yesterday morning, at 2.41 a.m., at General Eisenhower's headquarters, General Jodl, the representative of the German High Command and of Grand-Admiral Doenitz, the designated head of the German state, signed the act of unconditional surrender of all German land, sea and airforces in Europe to the Allied Expeditionary Force and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command. General Beddell Smith, Chief of Staff, United States Army, and General François Sevez signed the document on behalf of the Supreme Command of the Allied Expeditionary Forces and General Susloparov signed on behalf of the Russian High Command. Today this agreement will be ratified and confirmed at Berlin where Air Chief-Marshal Tedder, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, and General Delatre de Tassigny will sign on behalf of General Eisenhower. General Zhukov will sign on behalf of the Soviet High Command. The German representatives will be Field Marshal Keitel, Chief of the High Command and the Commanders-in-Chief of the German Army, Navy and Airforces.

Hostilities will end officially at one minute after midnight tonight Tuesday, May 8th, but in the interests of saving lives the cease fire began yesterday to be sounded all along the front and our dear Channel islands are also to be freed today. The Germans are still in places resisting Russian troops but should they continue to do so after midnight they will of course deprive themselves of the protection of the laws of war and will be attacked from all quarters by Allied troops. It is not surprising that on such long fronts in the existing disorder of the enemy the commands of the German High Command should not in every case be obeyed immediately. This does not in our opinion, with the best military advice at our disposal, constitute any reason for withholding from the nation the facts communicated to us by General Eisenhower of unconditional surrender already signed at Reims nor should it prevent us from celebrating today and tomorrow, Wednesday, as victory day in Europe.

Today perhaps we shall think mostly of ourselves. Tomorrow we shall pay a particular tribute to our Russian comrades whose prowess in the field has been one of the grand contributions to the general victory.

The German war is therefore at an end. After years of intense preparation Germany hurled herself on Poland at the beginning of September 1939 and in pursuance of our

guarantee to Poland in agreement with the French Republic, Great Britain, the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations declared war upon this foul aggressor.

After gallant France had been struck down we, from this island, and from our United Empire, maintained the struggle single-handed for a whole year until we were joined by the military might of Soviet Russia and later by the overwhelming power and resources of the United States of America. Finally almost the whole world was combined against the evil-doers who are now prostrate before us. Our gratitude to our splendid Allies goes forth from all our hearts in this island and throughout the British Empire.

We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing but let us not forget for a moment the toil and efforts that lie ahead. Japan with all her treachery and greed remains unsubdued. The injury she has inflicted on Great Britain, the United States and other countries and her detestable cruelties, call for justice and retribution. We must now devote all our strength and resources to the completion of our task both at home and abroad. Advance, Britannia! Long live the cause of freedom! God save the King!

PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN'S BROADCAST ADDRESS DELIVERED MAY 8th, 1945

This is a solemn but glorious hour. I only wish Franklin D. Roosevelt had lived to witness this day. General Eisenhower informed me that the forces of Germany have surrendered to the United Nations. The flags of freedom fly over all Europe.

For this victory, we join in offering our thanks to the Providence which has guided and sustained us through the dark days of adversity.

Our rejoicing is sober and saddened by a supreme consciousness of the terrible price we have paid to rid the world of Hitler and his evil band. Let us not forget, my fellow Americans, the sorrow and the heartache which today abide in the homes of so many of our neighbours—neighbours whose last priceless possessions have been rendered as a sacrifice to redeem our liberty.

We can repay the debt which we owe to our God, to our dead and to our children only by work—by ceaseless devotion to the responsibilities which lie ahead of us. If I could give you a single watchword for the coming months, that word is—work, work, work.

We must work to finish the war. Our victory is but half won. The West is free, but the East is still in bondage to the treacherous tyranny of the Japanese. When the last Japanese division has surrendered unconditionally, then only will our fighting job be done.

We must work to bind up the wounds of a suffering world—to build an abiding peace, a peace rooted in justice and law. We can build such a peace only by hard, toilsome, painstaking work—by understanding and working with our allies in peace as we have in war.

The job ahead is no less important, no less urgent, no less difficult than the task which has now been done.

I call upon every American to stick to his post until the last battle is won. Until that day, let no man abandon his post or slacken his efforts.

And now, I want to read to you my formal proclamation of this occasion:

"The allied armies, through sacrifice and devotion and with God's help, have wrought from Germany a final and unconditional surrender. The western world has been freed of the evil forces which have for five years and longer imprisoned the bodies and broken the lives of millions upon millions of free born men. They have violated their churches, destroyed their homes, corrupted their children and murdered their loved ones. Our armies of liberation have restored freedom to these harried peoples, whose spirit and will the oppressors could not enslave.

"Much remains to be done. The victory won in the West must now be won in the East. The whole world must be cleaned of the evil from which half the world has been freed. United, the peace-loving nations have demonstrated in the West that their armies are stronger by far than the might of dictators or the tyranny of military cliques that once called us soft and weak. The power of our peoples to defend themselves against all enemies will be proved in the Pacific war as it has been proved in Europe.

"For the triumph of supply and of arms which we have won, and for its promise to peoples everywhere who join us in the love of freedom, it is fitting that we, as a nation, give thanks to Almighty God, who has strengthened us and given us the victory.

"Now, therefore, I, Harry Truman, President of the United States of America, do hereby appoint Sunday May 13th to be a day of prayer.

"I call upon the people of the United States, whatever their station, whatever their religion, to unite in offering joyful thanks to God for the victory we have won and to pray that he will support us to the end of our present struggle and guide us into the way of peace.

"I also call upon you, countrymen, to dedicate this day of prayer to the memory of those who have given their lives to make possible this victory."

ALEXEI TOLSTOY

IMPERIAL MAJESTY

(Peter the Great)

BOOK III

Chapter VI

Tsar Peter had thrown off his sailcloth jacket and rolled up the sleeves of his shirt; the crimson handkerchief with grape leaves embroidered along the edges —a present from Izmailovo—he bound round his head like the Portuguese pirates in the way Rear-Admiral Pamburg had once shown him. In former years he would also have taken his shoes off so as to feel the warm roughness of the deck beneath his feet. A light breeze filled the sails and the two-masted "Katerina" seemed to be floating, yeilding and obedient, on the air. The brigantine "Ulrica" followed in her wake while the frigate "Wachtmeister" stood under full sail in the haze where earth and sky meet.

The vessels had only recently been captured from the Swedes—it was an unexpected but nevertheless a famous victory; the Russians acquired twelve brigantines and frigates, all Commodore Loeschert's pirate squadron which for two years had not allowed the tiniest cockleshell to enter Lake Peipus, had looted the villages and farms on the banks of the lake and threatened the rear of the army with which Sheremetiev was besieging Yuriev. The Commodore was a bold sailor but the Russians had caught him off his guard. During a thunderstorm one dark night, either in fear of the weather or for some other reason, he brought his squadron into the estuary of the Embakh and then got foolishly drunk on board the admiral's yacht "Karolus." When he rubbed his eyes at dawn hundreds of boats, rafts and barrels bound together were moving swiftly towards his vessels from the river bank...

"Both broadsides at the Rusian infantry!" screamed the Commodore.

The Swedes had not even time to spill powder into the touchholes of their guns or cut their anchor ropes before the Russians with their boats, rafts and barrels closed in around the ships and swarmed aboard hurling grenades before them and firing pistols as they came. This was a disgrace of no mean order—a whole squadron taken prisoner by infantry! In his fury Commodore Loeschert leaped into the powder magazine and blew up the yacht—flames sprang out through the hatches and through every crack—with a terrifying roar, masts, spars, barrels, crew and the Commodore himself flew up in a cloud of smoke almost to the very clouds.

The sun burned his back, the breeze played caressingly on his face, the waves running broadside to the vessel flashed in the sunlight, making Tsar Peter screw up his eyes. He stood at the wheel, his legs astride for the sake of coolness. The rigging whistled and sang, the seagulls flying in the vessel's wake croaked hoarsely. The white sails billowed out, full and strong.

Tsar Peter was sailing to Narva carrying news of victory; he brought with him the Swedish banners lying in a heap under the mizzen-mast—two days before Yuriev had been taken by storm. Yet another feather had been pulled out of King Charles' tail. Envoys despatched to the Emperor and to the Kings of England and France informed them that "by the grace of God we have retrieved our ancient heritage, the township of Yuriev, built seven hundred years ago by the Grand Duke Yaroslav Vladimirovich to guard the marches of the Russian land..."

It never entered Peter's head as it did

that of his kingly brother King Charles to compare himself with Alexander the Great; he considered war to be an arduous and difficult task, a hard working day of bloodshed, a necessity to the state. Nevertheless on this occasion at Yuriev he had tested his skill as a soldier and was quite proud and satisfied with himself as a result; in ten days after going there from Narva he had done what Field Marshal Sheremetiev and his foreign engineers, pupils of the famed Marshal Vauban, deemed absolutely impossible.

As he looked at the distant wooded coast he had another reason for contentment—the knowledge that the coast, recently the property of the Swedes, was now Russian and that all Lake Peipus was now ours. It is in the nature of man that having taken a lot he should want more; it already seemed that there could be nothing better than to sail a beautiful vessel on a fine morning with the huge flag of St. Andrew flying from the poop to the annoyance of King Charles.

But no! Today in particular, when the heat made you shudder, his mind was full of his sweetheart... There was no other name he could call her by, neither woman nor maid, but sweetheart, the light of his eyes, his Catherine... Wriggling his shoulder-blades under his shirt, he drew a deep breath of the moist air through his nostrils. The water and the ship's timbers smelt like a swimming pool and he had visions of Catherine bathing on just such a hot day... Through the kerchief with the grape leaves she whispered and breathed on him with a woman's breath—the wind behind his back kept blowing out the ends so that they flapped against his nose and lips... She knew what she was doing, the merry, curly-headed little Livonian witch... The townswomen of Yuriev are frightened to death and quite good looking, none of them to be compared with Catherine, not on one of them did the striped skirt tightly pulled in at the hips swing so jauntily... Not one of them did he want to take by the cheek, gaze deep into her eyes and press his lips against hers...

The Tsar stamped impatiently on the deck with the heel of his square-toed shoe. Somebody, half asleep apparently, looked out of the saloon door, pulled it open, slammed it—Alexei Vassilyevich Makarov came running up the companion:

"Here I am, Your Majesty..."

Tsar Peter, trying not to look at a man so out of place on board ship, at that bloated parchment face with the red eyelids, gave him an order through his teeth.

"Writing materials..."

Makarov turned away in a hurry, stumbled down the companion and the Tsar snorted after him like a cat. He soon returned with a stool, paper, an inkpot and with a goose quill behind his ear. The Tsar took them.

"Stand here at the wheel, hang on tightly, landlubbler, keep it like this. If you take the wind out of the sails I'll give you a taste of the rope's end..."

He nodded to Makarov, sat down on the collapsable stool, spread a sheet of paper on his knee, twisted back his head and gazed at the ball on top of the mizzen-mast where a long pennant was fluttering and then began to write.

On one side of the paper he wrote: "To Anissya Tolstaya and Catherine Vassilyevskaya." On the other side, splashing the paper with blots of ink and missing letters out of the words: "Auntie and Little Mother, may you live for many years to come... I should like to hear news of your health... We are living a hard life and are in need. There is nobody to wash or stitch and what is even worse, I miss you... Only a couple of days ago we danced a beautiful dance with the Swedes which made King Charles look as black as thunder. By God, I've not seen such beautiful play since I entered the service. To put it shortly, with the help of God we took Yuriev at the point of the sword... With regard to your well-being, God grant you that you may write me about yourselves and be kind enough to come to me as quickly as possible. Then I shall be happier. Go as far as Pskov and there await orders — you will be told where to go from there, the enemy is quite near. Peter."

"Fold it up, seal it without reading it," he said to Makarov and took over the wheel from him. "Send it at the first opportunity."

He seemed somewhat easier in mind. The bells rang out loudly with a double clang. Immediately after a gun on the

forecastle was fired, the sails flapped and a pleasant cloudlet of powder smoke spread across the deck.Captain Nepluyev, skipper of the "Katerina," a man with youthful, bony, impudent face, carrying a cutlass, ran up onto the bridge and touched two fingers to his hat.

"Mister Bombardier, Admiral's hour—will you accept a bowl..."

Following on Nepluyev's heels came little Felten, in a green knitted waistcoat, his shiny face beaming. On board ship he wore a white kerchief, pirate fashion, instead of his cook's cap. On a tin tray he offered the tsar a silver bowl and a poppy-seed cake.

Tsar Peter weighed the bowl in his hand, gulped down the fiery vodka with its strong smell of fusel oil seriously, sailor fashion, and hurriedly thrust a piece of the cake into his mouth and chewed it.

"We'll anchor in the Narova tonight," he said to Nepluyev. "And we'll spend the night ashore. Have you sounded the bottom?"

"Along the right bank of the Narova there is a sandy bar but under the left bank there is two fathoms of water."

"Good. You may go..."

Tsar Peter was again left alone at the wheel on the hot deck. A pleasant feeling ran over his body from the vodka he had drunk and, at times frowning, at times laughing, he began to recall the fine business that had occurred three days before, a business that should make King Charles go black in the face with anger.

2

Field Marshal Sheremetiev was taking his time over the siege of Yuriev—he was not giving either the troops or himself too much trouble, hoping to starve the Swedes out. Tsar Peter screwed up his long-winded letters and threw them under the table: the devil had got into the Field Marshal—for two years he had fought fiercely and boldly, but this year he was gossipping under the walls of a Swedish town like an old woman. When Field Marshal Ogilvie, taken from Vienna into the service of Moscow at the instance of Patkul for no mean salary—in addition to his board, wine and other emoluments he got three thousand gold yefimoks a year—finally appeared in the camp at Narva, Tsar Peter handed over the command to him and hurried off to Yuriev.

The Field Marshal did not expect him: after lunch on a hot afternoon he was snoring away in his tent behind a high rampart in the baggage train and only awoke when Peter pulled from his face the handkerchief that he had spread to keep the flies away.

"Sleeping in sight of the enemy!" he shouted rolling mad eyes at him. "Get up and show us some siege work!"

The Field Marshal lost his tongue from sheer fright, he could not remember how he got his legs into his trousers, he could not find either his wig or his sword and just as he was, wigless, he climbed on his horse. Military Engineer Kobert, also half-asleep, his French kaftan buttoned askew, came running up: during the siege he had done nothing but fatten his cheeks on Russian "shchi"[1]. Peter nodded angrily as he looked down at him. The three of them went out to the positions.

Nothing pleased the Tsar. On the eastern side where Sheremetiev's troops were laying siege, the walls were high, the squat towers had been newly strengthened, the bastions were thrust out starwise deep into the fields and the moats around them were filled with water. On the western side the deep river Embakh gave them good protection. In the south there was a deep morass. Sheremetiev was approaching the walls with saps and mines—using the greatest caution and not going too near for fear of the Swedes' guns. His batteries were ridiculously placed—he had hurled two thousand bombshells over the walls, had set fire to a house or two here and there, but not a scratch had he made on the walls.

"Do you know how many altyns [2] I pay for each bomb-shell?" Tsar Peter asked the Field Marshal gloomily. "We bring them from the Urals... Would you like to pay for those two thousand useless bombs from your salary?"

He grabbed the spy-glass from under the Marshal's arm and turned it on the walls.

"The south wall is low and weak. I thought so..." He turned swiftly to Engineer Kobert. "That's where you

[1] Shchi—thick cabbage soup.

[2] Altyn—3 copecks or $^3/_{100}$ths of a rouble.

ought to hurl your shells and smash down the walls and gates. You will take the town from this side, not from the east. You can't look for comfort and go there just because it is dry... You are fighting for victory even if you go up to your neck in a swamp to get it..."

Sheremetiev did not dare argue but could only mutter with his thick tongue:

"That's clear... You know best, Mister Bombardier. And we thought the other way, but we didn't think enough..."

Engineer Kobert deferentially puffed up his cheeks and smiled apologetically:

"Your Majesty, the southern wall and the towered gates, known as the Russian Gates, are weak, but they are nevertheless impregnable, for they can only be approached through a swamp. The swamp is impassable."

"For whom is the swamp impassable?" shouted Tsar Peter; he thrust out his long neck, kicked out his foot and lost his stirrup. "Nothing is impassable to the Russian soldier. We're playing at death, not chess..."

He jumped down from his horse, spread a plan of the town out on the grass, drew his box of drawing instruments from his pocket and took out dividers, rulers and pencil. He began to measure and to mark the map. The Field Marshal and Kobert squatted on their heels beside him.

"Here's where you should place your batteries!" He pointed to the edge of the swamp that lay before the Russian Gates. "And put some more field guns over there beyond the river."

He began skilfully plotting lines to show the trajectory of the cannon balls from the batteries to the Russian Gates. He made another measurement with the dividers.

Sheremetiev muttered:

"Of course... Within range."

Kobert smiled subtly.

"I give you three days to change the positions... On the 7th I begin the artillery diversion."

Peter placed the dividers and rulers in the box and tried to stuff it into his pocket, but the crimson kerchief with the embroidered grape leaves was in his way and he pulled it out angrily and pushed it into the breast of his jacket.

For three days he gave his men neither rest nor sleep. During the day all the troops were busy at their former siege works under the eyes of the Swedes, they dug saps under the bullets and cannon-balls of the enemy and hammered ladders together. Working secretly by night without the aid of lights they harnessed the bullocks to the guns and mortars and dragged them to their new positions at the edge of the swamp and over a floating bridge to the other side of the river, hiding them behind fascines and earth-works.

The sun had scarcely risen over the tops of the trees, casting its rays on the worn roofs of the south wall, the stone battlements on the Russian Gates were just showing through the mist over the swamps and the smoke of the town chimneys rising blue through the early morning silence when sixty field guns and heavy mortars shook heaven and earth and sent their cannon-balls and bomb-shells whistling across the swamp. The batteries beyond the river thundered. Under cover of the smoke from the guns the grenadiers from the Ivan Zhidok Regiment ran with faggots to lay a path across the swamp.

Tsar Peter was with the southern battery. He had no reason to shout, instruct and grow angry—he hardly found time to turn his head: watching the gunners he muttered: "Ai-lu-lu, ai-lu-lu..." A man hardly had time to repeat an "Our Father" before the barrels were sponged out, the charge and the shot rammed home, the touch powder poured in and the gun laid on the target...

"All batteries!" shouted little Colonel Nechayev, rolling his bloodshot eyes; his hat and wig had been torn off at the first volley. "The same range! Matches ready!.. F-i-i-i-re!"

The battery commanders echoed his words: "Fi-i-i-r-e!"

They could see where the cannon-balls struck, the battlements were knocked off the walls, the roofing on the wall smoked and burst into flames, houses in the town, set on fire by the shells, began to burn. The bells in the church steeples were rung. Swedish soldiers in their short-tailed grey tunics ran out of the gates—shying from the exploding bombs they began to throw up a barricade dragging out logs, barrels and sacks. Nevertheless at the end of the day the gate towers stood firm. The Tsar ordered the batteries to be moved closer.

The "fire diversion" lasted six days. The grenadiers of the Ivan Zhidok

Regiment, sometimes up to the knees and sometimes up to their waists in water, continued building their roads, protecting themselves from enemy bomb shells and bullets with portable fascines in the form of baskets of earth. The dead sank into the swamp immediately, the wounded were carried out on the shoulders of their comrades. The Swedes realized the terrible danger, brought guns from the other towers and every day increased their fire. The town was a mass of smoke. A reddish sun shone through the flying powder smoke. Tsar Peter did not leave his batteries, he was black with smoke, did not wash, ate whatever he could get as he walked about and himself distributed vodka amongst the gunners. He lay down to sleep for an hour at a time within sound of the gunfire, underneath an artillery waggon. He sent Engineer Kobert away with a big baggage train because although he was a learned man he was too peaceful, and "peaceful men weren't wanted here..."

At dusk on the evening of the thirteenth he sent for Sheremetiev. During those days the Field Marshal and his troops were making all the noise they could on the eastern side, frightening the Swedes. Again he reared his horse on to its hindlegs and, without dismounting, cursed and quarelled. He found the Tsar beside the silent batteries. Around him in a ring stood the bewhiskered bombardiers, all old acquaintances of his from the days of the "Play army," who at Pressburg had made a fine showing with turnips and clay bomb-shells fired from wooden guns at the Prince-Caesar's cavalry. Some had their heads bound with rags and their uniforms were torn.

The Tsar sat on the carriage of the biggest gun—"Salamandra," a bronze gun cast at Tula—they had to pour about twenty buckets of vinegar over it to cool it and it was still hissing even then. The Tsar was chewing a piece of bread and, speaking hurriedly, was analysing the day's work. The southern wall was breached at last in three places and the enemy would now not be able to close the gaps. Bombardier Ignatius Kurochkin had fired a number of red-hot cannon-balls into the left corner of the gate tower, one after the other.

"He knocked them in like nails. Didn't? What?" shrieked Tsar Peter in a voice that sounded like a cock crowing. The corner of the tower had been knocked away and now the whole edifice was ready to fall.

"Ignatius, where are you? I didn't see you, come here," and he offered the bombardier a pipe with the mouthpiece all gnawed. "I am not giving it to you, I haven't got another one with me, but take a smoke... Good lad!.. If we live I shan't forget."

Ignatius Kurochkin, a grave-looking individual with abundant moustaches, removed his hat, cautiously took the pipe, dug his finger into the bowl and his face spread into a mass of cunning wrinkles.

"The tobacco, Your Majesty, there isn't any here..."

The other bombardiers smiled. The Tsar took out his tobacco pouch but there was not a single shred of tobacco in it.

It was just at this moment that Field Marshal Sheremetiev arrived.

"Boris Petrovich," said Tsar Peter, brightening up, "have you got anything to smoke with you? Here on the battery we have neither vodka nor tobacco..." (The bombardiers laughed again.) "Please be kind enough..." (Sheremetiev bowed respectfully and held out a beautiful tobacco pouch covered with beadwork.) "Thank you... Give the pouch to Bombardier Kurochkin... That I will give you, Ignatius, but I want the pipe back, don't forget..."

He sent the bombardiers away and for some time sat loudly crunching rusks. The Field Marshal, resting his baton on his hip, stood silently in front of him.

"Boris Petrovich, we cannot wait any longer," said Peter in a changed voice. "The men are getting angry... How many days have the grenadiers been lying in the swamp?.. It's hard on them. I intend to set fire to tar barrels and continue shooting all night... Send me a battalion from Samokhvalov's regiment, brave, grim peasants. You get on with your own business, only for God's sake don't lose men for nothing... At dawn I shall attack..." (Sheremetiev dropped the hand holding the baton and crossed himself.) "Get along, my boy."

When the tar barrels flared up along the edge of the swamp and across the river, rapid fire such as the Swedes had never heard before came from all the batteries. The gates collapsed. Splinters flew

from the curtains, chevaux-de-frise and palisades. The Swedes expected an attack during the night; through the gaps in the wall they could see a bristling array of bayonets, helmets and banners in the flickering glow of the burning tar-barrels. The alarm was sounded throughout the town.

Tsar Peter, his knees bent, stood in a ditch behind the fascines looking through a spyglass. With him was Colonel Ivan Zhidok, a man from Orel who looked like a Gypsy; he had black eyes with a kind of dry flash to them, his lips trembled and without noticing it he gritted his teeth with anger.

The night was a short one, dawn was already appearing beyond the forest in the east and the stars were disappearing. They could wait no longer. Tsar Peter, however, still hesitated. Suddenly Ivan Zhidok let out a sad "O-o-o-h!" that came from deep down in his belly, and shook his lowered head. Tsar Peter seized him by the shoulders.

"Get going!"

Ivan Zhidok leaped out through the fascines and bending low ran across the swamp. At that moment a rocket, hissing and twisting through the air, burst with a shower of green fire; it was followed by a second and a third. The guns were silent and the silence pressed upon one's ears. Men arose from amongst the reddish-black clumps in the swamp and sinking into the boggy ground moved clumsily towards the gates. The whole swamp trembled and seethed with soldiers. The companies from Samokhvalov's regiment, with fixed bayonets, came from the bank to their help. Tsar Peter put down his telescope, drew the air through his teeth and frowned. "Oh," he said, "oh!" From behind the overturned barricade came the fire of the five surviving guns point blank at the attacking grenadiers. A single despairing voice shouted "Hur-r-a-ah!" across the swamp. The Swedes came out from behind the battered walls and with a sort of unholy joy ran to meet the Russians. A hand-to-hand conflict began with its cries, roars and clatter. About 4,000 men were entangled in this mêlée under the walls and at the gates...

Tsar Peter climbed out of the ditch and walked forward crushing the moss under his heavy boots, fumbling in his pockets as he went as though searching for something,—his lost spyglass, or a weapon or something. Little Colonel Nechayev overtook him.

"Your Majesty, you can't go on that way." And they both began to look in that direction.

"Send for help," said the Tsar.

"We dont' need it, Your Majesty..."

"I tell you to send..."

"We don't need it... Our troops are capturing the Swedish guns..."

"Nonsense..."

"I can see them..."

He was right, first one and then another gun flashed out and fired in the direction of the gates. The huge mass of fighting humanity wavered and then surged towards the gaps in the walls and into the town.

"Your Majesty, that's the real artillery diversion..." said Nechayev, his staring eyes filled with tears.

The grenadiers and Samokhvalov's men, furious because the task was a hard one and the Swedes had killed so many of them for nothing, hacked and hewed and stabbed, driving the enemy along the narrow streets to the town square. Four drummers were beating furiously at their drums—they had been sent there by the Commandant of Yuriev to beat the signal to surrender. It was a trumpeter on the castle tower, with the light, hoarse voice of his trumpet sounding the surrender, that stopped the carnage, and then only with difficulty and after some time...

3

The "Katerina" with furled sails and with sailors on the yardarms slid for some time along the bank in the green shade of the trees. The gunshot was followed by the rattle of the anchor chain. A boat immediately put out to the vessel. Standing in the boat was Menshikov in a long cloak and with tall feathers in his hat. This handsome young man used up a dozen yards of English cloth for his cloak alone. Leaning on the tafrail Tsar Peter looked down at him. Raising his arm to his right ear Menshikov took off his hat, waved it three times to one side and shouted.

"Vivat, Mister Bombardier, vivat!" he cried. "Congratulations on the great victory!"

"Wait a minute, I'll come down to

you," said the Tsar in a soft bass voice. "What is new here?"

"We have not been without our victories..."

"Fine... And have you got ready for me—what I asked for in my letter? Out there we did not even have a drink of beer."

"We got three barrels of Rheinish yesterday," shouted Menshikov. "Our camp is not like Sheremetiev's—no restraints and denials..."

"Go on, then, boast!" The Tsar called Captain Nepluyev and ordered him to fire three volleys from both broadsides as soon as the flag was raised on the vessel next morning, to raise the signal "Captured by Courage," and to send the Swedish banners ashore to the troop positions accompanied by a beating of drums. Such an order was an honour for the young captain, he blushed and became even more confused under the Tsar's piercing glance.

"You sailed well, Commodore," added Peter.

Nepluyev got redder and redder until the perspiration came, his prickly eyes became moist from tense excitement—the Tsar had called him Commodore—Admiral of the squadron... Tsar Peter did not add anything but stretching out his long legs and scraping the tarred sides of the vessel with the toes of his shoes, climbed down to the waiting boat. He sat down beside Menshikov and dug him with his elbow.

"I'm glad you came to meet me, thanks. So you have had a victory. Schlippenbach has been beaten..."

"And how we beat him, min Herz! Anikita Repnin with his men on waggons attacked him near Wenden, and Colonel Renn with his cavalry did as I advised him, he blocked the road to the town... The Swede had to accept battle in the open field whether he wanted it or not... Schlippenbach was defeated so badly that this time he hardly got safely into Revel with a dozen cuirassiers..."

"Still, he did get away... Ah, devils!"

"He's very elusive... Never mind, he has lost his guns, troops and banners... Anikita Repnin afterwards started weeping when he was half-drunk. 'I'm not so sorry that I didn't take Schlippenbach,' he said, 'as I am that I didn't get his horse—it's as swift as a bird.' And I said these words to him: 'You,' I said, 'Anikita Ivanovich, aren't a Crimean Tatar to go out lassoing horses, you're a Russian General, you ought to think like a statesman...' I swore at him then, something fierce... And there's something else new: a herald arrived from Warsaw—King August is sending a Grand Ambassador to you... It would be a good idea to receive him in Narva, in the castle—eh, min Herz?"

Peter listened to his chatter, frowned at the green water and bit his thumbnail.

"Was there any news from Moscow?"

"You're lonely again: there was a messenger from the Prince-Caesar—a whole box of letters and documents... Gabriel Brovkin came to Peterburkh and brought you a letter from Izmailovo." Tsar Peter looked up at him sharply. "I have it, min Herz. And then there were four cantaloups from the glasshouse, he brought them wrapped in a sheepskin coat, we'll try them at supper tonight... He said that in Izmailovo they're longing for you, oh, so much, they've all cried their eyes out..."

"Now you really are lying." The boat came broadside on to the sand and Peter jumped ashore near where Menshikov's tent stood above the river.

They sat down to supper together in the tent. Tsar Peter, lounging on leather cushions, ate a lot—he had been hungry on Sheremetiev's rations. Menshikov picked odd pieces unwillingly from the dishes and drank a lot, laying his hand on the broad sash that was tightly bound round his waist—he was rosy-cheeked, kindly-looking, with flashes of sly fire in his tender blue eyes. Cautiously, watching for the slightest sign of dissatisfaction on Peter's calm, thin face, he told him about the new Field Marshal Ogilvie.

"There's no doubt he's a learned man. He brought a whole cartload of books in calf bindings from Vienna, they're heaped up in his tent. The first thing we got from him, and he was so proud of it, was, that he would not eat anything of ours... When he wakes up instead of a cup of vodka and a bite to eat he wanted "shecolate and kaffee" and white wheat bread, and for lunch he wants fish—not just any kind of fish, it must be ling—and game and veal. We turned ourselves inside out—the Field Marshal had ordered these things, so we had to get them. I sent a messenger, a spy,

into Revel for kaffee and shecolate, gave him five chervonets[1] of my own. I tethered a cow specially for him and got one of the girls, a nice, clean girl, to milk and look after it... We hammered together a little privy for him behind his tent... He won't give anybody the key to that closet..."

The Tsar hastily swallowed a morsel of food and laughed.

"That's what we pay him three thousand yefimoks for, so that he should teach you Asiatics..."

"Yes, teach is right... The next day he sent for the colonels of all the regiments; he did not ask names or patronymics, didn't offer his hand to anybody in greeting, but told them very importantly how the Emperor loved him, what troops he had led, how he had besieged cities and how Marshal Vauban had said: "You're my best pupil" and had presented him with a snuff-box. He showed us his orders and the snuff-box—on the lid is a girl embracing a cannon—and then dismissed us. The shecolate should have made him feel better, but no... I shall soon write a disposition,' he said, 'and then you will know how to take Narva...' He is still writing it..."

"Now, now!" Tsar Peter wiped his hands on a napkin; the Magdeburg coco-nut cup with the gilded deities he took up by its stem; he pursed up his lips merrily, his dark eyes rarely showed a smile.

"As we did at the Kukuy in the good old days," he said, "let us praise, my dear friend, our father Bacchus and our mother the indefatigable Venus... Give me that letter..."

The tiny letter was sealed with wax and had that same sweet, womanly smell about it as the kerchief with the grape leaves; it was from Catherine Vassilyevskaya, although written by Anissya Tolstaya because Catherine could not write.

"My Lord, light and joy... I am sending you, my Lord, light and joy, a present—cantaloups that ripened under the glass at Izmailovo—they are so sweet. Eat them, my Lord, light and joy, may they bring you health... And, light of my life, I want to see you..."

"She wrote very little... She probably thought for a long time, wrinkled her brows, twisted her apron in her hands," said Peter softly smiling. He drank up the wine in the cup. Slapping his thigh he got up and left the tent: "Danilych, send for Makarov and take the Moscow post from him, and I—I'm going to relax."

It was a sultry evening and the dark pinewoods smelt of resin. The great glow of the sunset, giving off no light, died away dully. This was the time for lonely night-birds to shriek and for the bats to flit silently overhead. In the fields there were still fires burning here and there and the horses from the convoy that had come with Menshikov rattled their loosened harness. Tsar Peter walked along the bank wetting his stockings to the knee in the dew. He stopped to take a deep breath. At the edge of a low gully leading down to the river he stopped again—from there came a disturbing honey-sweet smell, either a vague smoke or someone secretly brewing beer, and a very clear voice could be heard, most likely one of the soldiers of the baggage-train, a driver, one of those babblers who don't let others sleep but insist on telling their own tales, true or untrue. Tsar Peter was about to turn back when he heard something that stopped him.

"... It's all nonsense, she's a witch, a witch. She was a raw farm girl in a torn shift. That's what she was like when they took her. Not every fellow would have slept with her. Am I right, Mishka? I saw her when she was still living with the Field Marshal. She ran out of the tent, threw out the slops, wiped herself on her apron and back to the tent, toddling along... She's smart and nimble... Even then I thought the wench would get along all right. Oh, she was tricky..."

"Uncle, what happened to her then?" asked a half-witted voice.

"Don't you know? Well, they say you don't have to cross the sea to find fools... Now she's living with our Tsar, eats cake and gingerbread, sleeps half the day and spends the other half stretching herself..."

The half-witted voice—astonished:

"Uncle, then she must have some thing special about her."

"You ask Mishka, he'll tell you what she's built like."

A thick sleepy voice answered:

"To hell with you, I don't even remember her..."

[1] Chervonets—ten roubles.

Tsar Peter found it difficult to breathe. Shame burnt his face. The black blood of anger ran in his veins. The Prince-Caesar put men in irons for such talk about the ruler. Should he arrest them? Shame, shame... and ridicule. It was his own fault if all the army laughed at him... "Took the girl straight from under Mishka..." With bowed head he walked in the direction of the lazy peasant who had known her first freshness... Some gentle force seemed to stop him, tangled his limbs so that he could not walk. Regaining his courage he placed his hand on his wet, drooping brow... "She's something of a bitch, Catherine..." She appeared tangibly before him... Swarthy, sweet, hot, kind and innocent of everything... "Hell, I knew all about her when I took her, I knew about the soldier, too."

Lifting his feet high as he stepped over the wet, coarse grass, he marched impressively down into the gully. Three figures arose out of the smoke. "Who goes there?" asked one of them roughly. Tsar Peter answered: "It is I..." The soldiers, although they sweated with fear, moved smartly—before he could look around they had their muskets in their hands, fusees held forward, their snub noses tilted cockily, eyes turned on the Tsar, stood steady at attention, ready for fire and death.

Tsar Peter, without looking at them, kicked the dying fire with the toe of his boot.

"A coal."

The soldier in the middle, the wit who had told the story, dropped to his knees, raked amongst the ashes, lifted a hot coal on the palm of his hand and tossed it up and down waiting while the Tsar filled his pipe. Peter lit the pipe and at the same time furtively watched the soldier farthest from him... "That..." He was a giant, well-built and strong. The Tsar could not see his face...

"How tall are you? Why aren't you in the guards? What's your name?"

The soldier answered according to the rules, but with a Moscow accent—that impudent way of speaking made the Tsar's moustache bristle:

"Mishka Bludov, Neva Dragoon Regiment, driver of the Sixth Company, called up in 1699, height 6 foot 3 inches, Mister Bombardier."

"You have been at the front since '99 and have not been promoted. Lazy? Silly?"

The soldier answered in a dull voice:

"That's so, Mister Bombardier, lazy, silly..."

"Fool!"

Tsar Peter threw the coal out of his lighted pipe. He knew that before he had time to disappear into the mist the soldiers would be looking at each other—they would not dare to smile, but they would glance at each other... Folding his thin hands behind his back and raising high his head with the pipe between his teeth, emitting showers of sparks, he marched out of the gully. Arriving at his tent he sat down at the table, pushed the candle farther from him: his throat was dry and he drank up some wine thirstily. Putting up a curtain of tobacco smoke around him he said:

"Danilych... In the Neva Regiment, Sixth Company, there's a soldier of guard's height... Not according to orders..."

In Menshikov's blue eyes there was neither astonishment nor cunning, only heartfelt understanding...

"Mishka Bludov... I know, I've known for a long time. He was awarded a rouble for the capture of Marienburg... The squadron commander does not want to let him go, he loves the horses and they love him, and such horses as they have in the Sixth Company aren't to be found anywhere else in the army."

"Transfer him to the Preobrazhensky Guards, Right Marker in the First Company."[1]

4

General Horn came down from the tower and walked through the market place, a tall figure with long legs and flat-heeled boots. As usual there were crowds of people in the shops, but, alas, the eatables to be had grew fewer each day: a bunch of radishes, a skinned cat sold as a rabbit, and a little smoked horseflesh. The angry townswomen did not greet the general with gracious curtsies and some of them even turned their backs on him. Quite often he heard them muttering: "Surrender to the Russian, you old devil; why are you starving people

[1] Right Marker is the first step to promotion.—*Transl.*

for nothing?..." It was impossible to fluster the general, however.

When the town clock struck nine he went to his tidy little house and wiped his boots carefully on the mat that lay on the doorstep. A neat maid opened the door and, curtseying very low, took his helmet and the heavy sword that he pulled out of its belt. The general washed his hands and with dignified slowness went into the dining-room where the round, bulging glass of a window that took up the whole wall let a yellowish-greenish light into the room.

The family stood by the table awaiting the general—his wife née Baroness Sperling, a woman with a difficult character, three round-shouldered, thin-haired girls with long noses like their father's, and a bloated little boy, his mother's darling.

The general sat down and then the remainder took their seats, folded their hands and silently said grace. When the lid was lifted from the tin dish steam arose, but there was nothing attractive in it but the steam—the same oatmeal porridge without milk or salt. The doleful girls swallowed it with difficulty, the bloated boy, pushing his plate away from him, whispered to his mother. "I won't eat it, I won't eat it..." As a second dish they were given the bones of an old sheep left over from yesterday with a few peas added. In place of beer they drank water. The general, quite undisturbed, chewed the meat with his huge, yellow teeth.

The Baroness Sperling spoke very rapidly, crumbling a piece of bread over her plate.

"No matter how I have tried during the fourteen years of my married life, I cannot understand you, Karl. Have you got a drop of live blood in your body? Have you got the heart of a husband and a father? The king sent a convoy of ships from Revel bringing ham, sugar, fish, smoked food and biscuits. How should a man in your place, the father of four children, have acted? You should have fought your way to the ships, sword in hand, and brought them to the town. You preferred to stare unruffled from your tower while the Russian soldiers ate up the Revel ham. My children are forced to choke themselves with porridge. I shall never stop saying it—you have a stone in place of a heart! You are a scoundrel! And that unfortunate business with the sham battle! Now I dare not show myself in Europe. 'Oh, you're the wife of that General Horn that the Russians led by the nose, like the village idiot at a fair.' 'Alas, alas!' I must answer. You do not even know that every market-woman in the town calls you the old stork on the tower. Lastly, our only hope, General Schlippenbach, who was coming to our help, perished at Wenden, and you, as though nothing were wrong, sit and chew mutton gristle as undisturbed as ever, as though it were the happiest day of your life. Enough of this! You must let me and the children go to the Palace at Stockholm."

"It's too late, madame, too late," said Horn, and his watery eyes, turned towards the window, seemed to let through as little light as the pot-bellied window panes. "We are as tightly sealed up in Narva as in a mousetrap."

Baroness Sperling seized her lace cap in both hands and pushed it low over her brow.

"Now I know what you want—you want me and my unfortunate children to eat grass and rats."

The bloated boy suddenly laughed and looked at his mother: the girls were in tears and lowered their noses to their plates; General Horn was somewhat astonished; this was unjust, he did not want his children to eat grass and rats. Nevertheless he finished his breakfast undisturbed.

Some time already he had heard the spurs of his Adjutant Bistrem rattle outside the door. Something, apparently, had happened. Horn took a clay pipe from the mantle-shelf, filled it, struck fire, lit a piece of paper from the tinder, got his pipe going and then left the dining-room.

Bistrem held the general's helmet and sword in his hands; he was panting slightly.

"Your Excellency, some movement has begun unexpectedly in the Russian camp and we cannot understand what it means."

General Horn again walked through the market-place crowded with excited people. He raised his head high, not wishing to look into the eyes of women who called him an old stork. He walked

up the worn steps to the tower. Something unusual was certainly happening in the Russian camp: along the whole crescent of the siegeworks closely squeezing the town the troops were drawn up in two ranks. A cloud of dust was rapidly approaching from the east. At first they could only make out the dragoons galloping along on their small horses. At some distance from them rode the Tsar and Menshikov. The yellowish dust raised by the hoofs of the squadron was so thick that General Horn screwed up his eyes painfully... After the Tsar and Menshikov came soldiers holding aloft eighteen yellow satin banners. On the folds of the banners waved eighteen Royal lions, stretching out their paws in anger...

The cavalry, the Tsar, Menshikov and the Swedish banners marched along the whole line of cheering troops... "Hurrah!.. Victory!.." came from their barbaric throats.

5

They were having a merry time in the Russian camp. The Swedes on the Gloria Tower could see them firing the guns around the Tsar's tent and by the number of volleys they could estimate the number of victory toasts drunk. General Horn who knew the boastful nature of the Russians, expected an envoy with an arrogant message; he was right in his assumptions. Suddenly about forty men streamed out of the royal tent, waving drinking bowls and cups; one of them jumped on to a horse and galloped towards the Gloria Tower with a trumpeter close behind him. Zigzaging to avoid the shots, the envoy pulled out a handkerchief, raised it on the point of a drawn sword and pulled up his horse at the very foot of the tower; the trumpeter, rolling in his saddle, sounded his horn with all his might, frightening the crows flying overhead.

"Parley, parley!" shouted the envoy. "I am Lieutenant-Colonel Karpov of the Preobrazhensky Regiment!" He was drunk, rosy-cheeked and the curls on his head were playing in the wind.

General Horn leaned over the battlements and answered him.

"Speak," he said, "I'm listening. We'll have time to kill you later."

"I have to inform you," shouted the lieutenant-colonel, raising his cheerful voice, "that on Friday of last week Field Marshal Sheremetiev, with the help of God, took the town of Yuriev at the point of the sword. In consideration of the commandant's tearful prayers and because of the courageous resistance they had put up, the officers were allowed to keep their swords and a third of the soldiers their muskets without cartridges. Their colours and musical instruments were taken from them..."

In a loud voice, Bistrem translated to the officers standing behind Horn; the officers looked at each other indignantly and one of them, beside himself, shouted out: "The Russian dog is lying!" Lieutenant-Colonel Karpov made a wide sweeping movement with his arm and pointed to the distant tent around which the men with their mugs were still standing.

"Gentlemen, is not this peace preferable to the confusion of battle such as we saw at Schlisselburg, Nijenshanz and Yuriev? Believing this to be true, the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Ogilvie, proposes that you surrender Narva by an honourable agreement. Envoys to make negotiations should proceed to the tent immediately. The cups are filled and the guns are charged to fire the salutes."

"No, I shall fight," answered General Horn in a dull voice. His face with its sunken cheeks and a nose grown big in old age was completely bloodless, his sinewy hands trembled. "Go. In three minutes I shall give the order to fire."

Karpov saluted with his sword, ordered the trumpeter to return to camp but instead of galloping off himself rode his prancing horse round to the other side of the tower. The officers on the tower ran to the battlements.

"Which of you is the scoundrelly thief that barked at me, a Russian officer, and said that I lie? Interpreter, translate that quickly... Come on out if you are brave enough, we will settle it here in the field, one against one..."

The officers shouted. One of them, a fat man, turned deep red and tore himself away from his companions. Musket-locks clicked. Karpov, lying on the neck of his horse, galloped away from the tower followed by musket shots and whistling bullets. He halted some two hundred paces off and awaited his adversary... In no great hurry the gate opened with

a grating of hinges and the drawbridge fell; the fat officer galloped out towards Karpov. He was taller than the Russian, his horse was bigger and his Swedish sword was a good six inches longer. He had donned an iron cuirass for the duel. Through Karpov's unbuttoned kaftan the wind ruffled the lace on his shirt.

In accordance with the custom the duelists began cursing each other before they engaged in battle—the Swede with heavy, morose words and the Russian with a string of obscenities addressed to the Swede's mother and rattled off rapidly in the Moscow manner... They both drew a pistol from their saddle-holsters, dug their spurs into their horses and flew at each other. They fired together. The Swede held his sword straight out in front of him but Karpov, Tatar-fashion, turned his horse right in front of his nose, rode round beside him and fired his second pistol. The Swede clenched his teeth and grunted, and then again flew at his adversary in a feartul rage. Karpov only saved himself by interposing his horse and the Swede's sword plunged deep in the animal's neck. "That's the horse finished," thought Karpov, "I'll never be able to stand against him on foot..." The Swede, like a man half-asleep, dropped the hilt of his sword and fumbled in the pistol-holster with his left hand. Karpov leaped down from the falling horse and thrust his sword into his adversary's side, stabbing him several times below the cuirass; he saw the Swede swaying farther and farther in his saddle and gasping for breath. "He's a strong devil and doesn't want to die," he muttered and ran limping back to the Russian lines.

... The darkness of night lay on the fields, dew was falling, the firing had long ceased, the fires of the camp cooks were smoking away, every living thing was making preparations for the night's repose, but in the Russian camp there was no rest.

On the western side of the camp, where the bridge had been built, there was a constant movement of lights, orders were shouted and the sing-song voices of men at heavy toil—"pu-u-ll"—sounded through the night. Campfires, torches and lanterns flashed all the way along the right bank of the Narova to the very fortress of Ivangorod and soon these fixed and moving lights increased in number until they were more numerous than the magnificent stars in the August sky.

At dawn the Swedes on the towers of Narva could see the huge bullock-drawn cannon for breaching the walls and large numbers of heavy siege-mortars still moving down the Yamgorod road. Some of them crossed the river by the bridge, but the majority remained on the right bank amongst the troop concentrations.

That morning General Horn rode to the Honour Tower in the old town close to the river bank. He climbed up onto a solid, brick-built rampart that was considered impregnable. With his naked eye he could see the bronze monsters on their cast-iron wheels, could count them, and without any particular difficulty guessed the intentions of Tsar Peter and realized his own mistake. Once more the Russian had outwitted an old and experienced soldier. In the defences he could see two weak spots: the reputedly impregnable Honour Tower which the Russians' new breaching guns would sweep away in a few days, and the Victoria Bastion which covered the town from the river side, also built of brick but old and decrepit, dating back to the time of Ivan the Dread. For two months the Russians had distracted his attention by their apparent preparations for a storming of the strong fortifications of the new town. Even then, of course, they had been preparing to storm the other side. General Horn saw that thousands of Russian soldiers were hurriedly digging and getting the heavy guns into position opposite Honour, Victoria and Ivangorod which protected the river crossing. The Russians had prepared an attack across the river, using pontoon bridges.

"Very well, everything's clear, nonsensical jokes are at an end and we shall fight," grunted General Horn, walking up and down the rampart with the gait of a younger man. "We shall oppose them with our Swedish courage and that is no small thing."

He turned to a group of officers.

"There will be hell here!" and he stamped his foot. "Here we shall oppose the Russian cannon-balls with our bodies. I order you to muster everybody in the town capable of handling a

spade. If the walls fall we shall fight on the counter-approaches, we shall fight in the streets. I will not surrender Narva to the Russians."

Late that night General Horn went home, sat down to table, and with his big teeth chewed gristly meat. Baroness Sperling was so frightened by the talk of the market-place that she remained silent and suppressed her discontent.

"The boys say that the Russians will kill us all," said the bloated boy running a finger wetted with spittle along the edge of the plate.

General Horn drank a mouthful of water, lit his pipe at the candle, crossed his legs and then answered his son:

"Well, my son, a man must do his duty and for the rest, depend on God's mercy."

6

Tsar Peter would have thrown any other long, dull missive across the table to Makarov with instructions to read it and tell him its contents intelligently but this was the disposition of Field Marshal Ogilvie. If one considered what he had been paid since the first of May and had done nothing else whatsoever, then this disposition had cost the treasury seven hundred gold yefimoks, to say nothing of food and other emoluments. Tsar Peter, sucking his snorting pipe and himself grunting in tune with it, patiently read through the Field Marshal's essay written in German.

Little green flies circled round the candles, fearsome-looking moths singed their wings and fell on to the papers scattered over the table; a beetle, half the size of a sparrow, circled round, putting out the candles (Tsar Peter shuddered, he did not like any strange or useless creatures, especially cockroaches), but Makarov took off his wig and chased the beetle out of the tent.

Peter Pavlovich Shafirov, who had come from Moscow with the Field Marshal, sat near the Tsar, his stumpy thighs spread apart; he was short in stature with moist, smiling eyes and quick on the uptake. Peter had been watching him for some time—was he intelligent enough to be loyal, was he clever in the bigger things and was he not greedy beyond measure? Shafirov had recently risen from the rank of a simple interpreter at the Ambassadorial Chancellory to a personage of considerable importance, although he held no office.

"Again I've got it all mixed up," said the Tsar, frowning.

Shafirov waved his tiny beringed hands, jumped up, bent over the table and translated the obscure passage quickly and accurately.

"Ah, that's all, and I thought it was something highly complicated." Peter dipped the goosequill in the inkwell and scribbled a few words in the margin. "It's simpler in Russian... You and the Field Marshal have eaten a whole pood of salt, Peter Palych; what do you think, is he worth having?"

Shafirov's face, shaven so closely that it had a grey look about it, spread into a cunning smile, like a devil's. He did not answer; not because he was wary but because he knew that Peter's unwinking eyes had read his thoughts through and through.

"Our people complain that he is painfully proud. He does not visit the soldiers, he is too fastidious... I do not know what there is to be fastidious about with the Russian soldier; take the shirt off anybody's back and his body will be clean and white. It is only the peasants in the baggage train that have lice.. Ah, these little Caesars! I went to him this morning, he was washing in a little tiny bowl, hands and face in the same water, and he spat in the same bowl... And he's too fastidious for us. He hasn't been to the bathhouse since he came from Vienna."

"He hasn't." Shafirov, shaking with laughter, covered his mouth with the tips of his fingers. "In Germany, he says, when a gentleman wishes to wash they bring him a can of water in which he washes whichever part of his body he desires... The bath is a barbaric custom... The Field Marshal is most indignant because we eat so much garlic, chopped and ground and whole and it's the same with the serfs and the boyars. The first few days he was here he kept his handkerchief to his nose..."

"So?" said Peter in astonishment. "Why didn't you tell me this before? It's true we eat a lot of garlic, but then it's good for you, let him get used to it..."

He threw the papers which he had read onto the table, stretched himself, cracked his joints, and then suddenly said to Makarov:

"Barbarian, sweep that carrion off the table, the flies... Order some wine and a chair for the Field Marshal.. And you, Makarov, have a bad habit: when you listen you breathe garlic in a man's face... Turn away and breathe..."

Into the tent came Field Marshal Ogilvie in a yellow wig, white military kaftan with gold lacing and soft leather riding boots turned down below the knee. Raising his hat with one hand and holding his cane in the other, he bowed and immediately straightened up again to his full height. Tsar Peter did not rise but pointed to the chair with all his fingers spread out wide.

"Sit down. How are you?"

Shafirov moved towards him and with an ingratiating smile on his face translated. With great dignity the Field Marshal sat down, his stomach wobbling and protruding a little, and the hand holding the cane stretched out to the full length of his arm. His face was yellowish, full but not bloated; his lips were thin and his glance, say what you will, was full of valour.

"I've read your disposition, not bad, quite clever in fact," and Tsar Peter took a plan of the town from under the table, opened it and immediately flies and moths dropped down on it. "Only one thing I disagree with—Narva must be taken in three days, not three months." He nodded his head, pressing his lips together.

The Field Marshal's face lengthened as though somebody standing behind him was helping him pull it out—his reddish eyebrows rose almost to his wig, the corners of his mouth dropped and his eyes expressed dissatisfaction.

"Now, now! Perhaps three days is a little too much to ask... I'll make allowances, let's say a week... More time than that I will not give you." Clicking his tongue angrily Tsar Peter began to brush the insects off the map. "You selected the place for the batteries cleverly... But, you will excuse me, I have already given the order to turn all the batteries across the river towards the Honour and Victoria Bastions, for this is General Horn's Achilles heel..."

"Your Majesty," exclaimed Ogilvie beside himself, "according to the disposition we begin with the bombardment of Ivangorod and the storming of it..."

"That won't do. General Horn hopes that we shall be busy with Ivangorod till autumn. He won't bother us, he may shoot at our pontoons a little, that's all. Further it is clever of you to fear a relief force from King Charles... In 1700 I lost an army on these very same positions on account of his relief column. You are preparing a counter-measure but you spend too much time and money on it. My counter-measure is to take Narva as quickly as possible. Look for victory in speed and not in caution. Your disposition is the sagacious fruit of the science of war and the logic of Aristotle. But I want Narva now as much as a hungry man wants a crust of bread... The hungry will not wait."

Ogilvie put his silk handkerchief to his face. It was difficult for his thoughts to keep pace with the syllogisms of the young barbarian but his dignity did not permit him to give in without a dispute. Abundant perspiration soaked his handkerchief.

"Your Majesty, fortune deigned to give me the pleasure of capturing eleven fortresses and towns," he said and threw his handkerchief into the hat lying on the carpet. "At the storming of Namur Marshal Vauban embraced me and called me his best pupil and there on the battlefield, standing amongst the groaning wounded, he presented me with a snuff-box. In compiling this disposition I did not miss one point in my experience of war, everything is weighed and measured. With humble confidence I maintain that the slightest deviation from my conclusions will have ruinous results. Yes, Your Majesty, I allowed a longer time for the siege but only after due consideration of the fact that the Russian soldier is still not a soldier but a peasant with a gun. He still has not got the slightest idea of order and discipline. He must have many more sticks broken over his back to compel him to obey without discussion as a soldier should. Then I may be sure that at a motion from my baton he will take a ladder and under a hail of bullets will climb a wall..."

Ogilvie listened to himself with great satisfaction dropping the lids over his eyes like a bird. Shafirov translated the verbose didactic speech into reasonable Russian. When Ogilvie finished speaking and looked up at the Tsar he pulled his legs up under his chair, drew in his sto-

mach and dropped the hand with the cane. Peter's face was a terrible sight, his neck seemed to have stretched to double its normal length, angry foam decked the corners of his tightly closed mouth, and fury—God forbid that it should!—was ready to burst from his wide-open eyes. He was breathing heavily. His huge sinewy hand with its short sleeve was searching for something amongst the dead moths. The goose-quill snapped between his fingers.

"So that's it, is it, the Russian soldier's a peasant with a gun!" he said chokingly. "I don't see anything bad in that. The Russian peasant is clever, thoughtful, brave... With the gun he is feared by the enemy. All this is not knocked in with a stick. He doesn't understand order? He does, and if he doesn't it's not his fault but the officers'. And when my soldier needs beating with a stick I'll beat him, not you."

... General Chambers, General Repnin and Menshikov came into the tent. Taking a cup of wine each from Makarov they sat down where they could. Peter looked at the Field Marshal's manuscript with his own notes in the margins, made lines and notes on the map with a pencil (standing in front of the candles and driving the flies away with his hand) and read out to the War Council that disposition which in a few hours would set all troops, batteries and transport in motion.

Women without wigs threw themselves at General Horn's horse. They seized it by the bridle and the stirrups and caught hold of the tails of the general's coat. Thin, black with the smoke of the conflagrations they shouted: "Surrender the town, surrender the town!.." The gloomy cuirassiers, his escort, were also seized and they could not go to his assistance. The roar of the Russian guns shook the houses on a square littered with charred beams and broken tiles. This was the seventh day of the cannonade. The day before the general had sternly rejected the reasonable and polite suggestion made by Field Marshal Ogilvie that he should not subject the town to the horrors of the storm and the ferocity of the invading troops. The general, instead of answering, had crumpled up the Field Marshal's letter and thrown it in the envoy's face. The whole town had heard the story.

The general fixed his stare on the faces of these screaming women—they were distorted by fear and hunger—such was war! The general drew his sword from its scabbord, struck at their heads with the flat of the blade and urged his horse on. "Kill him, kill him!" they screamed. "Trample him to death!" He swayed and they dragged him from the saddle. Then came an explosion such as none of them had ever heard before, even Horn's stout heart trembled. A blackish-yellow cloud of smoky flame rose over the tiled roofs of the old town—the powder magazine had blown up. The high tower of the old town hall trembled. Exhausted voices screamed and people scampered into the side streets leaving the square empty. His sword held across his saddle bow, the general galloped towards the Honour Bastion. Balls that rapidly increased in size flew from beyond the river through a curved trajectory and fell hissing on the roofs of the houses facing the street and fell in the narrow, crooked street itself, rolled along and then exploded. The general continually dug his huge spurs into the bloody sides of his shying horse...

The Honour Bastion was wrapped in dust and smoke. The general could distinguish a heap of bricks, overturned guns, legs of horses torn off and a huge hole in the wall that faced the Russians. The walls had been shattered to the foundation. The commander of the regiment, covered with grey dust and wounded in the face, came up to him. "My orders are: do not allow the enemy to pass!" said the general. The commander's look expressed either reproach or ridicule. The general turned away and urged his horse through narrow by-streets to the Victoria Bastion. Several times he had to protect his face from the flames of the burning houses with his leather sleeve. As he drew near he could hear the whining of the cannon-balls. The Russian fire was accurate. The walls were bulging, tottering and falling and were already half-destroyed. The general dismounted. A round faced soldier with a milk and roses complexion deliberately refused to look the general in the eyes as he took his horse. The general hit him under the chin with his gloved fist and climbed over a heap of bricks on to the surviving part of the wall. From here he could see that the attack had begun...

Waving his sword and shouting at the top of his voice, Menshikov ran across the pontoon bridge amidst the short-statured Ingermanlanders. Cast-iron guns barked at them from the walls of Ivangorod, the bomb-shells splashed in the water and pressed down the air as they whistled overhead. Menshikov ran across and reached the left bank, turned round, stamped his feet and waved the edge of his cloak. "Forward!.. Forward!" Soldiers, humb-backed from their knapsacks, ran in close ranks across the bridge which settled lower in the water from their weight; it seemed to Menshikov that they were just marking time. "Quicker, quicker!" he shouted like a drunken man and cursed them with some obscenities invented there and then.

On the left bank there was very little space on the narrow strip of land between the river and the damp walls of the Victoria Bastion, and the troops, closely packed, pushed against one another and slowed down their pace—there was an acrid smell of sweat. Menshikov, up to his knees in water, ran after the column: "Drummers to the fore! Colours to the fore!"

The Ivangorod guns now fired across the river at the column, the cannon-balls splashed into the river near the bank, throwing up spouts of water, they burst against the walls, their splinters started fires and struck soft and stickily into the men. The front ranks, dashing forward, waving their arms, were already scrambling over the heaps of bricks in the breach towards the crest of the walls. Drums were beating. Stronger and stronger grew the cries of the Ingermanlanders crawling over the top of the brick heaps. Away beyond them a hoarse voice gave an order in Swedish... A volley. A cloud of smoke... The Ingermanlanders burst over the ridge of bricks, through the breach into the town.

The second storming party passed by General Chambers. He sat on a high horse turning his head back and forth in time to the drums. He was wearing a bronze cuirass that had been burnished with brickdust and which he wore only on special ceremonial occasions; his heavy helmet he held in his hand so that the troops could see his hook-nosed, flushed face that resembled a heated cannon-ball. "Brave Russians... brave Russians, forward!.." he repeated continuously and without feeling.

At the head of the column a battalion of the Preobrazhensky Regiment ran at the double—tall picked troops, moustached and well-fed—their tiny three-cornered hats pushed low over their brows, their bayonets screwed on their muskets—stab, not shoot, had been the order. The battalion was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Karpov. He knew that both the Russians and the Swedes hiding in the breach were watching him. His chest puffed out like a pigeon's, his nose drawn in, he ran on without looking back at his battalion. Behind him four drummers beat their drums as hard as they could. Fifty paces separated them from the gap in the thick brick wall—Karpov did not increase speed but his shoulders began to rise. Seeing him the soldiers broke step and pushed on, the rear ranks pressing on those in front. "Rat-a-tat-tat, rat-a-tat-tat," rolled the drums. Steel helmets slowly rose in the breach, then the muzzles of muskets. "Throw down your arms, bastards, surrender!" screamed Karpov. Sword and pistol in hand he ran to meet the volley. A flash, a roar, the smoke of powder in his face... "Surely I'm still alive?" he asked himself joyfully. He had overcome the fear that had been the cause of his rising shoulders. His spirit demanded a fight. His soldiers overtook him, however, and he searched in vain for somebody to use his sword on. He could see only the broad backs of his Preobrazhensky guardsmen working with their bayonets like pitchforks, peasant fashion...

The third column, that of Anikita Ivanovich Repnin, advanced on the half-ruined Gloria Tower with storm ladders. The Swedes fired rapidly from the walls, threw down stones and logs and lit barrels of tar to pour on the besiegers. Anikita Ivanovich was in a fever, dashing up and down on a tiny horse at the bottom of the gate tower; throwing back his huge cloak he shook his fists and screamed in a high-pitched voice, encouraged his men in fear that they might slip on the ladders. First one, then another, then several of them, injured or stabbed, fell from the very top. But, God is merciful, the soldiers on the ladders were still many and were angry. The Swedes did not have time to overturn

their tar barrels before the Russians were on the walls...

Baroness Sperling seized her children by the hands as though she had to keep counting them. She jumped up, listened—the firing and the mad shouts of the fighting soldiers grew nearer and nearer... She stretched her arms out their full length, her hands clashed with the palms turned outwards and whispered through twisted lips: "That's what you wanted, you scoundrel, you, you stubborn, heartless man!" The weeping girls cried out: "Mamma, mamma, don't—keep quiet!" The boy stuffed his fist into his mouth and stared at his crying sisters.

Wheels rattled nearby and the Baroness ran to the window. A horse with a broken leg hobbled along dragging a cart loaded with all kinds of things; behind it ran women carrying bundles. "To the castle, to the castle, save yourselves!" they screamed. Four soldiers were carrying a stretcher... More stretchers and still more with the waxen faces of the wounded... Then she saw a fussy old man with a sack, a well-known, rich man who lent out money on security; hurriedly shuffling along in his slippers he held a squealing pig under his arm. Suddenly he dropped the pig and then the sack and ran. From quite near came a tinkle of broken glass. "Oi-oi-oi!" whined someone in pain.

At the far end of the square she saw General Horn... He was waving his arms and pointing to something. The cuirassiers rode heavily past him... Horn struck his capering horse several times in the ribs with the flat of his sword —all his teeth were visible in his blackened face like those of a wolf, and with his horse rearing high into the air he disappeared into one of the side-streets. "Karl, Karl!" The Baroness ran into the passage and opened the street door. "Karl, Karl!" Then she saw the Russians —they were moving along the walls of the house at the side of the empty square and looking in at the windows. They had wide faces and long hair and on their caps were brass eagles.

The Baroness was so afraid that she stood and watched as they approached, pointing to her and to the commandant's flag flying over the house. The soldiers encircled her, poked her with their fingers, talking excitedly and angrily. One of them —a flat-faced idol—pushed her aside and went into the house. When he pushed her as he would a common woman in the marketplace all the hatred that had been stifling her so long welled up within her, hatred for her old husband, who had eaten up her life, hatred for those Russian barbarians who had caused so much suffering and fear... She seized the flat-faced soldier, dragged him out of the passage spitting and spluttering incoherent words; she scratched his cheeks and eyes, bit him, beat him with her knees... The soldier fought madly to free himself from this insane woman. He rolled to the ground with her. His comrades, astounded at this feminine fury, tried to drag her off him, grew angrier, rolled her over and when they stood up the Baroness was lying on the ground with a strange, blue face. One of the soldiers pulled her skirt down over her bare legs, another turned angrily to the three girls and a boy standing in the dooorway; the boy, hopping from one leg to another, shouted soundlessly and without tears. "To hell with them!" said the soldier. "The scum, let's get out of here, lads!"

Everything was over in three quarters of an hour. The Russians swept through the squares and streets of old Narva like a hurricane. It was impossible to check or repulse them. General Horn ordered his troops to retreat to the earthen rampart that separated the old town from the new. The rampart was high and broad and Tsar Peter's regiments would have to soak its steep sides in their blood.

The horse on which the general sat bent its head down to its hoofs. The fresh wind that arose caused his personal banner—yellow and black—to flutter on its high pole. Half a hundred cuirassiers, gloomy and motionless, formed a half-circle behind his back. From the high rampart the general could see the whole length of several streets. His troops should be retreating along these streets but still they remained deserted. The general watched and waited, pursing his wrinkled lips. At the far end of one street, then of another, men appeared running. He could not see who they were or why they were running. The cuirassiers behind him began to mumble dully. A horseman, galloping desperately, appeared before them, jumped down from

his horse at the foot of the rampart and holding his bleeding left hand in his right made his way up the steep embankment. It was Adjutant Bistrem, without sword or pistols, without a hat and with the tails of his coat missing.

"General!" he raised his face, devoid of intelligence. "Oh, God, my God!.."

"I'm listening, Lieutenant Bistrem, speak calmly."

"General, our troops are surrounded, the Russians are in a furious rage... I never saw such carnage... General, fly to the castle!.."

General Horn lost his composure. Now he realized who those men had been who ran across the far end of the streets. His slow thoughts which always led to a firm decision were muddled. He could come to no decision. His feet slipped out of his stirrups and hung below the belly of his horse. He did not even recover his senses when his cuirassiers shouted in alarm. Riding at full gallop along the wall from both directions came the bearded Cossacks, their tall, terrifying sheepskin caps pulled down over their ears. They were waving their long, curved sabres and aiming their blunderbusses. Bistrem, in order not to see this horror, buried his face in the flank of the general's horse. The cuirassiers, glancing at each other, began to draw their swords — they threw them to the ground and dismounted.

The first to ride up was the excited Colonel Renn who seized the general's horse by the bridle.

"General Horn, you are my prisoner!"

Then like a man asleep he raised the hand that held his sword, and in order to take it Colonel Renn was forced to use all his strength to bend back the general's fingers as they clung to the hilt.

If Field Marshal Ogilvie had not been there Tsar Peter would long before have been amongst his troops—in three quarters of an hour they had done what he had been preparing for four years, what had caused him so much pain and so many cares, like a running sore. Well, to hell with him!—he had to behave like a respectable ruler in accordance with European customs. Tsar Peter sat importantly on a white horse—he was wearing the Preobrazhensky kaftan and scarf, on his head a new furry cocked hat with a cockade, in his hand he held a spyglass pressed against his hip—there was nothing to look at from the hill now—his face expressing dread majesty. This was a European affair: it was no joke to take one of the most impregnable fortresses in the world.

The officers began to arrive—Peter pointed to Ogilvie with a tilt of his chin —and reported the course of the battle to the Field Marshal... So many streets and squares taken. Our troops are breaking down the wall, the enemy is retreating in disorder everywhere... Finally, through the battered Gloria gates came three officers riding hell-for-leather... Ogilvie raised a finger and said:

"Good news, I imagine."

The first to arrive was a Cossack officer who leapt from his horse in full gallop and stroking his beard before the Tsar shouted at the top of his voice:

"General Horn, the Commendant of Narva, has surrendered his sword..."

"Excellent!" exclaimed Ogilvie and with a hand clad in a doeskin glove waved elegantly to the Tsar. "Your Majesty, be kind enough to ride on, the town is yours."

Peter walked hurriedly into the Knight's Hall of the castle. He seemed to have grown taller, his back was straightened and he breathed noisily. In his hand he held a drawn sword. He looked angrily at Menshikov—there were dents made by bullets in his iron cuirass, his face was haggard, his hair sweaty and his lips dry; he looked at little Repnin, smiling sweetly with his silky eyes; he looked at red-faced Colonel Renn who had already managed to get a cup of wine; he looked at General Chambers, as satisfied with himself as though it were his birthday.

"I want to know," Peter shouted at them, "why the bloodshed in the old town has not yet stopped? Why is the town being looted?" He stretched out the hand that held the sword. "I struck one of our soldiers, he was drunk and dragging a girl along..." He threw the sword on the table. "Mister Bombardier Lieutenant Menshikov, I appoint you governor of the town... I give you one hour in which to stop the carnage and the looting. You will answer for this with your head, not your back..."

Menshikov turned pale and went out immediately, dragging his torn cloak after him.

"The enemy asked for mercy just a

little too late," said Anikita Repnin in a soft voice. "It is difficult to calm our soldiers, they are angry, terribly angry. The officers I sent are seizing them by their hair and dragging them out of it... The town is being looted by the townspeople themselves..."

"Seize them and hang them to frighten the others!"

Tsar Peter sat down at the table but got up again immediately. Ogilvie came in followed by two soldiers and an officer leading General Horn. Silence fell, only the rowels in Horn's spurs tinkling faintly. He walked up to Tsar Peter, stared past him with bleary eyes, his lips contracted in a smile. Everybody saw how Peter's hands were snatched from the red cloth on the table, how he clenched his fists (Ogilvie, frightened, walked over to him), how he shrugged his shoulders in disgust; he stood silent so long that the officers could no longer hold their breath.

"You will get no honour from me," he said softly. "Idiot! You old wolf, you stubborn tiger!.." He turned his eyes on Colonel Renn. "Take him to prison, through the whole town on foot, so that he may see the results of his evil work..."

Translated by George Hanna

CYRIL LEVIN

THE SCOUT

It was night. For a moment I lay trying to determine what had awakened me. Then I heard it again—somebody's voice, a tenor voice speaking quietly, in a Volga singsong, and a reply in a second voice—a deep bass which I recognized as belonging to Major Vershigora.

"You don't need to start out till morning," the major was saying. "Have a rest till then."

"There won't be time enough if we wait till morning," the tenor voice argued. "And my men are waiting for me. Permit me to set out at once, Comrade Major."

I pulled my greatcoat off my face and in the dim light of a smoky paraffin lamp I saw the officer talking with the major. He looked a youth, little more than a boy—small, slight, with a round face that had evidently never known a razor.

"All right, go along," said the major, after thinking for a moment or so. "When can I expect you back?"

"By night, I think," the officer replied unhurriedly. "Though I don't promise. We might have to spend the night there. May I go?"

The major nodded silently, and with a salute, the officer turned to the exit. He had the typical look of a serviceman—uniform worn but well fitting, without foppishness but neat and comfortable. He walked easily, with a supple movement, and stooped to pass through the low dugout entrance as though he had no more bones than a cat.

"Shall we go, Comrade Lieutenant?" said a voice outside and the lieutenant replied calmly:

"Of course we'll start at once. Everything ready?"

"Look at that—already waiting," said the major. "Right here by the dugout."

I glanced at him questioningly, and he explained what it was all about.

"Those are scouts. Real daredevils. Our fellows call them 'experts in the impossible.' A week ago, for instance, the divisional commander wanted a 'tongue.' 'A staff officer would do very well,' he said jokingly, because he knew that on our sector the Germans have got solid concrete, not a mousehole in it, and to get a staff officer in such conditions is like digging a dugout in winter. Well, the lieutenant was there at the time. His eyes sparkled, he stood to attention and asked my permission to speak to the general. 'Very well,' I told him, 'but make it snappy.'

"'If you permit me, Comrade Major-General, I will get you a staff officer,' he said.

"'Very well, get me one, then,' said the general, and added gaily: 'You can bring him right along to me at headquarters. I'll be waiting for you.'

"The general left, and I began to give the lieutenant a piece of my mind.

"'Now you've given your word, you'll have to get one, and how do you think you're going to manage it?' I said.

"'I don't know yet. I'll have a talk with my lads and then I'll report,' was the answer.

"In the evening he came to me with his plans all worked out.

"'We've decided to start off tomorrow morning for the tongue,' he told me.

"'What, in the morning, in full view of the Germans?'

"He began explaining his plan very calmly.

"'At night they're all on the alert. But during the day they won't be expecting us.'

"The idea was such a bold one and at the same time so correct, that the group of men in their white camouflage overalls actually managed to slide over the snow into the German positions without being spotted. During the night they came out on the road and Sergeant Khryapov, who knows German well, found out from soldiers they met how to find the way to headquarters, where he said they had to deliver an important package."

Lines of laughter appeared at the corners of the major's eyes.

"You should just have seen that officer," he continued. "Fat and rosy as a sucking pig, forty years old, and as it turned out, the owner of a Bierhalle in Göttingen. They trussed him up and brought him right through all the German lines—devil knows how they managed it! They'd shoved a gag in his mouth that nearly choked him. Well, although he didn't shout 'Hitler kaput!' the officer told us all he knew; he was most polite, and said flatteringly that he knew it was good to be a prisoner of the Russians; after all, Field Marshal Paulus and no end of others are here, and that means something, you know."

My companion fell silent and opened the newspaper. The sound of explosions nearby penetrated into the dugout; fine grains of earth fell from the ceiling onto the table, and the glass in the tiny window rattled softly. The major brushed the soil from his newspaper and continued reading without raising his head. The explosions came closer; the lamp flickered and went out. He lighted a match and the yellow tongue of flame licked the air. The major again immersed himself in his newspaper, then carefully folded it and passed his hand affectionately over the folded sheet. It was like a caress.

"'Pravda'—and a fresh one," said Vershigora. "You can't imagine the pleasure of reading it here, at the front. It brings back so many thoughts and feelings, it's as though I were back in Moscow... Oh, you just can't explain..."

The firing died down. Without undressing, the major lay down on the folding bed and pulled his greatcoat over him.

I do not know how much time had passed when I was awakened by silence, so unusual at the front. There was nobody in the dugout. The lamp had gone out, and thin grey streaks of feeble light penetrated through the window. A few moments later I was outside. The shaggy pines stood motionless under their blanket of snow. A trodden path led to the river, a slightly darker line running across the whiteness.

Suddenly the rattle of a machine-gun rang out in the frosty air. The sun had not yet risen, but the clouds were already tinged with rose, and against them sharp-nosed aircraft, looking like a flight of geese, were travelling westward with angrily roaring engines. Shots were sounding from the pine thickets on the river bank and figures flitted here and there. I made a dash for the spot. Major Vershigora was kneeling, tensely watching the opposite bank through his binoculars. Over there, somewhere in the forest, fighting was going on.

"Can it possibly be Semyonova?" said the major in angry disapproval. "It's not like her."

I looked at him in surprise. Who was this Semyonova?

"She'd hardly try to get through in the morning," the major growled, "and at a place without any cover at that. Can't make it out!"

"She'll not make a mess of it," said Corporal Yegorchuk in his deep bass. He was an elderly man, very tall, and with bushy moustaches. "She's got some idea in her head—we'll just have to wait and see what it is."

"What's there to wait for? Look at that!" cried the major. "Eh, she's for it this time!"

Two people emerged from the forest and began zigzagging towards our bank. A hail of bullets followed them, and every now and then white puffs of snow, like miniature explosions, would fly into the air. Suddenly one of the running figures collapsed on the ground, and the enemy fire left it alone. The other continued on its way, dodging with the skill of a hunted wolf. Then the second one jumped up and again continued running. But it seemed to me that there was something strange in their movements. They ran, it was true, but nevertheless it looked as though they were not in any particular hurry to gain cover and get over to us. They would suddenly lie down in the snow, where they were completely invisible in their white overalls, then jump up and begin running again.

"Hurry up, get a move on!" roared Yegorchuk in his powerful bass. "What are you dawdling for?"

The major was acting strangely. He let out a surprised "h'm!", looked at the running figures again, then trained his binoculars somewhere to the right and suddenly laughed softly.

"Yes, of course," he murmured. "There's a Semyonova for you, might have known Semyonova would do it..."

"Why Semyonova?" I asked. "Semyonov, surely?" [1]

He gave me a sly glance.

"Well, Semyonov, if you want it that way," he said, and turned triumphantly to Yegorchuk. "Running well, the young devils!" and he gestured to the opposite bank. "Fine, isn't it, Corporal?"

"What's there fine about it," the latter replied, taken aback. "They could have been here long ago."

"That's why it's fine, that they take so long to make the run." And the major clapped the corporal on the shoulder. "Look at that." And pointing to the north, he held out his binoculars to the corporal.

The latter peered in the direction indicated, and his whiskered face beamed. Lowering the glasses, he looked with respect at the running soldiers the other side of the river and said softly:

"Now I understand, Comrade Major. Grand kid, Semyonova. A real born scout, as you might say."

"What's it all about, Comrade Major?" I asked. "For God's sake explain."

"You'll understand it all yourself soon," he replied smiling, and again peered towards the north through his field-glasses. "All, I think," he growled in satisfaction, then shouted through his cupped hands: "Come on, come on, lads, they're all over!"

Within a few moments, a quick, straight sprint had brought the two soldiers into our midst, among the pines. One of them, a snub-nosed lad with cornflower-blue eyes, threw off his hooded camouflage cloak, took a deep breath, tore off his cap despite the hard frost, wiped his forehead with his glove and said in a cracked voice:

"Well, that was a run! It wasn't for nothing the lieutenant trained us. Have they got across, Comrade Major?"

Vershigora did not reply. He was tensely watching the place where tall spruce columns rose among the bushes as the brushwood gave place to forest. Several figures were flitting among the trees, appearing and again disappearing. An officer was leading them. Approaching the major, he drew himself up and saluted. I heard the tenor voice which I remembered from the dugout delivering a brief report.

"Tricked the Jerries, by heavens!" the major cried gaily, after hearing the report. "Done a good job, Semyonova, no denying it. Got across the river in fine style. And at first I was swearing at you, didn't understand what you were about."

I was staring at Semyonova with all my eyes. Her bearing was manly, or rather, soldierly, and her clear voice could easily have belonged to a man.

"Semyonova or Semyonov?" I asked the major softly. "The same?"

"The very same," laughed the major. "The Jerries take her for a man all right, the way she fights. Let me introduce you."

Lieutenant Semyonova held out a small hand and laughed. She had large,

[1] In Russian women's surnames take the ending "a." Thus "Semyonova" is a woman, "Semyonov," a man.

black, languid eyes. Looking into those young, girlish eyes I doubted for a moment—could they really belong to a hardened soldier, an officer?

"This is the fourth year she's fighting," said the major. "And she knows all the tricks, all of them, I tell you; she'll soon be getting the Hero's Gold Star—bet your life on it. Did you see how she got across? Drew off the Jerries, and then herself crossed a mile higher up."

Then as though catching himself up, he asked Semyonova angrily:

"And why the blazes did you have to get over in daylight? Couldn't you have waited till evening?"

Before replying, she pulled off a large satchel, of a kind not used in our army, which was slung round her neck.

"Couldn't be done, Comrade Major. The Germans were at our heels. We'd been rooting about in their headquarters, and found a few papers. Well, they got quite annoyed about it, and we had to make tracks. Here are the documents."

And with a gentle, girlish smile, she held out the satchel to the major.

Translated by Eve Manning

RACZKIEWICZ, ARCISZEWSKI AND Co.

The Polish emigrant "government" is energetically soliciting loans in London, Brussels, and Paris.

(From the foreign press)

Fishers in muddy waters off for another try

Drawing by Boris Yefimov

THE TRĘBLINKA HELL

The terrain to the east of Warsaw along the Western Bug is an expanse of alternating sands and swamps interspersed with ever-green and deciduous forests. The landscape is drear and villages are rare. The narrow, sandy roads where wheels sink up to the axles and walking is difficult, are something for the traveller to avoid.

In the midst of this desolate country stands the small out-of-the-way station of Treblinka on the Siedlec railway branch line. It is some sixty kilometres from Warsaw and not far from Małkinia station where lines leading to Warsaw, Byałystok, Siedlec and Lomża meet.

Many of those who were brought to Treblinka in 1942 may have had occasion to travel this way before the war. Staring out over the desolate landscape of pines, sand, more sand and again pines, scrubland, heather, unattractive station buildings and railway crossings, the prewar passenger might have allowed his bored gaze to pause for a moment on a single-track spur running from Treblinka station into the forest to disappear amid the pine thickets. This spur led to a pit where white sand was extracted for industrial purposes.

The sand pit is situated about four kilometres from the station on an open stretch of country surrounded on all sides by pine woods. The soil here is miserly and sterile and the peasants do not cultivate it. And so the land is bare but for a few patches of moss and an occasional sickly pine. Now and then a jackdaw or a bright-combed hoopoe wings past but no bird stops to build its nest on this desolate wasteland.

This is the spot Heinrich Himmler, the S.S. reichsführer, selected and approved for the site of a slaughterhouse the like of which the human race has not known from the age of primitive barbarism to these cruel days of ours. The principal S.S. slaughterhouse, surpassing those at Sobibór, Majdanek, Bełżec and Oświęcim, was located here.

There were two camps in Treblinka: labour camp No. 1 where prisoners of various nationalities, chiefly Poles, worked, and camp No. 2 for Jews.

Camp No. 1, of the labour or punitive type, was located in the immediate vicinity of the sand pits not far from the woods. It was one of the hundreds and thousands of similar camps the Hitlerites had set up in the occupied countries of Eastern Europe. It came into being in 1941. In it the various traits of the German character, distorted in the hideous mirror of the hitlerite regime, co-existed in a sort of frightful unity. Thus do the delirious ravings of a fever patient give an ugly, distorted reflection of the thoughts and emotions experienced by the patient before his illness. Thus does a madman distort the logical behaviour and thoughts of normality. Thus does the criminal commit his crime, combining in that hammer blow aimed at the bridge of the victim's nose the keen eye and the firm grip of the foundry worker with a cold-bloodedness that is sub-human.

The thrift, accuracy, practicality and pedantic cleanliness common to many Germans are not bad traits in themselves. Applied to agriculture or to industry they produce laudable results. Hitlerism applied these traits to crime against mankind and the Reich's S.S. behaved in the Polish labour camp exactly as though they were raising cauliflower or potatoes.

The area of the camp was laid out in neat rectangles; the barracks stood in neat rows, the paths were lined with birches and covered with sand. There

were concrete ponds for domestic fowl, pools for washing laundry with steps leading conveniently down, various services for the German personnel—a modern bakery, barbershop, garage, a gasolene-filling station, warehouses. Built on approximately the same principle—with the gardens, the drinking fountains, the concrete paths—was the camp at Majdanek and dozens of other labour camps in East-Poland where the Gestapo and the S.S. intended to settle for a long time. German accuracy, petty calculation, the pedantic fondness for orderliness, the German love for timetables and charts, for ticketing and docketing every detail were reflected in the layout of these camps.

People were brought to the labour camp for brief periods, sometimes no more than four, five or six months. They were Poles who had violated laws laid down by the governor-generalship—minor violations, as a rule, for the penalty for major violations was immediate death. A slip of the tongue, a chance word overheard on the street, failure to make some delivery, refusal to give a cart or a horse to a German, the harsh word of a girl declining the amorous advances of some S.S. man, not sabotage at factories but mere suspicion of the possibility of sabotage—these were the offences that brought hundreds and thousands of Polish workers, peasants and intellectuals, men and girls, mothers of families, old people and juveniles, to this labour camp. Altogether about 50,000 people passed through its gates. Jews were sent there only if they happened to be skilled workers in their field—bakers, bootmakers, carpenters, stone-masons or tailors. The camp had all manner of workshops, including a substantial furniture factory which supplied armchairs, tables and chairs to German army headquarters.

Camp No. 1 existed from the autumn of 1941 until July 23rd, 1944. It was completely destroyed when the prisoners already heard the distant roll of the Soviet guns.

Early in the morning on July 23rd, the guards and S.S. men took a stiff drink and set to work to wipe all trace of the camp off the map. By evening all the inmates had been killed and buried. Only one man survived—Max Levit, a Warsaw carpenter, who was only wounded and lay beneath the bodies of his comrades until nightfall when he crawled off into the forest. He told us how as he lay there at the bottom of the pit he heard a group of some thirty young lads singing a popular Soviet song, "Vast Is My Native Land," before being shot down; heard one of the boys cry out: "Stalin will avenge us!"; heard the boys' leader, young Leib, who had been everyone's favourite in the camp, scream after the first volley: "Pane Watchman, you didn't kill me! Shoot again, please! Shoot again!"

It is now possible to reconstruct the picture of the German regime in this labour camp from the accounts of dozens of witnesses—Polish men and women who escaped or were released from it at one time or another. We know how they worked the sand pits, we know that those who did not fulfil the work quote were pushed over the edge of a cliff into the abyss below. We know that the workers received a food ration of 170—200 grams of bread and a litre of some indescribable liquid which passed for soup; we know of the deaths from starvation, of the hunger-swollen wretches who were taken outside the camp on wheelbarrows and shot. We know of the savage orgies in which the Germans indulged; we know that they raped girls and shot them immediately afterwards; that they pushed people off a tower six metres high; that drunken Germans broke into the barracks at night, grabbed ten or fifteen prisoners and commenced calmly to demonstrate their adeptness in murdering their victims by shooting through the heart, the back of the head, the eye, the mouth or the temple. We know the names of the S.S. men in this camp, we know their characters and idiosyncrasies. We know about the chief of the camp, a Dutch-German named Van Eupen, an insatiable murderer and sex pervert who had a passion for good horses and reckless riding. We know about the massively-built young Stumpfe who was invariably overcome by a paroxysm of uncontrollable laughter whenever he killed anyone or when executions were carried out in his presence. "Laughing death" they called him, and Max Levit was the last to hear him laugh on July 23rd, 1944, when the boys were shot at Stumpfe's orders.

We know Svidersky, the one-eyed German from Odessa, known as the "hammer expert" because of his consummate skill at killing without fire-

arms: Within the space of a few minutes he hammered to death fifteen children between the ages of eight and thirteen declared unfit for work. We know the skinny S.S. man known as "old Preifi," a gloomy and morose individual who looked like a Gypsy. "Old Preifi" amused himself by hunting down camp inmates who would steal to the garbage dump to pick up potato peelings. He would pounce on his victim and force his jaws apart so that he could shoot him in the mouth.

We know the names of the professional murderers Schwarz and Ledek who relieved the monotony of their existence by shooting at prisoners returning from work. They killed twenty to forty people every day.

There was nothing human about these creatures. Warped minds, hearts and souls, their words, behaviour and habits were like a horrible caricature of the behaviour, habits, thoughts and feelings of ordinary people. The order that existed in the camp, the documentation of the murders; the predilection for monstrous practical jokes faintly reminiscent of the jokes of drunken German student brawls; the chorus singing of sentimental songs amid pools of blood; the speeches they were continually delivering to their doomed victims; the sermons and pious, neatly printed texts hung all over the place—all these were the monster dragons and reptiles that had sprung from the embryo of traditional German chauvinism, the arrogance, conceit, vanity, self-assurance, slobbery nest-feathering and utter indifference to the fate of all living beings, arising from a fierce, blind certainty that German science, music, poetry, language, flower beds, waterclosets, sky, beer and homes were the finest and best in the whole universe. The horrible vices and fearful crimes of these people were offshoots of the vices of the German national character.

Such was routine in this camp, this lesser Majdanek. One might think that there could be nothing more terrible in all the world. Yet those who lived in Camp No. 1 knew very well that there was something a hundred times more ghastly than their camp.

Within three kilometres of the labour camp the Germans built a slaughterhouse for Jews. Construction was started in May, 1942, and proceeded at a rapid pace with more than a thousand workers on the job. Everything in this camp was adapted for death. It was Himmler's intention to keep this camp a dead secret. Not a single human being was to leave it alive. And no outsider was permitted to approach the place. Anybody who chanced within a kilometre of the camp was shot at without warning. Luftwaffe craft were forbidden to fly over this area. The victims brought hither by trainloads over a special branch line were ignorant of the fate awaiting them up to the last moment. The guards escorting the trains were not allowed inside the camp grounds; instead, S.S. men took over the trains at a distance of two hundred metres from the camp. The trains, usually consisting of sixty cars, would be divided into three sections in the woods outside the camp and the locomotive would haul twenty cars at a time up to the camp platform, shunting them from behind so as to stop outside the barbed-wire fence. Thus, neither an engine nor a fireman ever crossed the boundary line. When one batch of cars had been unloaded, the non-commissioned S.S. officer on duty would signal for the next twenty cars. When all sixty cars were empty, the camp officials would telephone to the railway station for the next train, while the empty train would proceed further up the line to the sand pit where it would load up with sand and pull out for Treblinka and Małkinia.

Treblinka was well located. Trainloads of victims came here from all the four points of the compass—West, East, North and South. Trains pulled in from the Polish cities of Warsaw, Międzyrzecze, Częstochowa, Siedlec, Radom; from Lomża, Białystok, Grodno and many Byelorussian towns; from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Bulgaria and Bessarabia.

For thirteen months the trains rolled in to Treblinka. Each train consisted of sixty cars, and on each car were chalked the figures 150, 180 or 200, depending upon the number of people inside. Railway workers and peasants secretly kept count of these trains. Kazimierz Skarzyński, a sixty-two-year-old peasant from the village of Wulka (the inhabited point nearest to the camp), told me that on some days as many as six trains would pass along the Siedlec line alone and hardly a day passed throughout these thirteen months without at least one

train coming in. And yet the Siedlec line was but one of the four railways supplying Treblinka. Lucian Zukov, a railway section hand mobilized by the Germans for work on the line between Treblinka and Camp No. 2, said that from one to three trains were sent up to the camp from Treblinka every day throughout the period he worked there, which was from June 15th, 1942, until August, 1943. Each train had sixty cars and in each car there were no less than one hundred and fifty people. We are in possession of dozens of like statements. Even if we were to cut the figures cited by witnesses of the movement of trains to Treblinka by one half, the number of people brought there during the thirteen months would amount to something like three million. But we shall return to that figure.

The fenced-in area of the camp with its warehouses for the belongings of the executed, platforms and other auxiliary premises occupied an insignificant area, 780 metres in length and 600 metres in width. If one were to entertain the slightest doubt as to the fate of the millions who were brought here, or to assume for a moment that they were not murdered immediately upon arrival, there arises the question: what became of all these people of whom there were enough to populate a small state or a large European capital? Where are they? For thirteen months or 396 days, the trains returned empty or loaded with sand; not a single one of those they brought to Camp No. 2 ever returned with them. The time has come to ask the awesome question: "Cain, where are they whom thou broughtest hither?"

Fascism did not succeed in concealing its terrible crime. But not because thousands of people were its unwilling witnesses. Confident that he could act with impunity, Hitler took the decision to exterminate millions of innocent people during the summer of 1942 when the Wehrmacht was at the zenith of its sanguinary career. It can now be proved that the statistics of the murders perpetrated by the Germans reach their highest mark in 1942. Confident that they could act with impunity, the fascists showed what they were capable of.

Today the witnesses have spoken, the very stones and earth have cried aloud. And now, before the conscience of the whole world, before the eyes of all mankind we can step by step reconstruct a picture of the Treblinka hell, compared to which Dante's inferno was a harmless satanic frolic.

Everything recorded here has been compiled from the accounts of living witnesses, the testimony of people who worked in Treblinka from the first day of its existence until August 2nd, 1943, when the doomed people who made up its population rose up against their executioners, set fire to the camp and escaped into the woods, and from the testimony of apprehended guards who bit by bit confirmed and in many respects supplemented the stories of the eye-witnesses. I have seen these people and listened to them myself at great length, and I have their written testimony before me as I write this. All this voluminous evidence emanating from so many different sources dovetails in every respect, beginning with the description of the habits of Bari, the commandant's dog, and ending with the technology of murder and the mechanism of the death conveyor.

Let me conduct you through the hell on earth that was Treblinka.

Who were the people brought here by the trainload? Mainly Jews, and to a lesser extent Poles and Gypsies.

By the spring of 1942 the entire Jewish population of Poland, Germany and the western districts of Byelorussia had been rounded up in ghettos. Millions of Jewish workers, artisans, doctors, professors, architects, engineers, teachers, art workers and diverse other professions together with their wives and children, lived in the ghettos of Warsaw, Radom, Czenstochowa, Lublin, Bialystock, Grodno and dozens of other smaller towns. In the Warsaw ghetto alone there were about 500,000 Jews. Confinement to the ghetto was the first, preparatory stage of the hitlerite plan for the extermination of the Jews.

The summer of 1942 was chosen as the most suitable time to effect the second stage of the plan: physical extermination.

Himmler came to Warsaw and issued orders. Day and night work went on to prepare the Treblinka slaughterhouse for its gory work. In July, the first trainloads were on their way to Treblinka from Warsaw and Czestochowa. The victims were told that they were being taken to the Ukraine for farm work, and were permitted to take twenty kilograms

of baggage and some food with them. In many cases the Germans forced their victims to purchase railway tickets to the station of Ober-Majdan, their code name for Treblinka, which soon acquired such fearful notoriety throughout Poland that the old name was dropped. The treatment of the victims, however, was such as to leave little doubt in their minds as to the fate in store for them. No less than 150 persons, and in most cases, 180 to 200, were crowded into each car. They were given nothing to drink throughout the journey, which sometimes lasted two or three days. People suffered so from thirst that many were reduced to drinking their own urine. The guards offered a mouthful of water for 100 zloty, but pocketed the money without giving anything in return. The prisoners were packed so tightly into the cars that each trip, especially in hot weather, usually took a toll of several old people and persons with heart ailments. In as much as the doors were sealed throughout the journey, the bodies would begin to decompose, befouling the already nauseating air. It was enough for any of the prisoners to strike a match during the night for the guards to fire through the walls of the car. Abram Kohn, a barber, states that five persons in his car were killed and many wounded as a result of such shooting.

The trains that came to Treblinka from the Western-European countries—France, Bulgaria, Austria and others—were another matter entirely. These people had not heard of Treblinka and up to the last minute they believed they were being taken to work. The Germans painted alluring pictures of the pleasures and conveniences of the new life awaiting the settlers. Some trains brought people who thought they were being taken to some neutral country. Victims of a gruesome hoax, they had paid the German authorities large sums of money for foreign visas.

Once a train arrived in Treblinka filled with Canadian, American and Australian citizens who had been stranded in Europe and Poland when the war broke out. After lengthy negotiations involving the payment of huge bribes, they had succeeded in gaining permissions to travel to neutral countries.

All the trains from the Western-European countries were unguarded and provided with the normal sleepers and dining-cars. The passengers had large trunks and valises with them and abundant supplies of food, and when the trains stopped at stations the travellers' children would run out to ask how far it was to Ober-Majdan.

There were occasional trainloads of Gypsies from Bessarabia and elsewhere. Several trains brought young Polish peasants and workers who had taken part in uprisings and fought in partisan detachments.

It is hard to say what is worse: to ride to one's death in terrible agony knowing that the end is near, or to gaze calmly and unsuspectingly out of the window of a comfortable coach at the very moment when a phone call is being put through from Treblinka to the camp announcing the time the train is due to arrive and giving the number of people in it.

To keep up the farce at the expense of the people coming from Western Europe until the very last moment, the railhead at the death camp was got up to look like a railway station. The platform at which each batch of twenty cars was unloaded had a regular station building with ticket offices, luggage rooms, a restaurant and arrows pointing in all directions with the signs: "To Białystok," "To Baranowicze," "To Wołkowysk" etc. As the trains pulled in a band of neatly-dressed musicians struck up a tune. A station guard in railway uniform collected the tickets from the passengers, letting them through to a large square.

Thus three to four thousand people carrying suitcases, bags and bundles and supporting the aged and the weak, would find themselves on this square. Among them were mothers who carried infants in their arms while older children huddled against their skirts staring curiously at the strange surroundings. There was something frightening about this square which had been tamped down by so many millions of human feet. With growing dread the passengers became aware of alarming signs all around them: a bundle of clothing, an open valise, some shaving brushes and enameled kitchenware lying here and there on the square that had obviously been hastily swept a few minutes before their arrival. How had they come to be there? And why was it that just beyond the station the railway line ended and yellow grass grew and a three-metre barbed-wire fence obscured the

view? Where were the railways to Białystok, to Siedlec, Warsaw and Wołkowysk? And what accounted for the strange smile on the faces of the new guards as they regarded the men straightening their ties, the neatly attired old ladies, young boys in sailor suits, slim girls who had miraculously contrived to look fresh and attractive after their long journey, young mothers who tenderly adjusted their infants' blankets?

All these guards in black uniforms and the S.S. non-commissioned officers looked and behaved like cattle drivers at the entrance to a slaughterhouse. For them the newly arrived group did not consist of living human beings and their lips curled at these manifestations of embarrassment, love, fear, solicitude for others and concern for the safety of belongings. It amused them to hear mothers scolding their children for running off for a few yards, to see the men pull out clean pocket handkerchiefs to wipe their perspiring brows and light cigarettes, and the girls touching up their hair and holding down their skirts when a gust of wind blew. It struck them as funny that the old men tried to squat down on suitcases, that some carried books under their arms and wore mufflers and scarves around their throats.

Anything up to 20,000 people passed through Treblinka every day. Days when only six or seven thousand left the station building were rare. The square was filled with people four and five times a day. And all these thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people with the frightened, questioning eyes, all these young and old faces, these pretty dark-haired and light-haired girls, the bowed and baldheaded old men, the timid youths—all of them merged into a single flood that swept away reason, human knowledge, maidenly love, childish wonder, the coughing of old men and the throbbing hearts of living human beings.

The new arrivals trembled inwardly as they sensed the strangeness of that cool, smug leer on the faces of the Hitlerites watching them, the look of a live beast that feels its superiority over a dead man. In those brief moments on the square the newcomers found themselves noticing more and more alarming details.

What was behind that massive six-metre wall covered thickly with yellowing pine branches and blankets? The blankets too inspired fear: they were quilted and made of coloured silk or calico exactly like those packed in the bedrolls of the travellers. How had they got there? Who had brought them? And where were their owners? Why had they no further use for their blankets? And who were these men with the blue bands on their arms? They began to recall all the stories they had heard recently, all the terrifying rumours that had been whispered back and forth. No, no. it could not be! They dismissed the fearful thought.

This feeling of alarm lasted for a few moments until all the passengers had emerged on the square. There was always a slight delay at this point for in every party there were crippled, lame, aged and sick people who had to be helped along.

But now the train was empty and the square full. An unterscharführer (non-commissioned S.S. officer) in a loud voice instructed the passengers to leave all their things on the square and prepare to go to the bathhouse, taking along only personal papers, valuables and toilet accessories. No doubt a dozen questions occurred to the people—should they take clean underwear, might they undo their bundles, would their belongings not get mixed up or lost if they did? But some mysterious, irresistible force compelled them to hurry forward in silence without asking questions or turning round, impelled them toward the opening in the six-metre barbed-wire fence camouflaged with boughs.

Inside they walked past tank obstacles, past the barbed-wire fence three times the height of man, past an anti-tank ditch three metres wide, past thin coils of steel wire strewn on the ground to trip up the fugitive and catch him like a fly in a spiderweb, and again past a barbed-wire fence, metres in height. A terrible sensation of despair, a feeling of utter helplessness would seize the newcomer. There could be no question of running away, of turning back, or fighting; from the low squat wooden towers the muzzles of heavy machine-guns stared menacingly at them. Cry for help? What was the use with all these S.S. men and guards armed with tommy-guns, hand-grenades and pistols? The power was in their hands. Theirs the tanks and aircraft, the land, the towns, theirs the sky, the railways, the laws, the newspapers and the radio.

The whole world was silent, crushed and enslaved by the brown-shirted gang which has seized the power.

In the meantime two hundred workers with pale-blue armbands were busy on the station square untying bundles, opening suitcases and baskets, removing straps from bedrolls. The possessions of the new arrivals were being sorted out and appraised. Neatly packed darning sets flew on the ground, skeins of thread, children's panties, shirts, sheets, jumpers, pocket-knives, shaving sets, bundles of letters, photographs, thimbles, bottles of perfume, mirrors, night caps, shoes, ladies' slippers, stockings, lace, pyjamas, parcels of butter, coffee, cans of cocoa, prayer robes, candlesticks, books, rusks, violins, children's blocks. It required considerable skill to sort out and classify within the space of a few minutes all these thousand and one articles, some for sending to Germany, the old and valueless to be laid aside for burning. Woe to the blundering worker who placed an old fibre suitcase on the pile of leather valises intended for shipment to Germany, or who threw a new pair of silk stockings with a Paris trade mark on a heap of old mended socks! Such a blunder could be made only once. The workers were not allowed to make the same mistake twice.

Forty S.S. men and sixty guards worked on "transport," as the first stage of the Treblinka tragedy was called. Their work involved meeting the trains, leading the passengers out of the "station" to the square, and watching over the workers who sorted and classified the possessions. While they worked the men with the pale-blue arm-bands often popped into their mouths bits of bread, sugar or candies found in the baggage they were sorting, but they made sure that the guards did not see them for this was strictly forbidden. It was permitted, however, to wash up after the job was finished with eau de cologne and perfume, for there was a shortage of water in Treblinka and only the Germans were permitted to use water for washing.

While the people were still preparing for their bath, the sorting of their possessions was being completed. The valuable articles were carried away to the warehouses, and the letters, photographs of newborn babies, brothers and brides, yellowed wedding announcements, all these precious bits of paper that had been treasured by their owners perhaps for years, were just so much trash for the Treblinka officials who collected them in a pile and carted them away to huge pits already partly filled with hundreds of thousands of similar letters, postcards, visiting cards, photographs, letters written in shaky childish handwriting and crude childish crayon drawings.

After a brief, hurried sweeping the square was ready to receive the next group of unfortunates.

Not always, however, did things go so smoothly. There were cases when prisoners who knew where they were being taken mutinied. A peasant by the name of Skrzemiński saw people smash their way out of two trains, knock down the guards and run off into the forest. In both cases everyone of the fugitives was killed. Four children between the ages of four and six were killed with them. Similar cases of skirmishes between the victims and the guards were described by a peasant woman named Marianna Kobus. Working in the fields one day she saw sixty people break away from a train and make for the forest. They were all shot down before her eyes.

By this time the group inside the camp had passed on to another square. On this square stood a huge barrack-like building, and to the right of it, three other barracks, two for storing clothing and the third for footwear. On the west side of the camp were the buildings housing the S.S. men and guards, food stores, stables, and automobiles, trucks and armoured cars. The general impression was that of the usual concentration camp.

In the south-eastern corner of the camp grounds, fenced off by branches, was a compound with a booth bearing the sign "Infirmary" in front. All the feeble and sick were separated from the crowd waiting for the bath and were carried off on the stretchers to this infirmary, where a man wearing the white doctor's smock and a red-cross band on his left arm met them. What happened inside the infirmary I shall describe later on.

The next step in handling the new arrivals was to break their will by barking curt rapidfire commands at them with the German "r" sounding like a whiplash, an accomplishment of which

the German army is inordinately proud and which is regarded as one of the proofs that the Germans belong to the "master race."

"Achtung!" the command would ring over the crowd and in the leaden silence the voice of the scharfführer would repeat instructions repeated several times a day for many months on end:

"The men are to remain where they are. Women and children undress in the building on the left."

Here, according to witnesses, the heart-rending scenes usually began. The instinct of maternal, conjugal, filial love told the victims that they were seeing one another for the last time. Handshakes, kisses, blessings, tears, briefly murmured words invested with all the love, all the anguish, all the tenderness and despair that filled them were now exchanged. The S.S. psychiatrists of death knew that these emotions had to be stamped out at once. The psychiatrists of death were familiar with the primitive laws that operate in all the slaughterhouses of the world, laws which in Treblinka were applied by the cattle to the human beings. This was one of the most critical moments, the moment when daughters had to be separated from fathers, mothers from sons, grandmothers from grandsons, husbands from wives.

Again the words "Achtung! Achtung!" rent the air. This was precisely the moment when the minds of the victims had to be befuddled again, when a glimmer of hope had to be allowed to dawn, when death had to be made for a few moments to look like life.

"Women and children are to remove their footwear on entering the building," barks the same voice. "Stockings are to be placed inside shoes. Children's stockings inside children's sandals, boots and shoes. Be orderly."

And again: "On entering the bathhouse take with you valuables, documents, money, soap and towel... I repeat..."

Inside the women's bathhouse was a hairdressers' department. As soon as they were undressed the women lined up to have their hair clipped off. For some inexplicable, psychological reason this final haircut, according to the testimony of the hairdressers themselves, had a reassuring effect on the women; it seemed to convince them that they really were about to take a bath. Young girls felt their close-cropped heads critically and asked the barber if she wouldn't please smooth out some of the uneven spots. The women usually calmed down after the haircut. Nearly all of them passed out of the dressing-room carrying a piece of soap and a folded towel. A few of the younger ones wept to part with their flowing tresses. Why were the women thus shorn? To deceive them? No, the hair was needed in Germany. It was a raw material...

I asked many people what the Germans did with all the hair they removed from the heads of these living corpses. According to all the witnesses, the huge mountains of black, golden, chestnut hair, straight, curly and braided, were first disinfected and then pressed into sacks and shipped to Germany. All the witnesses questioned confirmed that the sacks containing this hair had German addresses on them. What was it used for? According to the written testimony of one Kohn, the hair was used by the navy to fill mattresses, to make hausers for submarines and for other similar purposes. Other witnesses claim that the hair was used to pad saddles for the cavalry.

It seems to me that this testimony requires additional confirmation; Gross-Admiral Reder who headed the German navy in 1942 will furnish it.

The men undressed in the yard. Of the first group of the morning arrivals some 150 to 300 would be selected for their physical strength to be used to bury the corpses. These would be killed the following day. The men were told to undress quickly, but were also warned to lay down their clothes neatly, shoes, socks, underwear, coats and trousers separately. These things were sorted out by another team of workmen wearing red arm-bands as distinct from the blue bands worn by the station team. Articles of clothing considered worthwhile sending to Germany were taken away at once to the warehouse. All labels were carefully removed. The rest of the clothing was burned or buried.

The feeling of alarm grew, heightened by a fearful stench mingled with the odour of lime that assailed the nostrils. What accounted for such huge swarms of fat and troublesome flies? Pine woods and paved ground did not usually breed flies. The men began to breathe heavily,

they started at every sound and stared hard at every trifle in search of an explanation, a hint that would help them to unravel the mystery and gain an inkling of the fate in store for them. What, for instance, were those gigantic excavators doing over at the southern end of the camp grounds?

The next stage in the procedure began. The naked people were lined up at a window through which they were told to hand over their documents and valuables. And again the frightful, awe-inspiring voice seared their consciousness: "Achtung! Achtung! The penalty for hiding valuables is death! Achtung!"

A sharführer sat in a small wooden booth. S.S. men and guards stood around him. Next to the booth were wooden boxes into which the valuables were thrown—one for paper-money, another for coins, a third for watches, rings, earrings and broches with precious stones and bracelets. Documents were thrown on the ground, for no one on earth had any more use for these documents belonging to living corpses who within an hour would be lying stiff and dead in a pit. The gold and valuables, however, were carefully sorted out; dozens of jewellers were engaged in ascertaining the purity of the metal and the value of the stones and diamonds.

The remarkable thing is that the beasts in human shape made use of everything—leather, paper, cloth; everything that served men was of use to the beasts, everything except the most precious thing on earth—human life. Think of all the brilliant minds, the sterling souls, the wonder-filled children's eyes, the sweat of old faces, the proud and beautiful girlish heads to fashion which nature had toiled for untold ages, think of all this as a huge silent flood precipitated into oblivion. A few minutes sufficed to destroy that which had taken nature aeons of travail to evolve.

The spell of illusion was broken at this point. Here at the booth ended the anguish of uncertainty that had kept the people in a fever of anxiety causing them to pass within the space of a few minutes from hope to despair, from visions of life to visions of death. This torture by deception was part of the process at this slaughterhouse, it aided the S.S. men in their work. When the final act of robbing the living corpses was over, the attitude of the Germans to their victims underwent a sharp change. Rings were torn off unwilling fingers, and earrings wrenched out of ears.

At this final stage, speed was important for the smooth working of the death conveyor. Hence the word "Achtung" was replaced by another word, a hissing compelling word: "Schneller! Schneller! Schneller!" "Faster! Faster! Faster into oblivion!"

Experience has shown that when stripped a man loses his power of resistance and ceases to resist his fate; having lost his clothes, he seems to lose his instinct of self-preservation and accepts what happens to him as the inevitable. He who a moment before wished passionately to live becomes passive and apathetic. In order to make doubly sure, however, the S.S. employed at the last stage of their gruesome death conveyor a monstrous method of stunning their victims, of reducing them to a state of complete mental paralysis.

How was this done?

By switching over suddenly to senseless and inexplicable brutality. These naked men and women who had been stripped of everything but who continued stubbornly to remain human, a thousand times more human than the creatures in German uniforms surrounding them, still breathed, still saw, still thought, their hearts still beat. Suddenly the soap and towels were knocked out of their hands. They were lined up five in a row and marched off to the accompaniment of rapped out commands:

"Hände hoch! Marsch! Schneller! Schneller!"

They were marched down a straight avenue about 120 metres long and two wide, and lined with flowers and firs. This path led to the place of execution.

Wire was stretched along either side of the path which was lined by guards in black uniforms and S.S. men in grey standing shoulder to shoulder. The path was covered with white sand and as the victims marched forward with upraised arms they saw the fresh imprint of bare feet on the sand: the small footprints of women, the tiny footprints of children, the impress of heavy aged feet. These faint tracks on the sand were all that remained of the thousands of people who had recently

passed down this path just as the present four thousand were passing now and as the next four thousand would pass two hours later and the thousands more waiting there on the railway track in the woods. Passed as they had the day before, ten days, a hundred days before, as they would pass tomorrow and fifty days hence, as they had passed throughout the thirteen months of the existence of the hell at Treblinka.

The Germans called it "the road from which there is no return."

Smirking and grimacing, a fiend in human shape whose name was Sukhomil ran alongside shouting in deliberately distorted German:

"Now then, lads, faster, faster! Your bath water is cooling. Schneller, Kinder, schneller!"

And bursting into loud guffaws the creature danced in a frenzy of delight. The victims moved on in silence with upraised arms between the two rows of guards, who beat them with rifle butts and rubber truncheons as they went by. Children ran to keep up with the grown-ups.

The brutality of one of the fiends, an S.S. man called Zepf, especially impressed itself on all who witnessed this mournful procession. Zepf specialized in child-killing. Endowed with unusual physical strength, this creature would suddenly snatch a child from the ranks and either smash out his brains by flinging him against the ground or tear him in two.

When I heard about this creature who had evidently been born of woman I could not believe the senseless and incredible things that were told of him. But when these stories were repeated to me by people who had seen with their own eyes, I believed and I realized that what they had seen was merely one of the details that fitted perfectly into the whole gruesome picture of Treblinka.

Zepf's clowning was part of the hideous farce staged by the tormentors to stun the mentality of their doomed victims; it was an expression of the senseless cruelty employed for the purpose of undermining will and consciousness. It was an essential screw in the huge machine of the fascist state.

The horror of it is not that nature should beget such degenerates—for there is much that is freakish in the organic world—such as cyclopes, two-headed creatures with the corresponding mental deformities. What is dreadful is that these creatures, who ought to have been isolated and placed under observations as psychiatric phenomena, should be allowed to exist and function as normal citizens. Their insane mentality, their diseased minds, their phenomenal crimes are the necessary elements of the fascist state. Thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of creatures like these form the backbone of hitlerite Germany. Dressed in uniforms, carrying weapons, and decorated with orders of the empire, these creatures lorded it for years over the lives of the European peoples. It is not the creatures themselves that fill us with horror and loathing but the state that caused them to crawl out of their holes, and made them useful and indispensable in places like Treblinka, near Warsaw, at the Lublin Majdanek, in Belżec, in Sobibór, in Oświęcim, in Baby Yar, in Domanevka near Odessa, in Trostyanets near Minsk, at Ponary in Lithuania, in tens and hundreds of prisons, labour and "extermination" camps.

A state does not descend upon a nation from the skies; the material and spiritual relationship of nations arise from the state system. To grasp this is to appreciate the full horror of it...

The journey from the booth to the place of execution took between 120 and 180 seconds. Hurried forward by blows, deafened by shouts, the victims reached the third open lot and for a moment halted in astonishment.

Before them stood a handsome building surrounded by trees and built in the style of an ancient temple. Five broad concrete steps led to low, massive and handsomely decorated doors. Flowers grew at the entrance. For the rest, however, chaos reigned. There were mountains of fresh earth everywhere. A huge excavator clanked and rattled as it dug up tons of yellow sandy soil with its steel jaws, raising a cloud of dust that blotted out the sun. The roar of the machine digging huge graves from morning till night mingled with the wild barking of dozens of Alsatian dogs.

On either side of the temple of death

ran narrow-gauge lines over which men in loose overalls pushed small self-dumping waggonettes.

The wide door of the slaughterhouse opened slowly and two of the assistants of Schmitt, the chief of the death factory, appeared at the entrance. These were sadists and maniacs. One, aged about thirty, was tall with massive shoulders, dark hair and a sallow-complexioned face beaming with excitement; the other, slightly younger, was short, brown-haired, with a pasty, jaundiced complexion.

The tall one held a massive piece of gas piping about a metre long and a whip. The second carried a sabre.

At this moment the S.S. men released the dogs who in obedience to careful training threw themselves on the crowd and dug their teeth into the bare flesh of the doomed people. With savage cries the S.S. men brought their rifle butts down on the women who stood rooted to the spot with terror.

Inside the building Schmitt's men drove the victims into the gas chambers.

At that moment Kurt Franz, one of the commandants of Treblinka, would appear leading his dog Bari by the leash. Bari had been trained by his master to tear the sex organs off the victims. Kurt Franz had made quite a career for himself in the camp. Beginning as a junior non-commissioned S.S. officer, he had been promoted to the rather high rank of an untersturmführer. This tall, skinny thirty-year-old S.S. man not only displayed ability in organizing the death conveyor, not only did he love his work and could imagine no occupation for which he was more perfectly suited than the supervision of Treblinka but, in addition to all this, he was something of a theoretician and loved to generalize and explain the meaning and significance of his work.

Great is the power of humahity; humanity does not die until man dies. And when there comes a brief but terrifying period in history, the period in which the beast triumphs over man, the man slain by the beast retains to his last breath his strength of spirit, clarity of thought and warmth of feeling. But the beast who slays the man remains a beast however he might triumph over the man. In this immortal spiritual strength of human beings lies a solemn martyrdom, the triumph of the dying man over the living beast. Therein, during the dark days of 1942, lay the dawn of reason's victory over bestial madness, good over evil, light over darkness, the power of progress over reaction; an awesome dawn breaking over a field of blood and tears, an ocean of suffering, a dawn breaking amid the screams and cries of perishing mothers and infants, amid the death rattle of the aged.

One is shaken to the very depth of one's being by the stories of how the living corpses of Treblinka up to the last minute preserved their human souls although they had lost everything else, how women tried to save their sons and for their sake accomplished feats of hopeless bravery, how young mothers tried to hide their infants under blankets. No one will ever know the names of these mothers. There are stories of little girls of ten who with divine wisdom comforted their sobbing parents, of a little boy who on entering the gas chamber shouted: "The Russians will avenge us, mama, don't cry!" No one will ever know the names of these children. We were told about dozens of doomed people who fought one against a legion of S.S. men armed with automatic weapons and grenades, and died standing up, their breasts riddled with bullets. We were told about the young man who stabbed an S.S. officer, about the lad who had taken part in the mutiny in the Warsaw ghetto and who by some miracle had managed to hide a grenade from the German and flung it into a group of executioners at the last moment. We heard about the battle that lasted all of one night between a group of the condemned and detachments of guards and S.S. men. The shooting and grenade explosions went on all night and when the sun rose the next morning the whole area was covered with the bodies of the fighters. Beside them lay their weapons—sticks wrenched out of the fence, a knife, a razor. Never on this earth will the names of these fallen fighters be known. We heard about the tall girl who tore a rifle out of the hands of a guard on the "road from which there is no return," and fought against dozens of S.S. men. Two beasts were killed in that fight, and a third lost his arm. Terrible were

the tortures to which this brave girl was subjected before they finally put her to death. She, too, is nameless.

Yet is that quite true? Hitlerism robbed these people of their homes and their lives, Hitlerism sought to wipe their names out of living memory. Yet everyone of them, the mothers who shielded their children with their bodies, the children who dried their fathers' tears, those who fought with knives and grenades and fell in the nocturnal massacre, and the naked girl who, like some ancient Greek goddess, fought alone against dozens—all of these people who have departed into the unknown have preserved forever the most splendid name of all, the name which the pack of Hitlerites and Himmlerites could not trample underfoot, the name of Man. History will inscribe on their tomb the epitaph: "They Died for Humanity."

Inhabitants of the village of Wulka, the settlement nearest to Treblinka, say that sometimes the shrieks of the women being murdered were so terrible that the whole village would run for miles into the forest to get away from the piercing cries that rent the air. Presently the screaming would subside only to break out again as terrible and soul-searing as before...

I asked one of the executioners who had been taken prisoner about the cries. He explained that the women usually screamed when the dogs were unleashed on them and the whole crowd of doomed people were driven into the death house. "They saw their end coming. Besides it was very crowded inside, they were beaten unmercifully and the dogs tore at them."

A sudden silence fell when the doors of the gas chambers closed. The screaming broke out again when a fresh group was brought. This occurred twice, three times, four times and sometimes five times a day. For Treblinka was not an ordinary slaughterhouse, it was run on the conveyor system, on the production line method copied from modern large-scale industry.

And like any industrial enterprise, Treblinka did not always work as efficiently as has been described above. It developed gradually as new equipment and new rationalization methods were introduced. In the beginning there were three small gas chambers. While these were under construction several trainloads of victims arrived and the killing was done with axes, hammers and truncheons instead of fire-arms. This was done to prevent the surrounding population from suspecting the nature of the Treblinka work. The first three concrete chambers were 5×5 metres in size, i. e., with an area of 25 square metres each. The height was 190 cm. Each chamber had two doors, one to admit the living, the other to serve as an exit for the gased corpses. This second door was very wide—nearly two and a half metres. The three chambers were erected on one foundation.

These three chambers did not have the capacity Berlin demanded. It was then that the construction of the building described above was begun. Treblinka officials took pride in the fact that their gas chambers surpassed those of all the other Gestapo death factories in Majdanek, Sobibór and Bełżec for capacity and production floor space.

For five weeks 700 prisoners worked on the erection of the new death factory. When the work was at its height a foreman came from Germany with his crew and set about installing the equipment.

The new gas chambers, of which there were ten in all, were symmetrically placed on the two sides of a wide concrete-floored corridor. Like the old three, they each had two doors, one from the corridor for the live victims, and another in the back wall to provide an outlet for the corpses. The latter led to platforms running on both sides of the building. Narrow-gauge tracks led up to the platforms. The corpses were first emptied out on the platforms and then loaded into waggonettes to be carried to the huge burial pits the excavators dug day and night. The floor of the gas chambers was laid at an incline toward the platforms to make it easier and faster to drag out the corpses. This was a substantial improvement over the old chambers where the corpses had to be carried out on stretchers or dragged out with straps.

Each new gas chamber was seven metres wide and eight long, fifty-six square metres in all. The total area of the ten made up 560 square metres, and the three old chambers which continued to operate when there were smaller groups to be wiped out brought the total production floor space of the Treblinka

death factory up to 635 square metres. From 400 to 500 people at a time were herded into each lethal chamber, which means that working at capacity the ten new chambers could destroy an average of 4,500 lives at once.

At average operations pace the lethal chambers of the Treblinka hell were filled at least two or three times a day (there were days when they were loaded as many as five times). At the lowest estimate, two loadings a day of the new chambers alone meant the destruction daily of some 10,000 persons, or some 300,000 every month. Treblinka was in operation every day for thirteen months. If, however, we allow 90 days for stoppages, repairs and hitches in the delivery of the victims, it still leaves ten months of continuous operation. If the average number of victims a month was 300,000, in ten months Treblinka destroyed three million lives. Again we have the same fearful figure: three million; the first time we arrived at it through a deliberately low estimate of the number of victims brought in by train. I shall repeat:

Firstly: Witnesses testify that Treblinka operated every day, and that the Germans even refrained from observing Sundays, Christmas, New Year's day or even Easter.

Secondly: The figure given above for the capacity of the lethal chambers is less than it was in reality. Treblinka was notorious among the German death factories for the fact that in none of them were the chambers packed so full as here. Often as many as 700—800 living bodies were packed into a single chamber, and children and the infirm were usually thrown on top of the heads of the victims jammed in so tight that they could not move in any direction.

Thirdly: I have taken two loadings a day as the average for the lethal chambers, but all the data at hand indicate that they were filled and emptied three times a day at the average. Thus the monstrous figure of three million, which we have arrived at in calculating both the number of victims delivered to the death factory and the capacity of the lethal chambers, is considerably less than the actual number of human lives snuffed out at Treblinka.

To snuff out life 10 to 25 minutes were required. In the early period after the starting of the new chambers when the executioners had not yet established the efficiency peak and were still experimenting, the victims were subjected to fearful torture lasting for two to three hours before life left their tormented bodies. During the very first days the intake and outlet installations worked badly and the victims writhed in agony for anything up to eight or ten hours.

Various means were employed to effect this mass slaughter. One of them was by forcing the exhaust fumes from the engine of a heavy tank that served as the Treblinka power station into the chambers. These fumes contained two to three per cent of carbon-monoxide, which has the property of combining when inhaled with the hemoglobin of the blood to form a stable combination known as carboxyhemoglobin. Carboxyhemoglobin is far more stable than the combination of oxygen and the hemoglobin of the blood formed in the course of the respiratory process. In some fifteen minutes the blood becomes saturated with carbon-monoxide to such an extent that the hemoglobin is no longer useful as an oxygen carrier. The victim begins gasping for air but no oxygen reaches the suffocating organism; the heart beats as if ready to burst, driving blood into the lungs, but the carbon-monoxide saturated blood can no longer combine with the oxygen in the air. Breathing grows hoarse, all the symptoms of painful strangulation appear, consciousness dims, and the victim perishes just as if he had been strangled.

The second method, and one that was the most widely used, was pumping air out of the chambers with suction pumps until the victims were dead. As in the case of the first method, death was caused by depriving the victims of oxygen.

The third method, used less but nevertheless used, was murder with steem. This method, too, aimed at depriving the organism of oxygen, for the steam was used to expel the air from the chambers.

Diverse poisons, too, were employed, but this was experimentation; the first two were the methods used for mass murder on industrial scale.

Thus, the work of the Treblinka conveyor was so designed as to enable the beasts to deprive man successively

of all the rights and privileges he had enjoyed throughout the ages.

First they robbed him of freedom, home, country and took him to a nameless bit of wasteland set in the midst of dark forests. Then they took his personal effects, his letters, photographs of his near ones, and after that, on the other side of the fence, they took away his mother, his wife, his child. They stripped him naked, took away his documents and flung them carelessly aside; in doing so they deprived him of his name. They drove him into a narrow corridor with a low brick ceiling and thus robbed him at once of the sky, the stars, the wind and the sun.

Then came the last act in the human tragedy when the man passed through the last gate of the Treblinka hell. The doors of the concrete chamber clanged to behind him. Those doors were held together by a modern combined lock consisting of a massive bolt, a chain and a hook. They could not be broken down.

Can we overcome our horror and try to imagine how the victims felt during the last minutes of their lives? We know only that they were silent... Packed so tightly that bones cracked and crushed lungs could scarcely breathe, they must have stood there, one mass of humanity, covered with the sticky sweat of imminent death. Someone, with the wisdom of age perhaps, may have conquered his own fear sufficiently to say to the others: "Take heart, this is the end." Someone no doubt shouted a terrible curse... These curses must come true! We can picture some mother making a superhuman effort to obtain a whit more breathing space for her child in order that his last anguished gasps might be alleviated if only by one-millionth by this last evidence of maternal solicitude. We can hear some young girl, her tongue turning to lead with horror, ask piteously: "Why are they suffocating me, why may I not live and be loved?"

What visions passed before the glassy eyes of the victims as their heads spun and their breath was stifled in their bodies? Their childhood, the happy days of peace, the last painful journey. Someone may have remembered the leering smile on the face of the S.S. man on the station square and thought: "So that is why he laughed!" The brain swam, consciousness faded and the last moments of anguish seized the victim.

No, it is impossible to imagine what took place in that chamber... The dead bodies stood pressed close together growing colder and colder. The children, witnesses maintain, clung to life longer than the adults. Within 20—25 minutes Schmitt's assistants would peep through openings. The time had come to open the doors to the platforms. Urged on by the S.S. men, prisoners in overalls set about emptying the chambers. Since the floor sloped toward the platforms, many of the corpses rolled out by themselves. People who worked here told me that the faces of the corpses had turned yellow and that about 70% bled slightly at the nose and the mouth. Physiologists can no doubt explain this.

S.S. men inspected the bodies, exchanging remarks as they did so. If a groan or a slight movement showed that life still lingered, revolver shots snuffed it out at once. Then came teams of men armed with dental tongs to extract all gold or platinum teeth from the mouths of the corpses piled ready for shipment. The teeth were subsequently sorted out according to value, packed in boxes and sent to Germany. There is no doubt that had it been convenient or advantageous for the S.S. to extract teeth from living people, they would have done so with as little compunction as they had clipped off the hair of living women. But evidently it was simpler to extract teeth from corpses.

The bodies were loaded in the waggonettes and hauled to huge common graves where they were laid in rows packed close together. The pit would not be filled in yet. It was left open waiting for fresh victims. For as soon as the gas chambers were emptied out the scharführer working on "transport" received a brief order over the phone. The scharführer blew on his whistle and the engine-driver shunted the next twenty cars up to the platform with the dummy station of Ober-Majdan. Another three or four thousand people carrying suitcases, bundles and packages of food alighted and walked to the station square. Mothers carried infants in their arms, the older children pressed close to their mothers' skirts, staring curiously about them. There was something frightening about this square tamped down by so many

millions of human feet. Why did the railway line end just beyond the station in yellow grass and a three-metre barbed-wire fence?

The whole gruesome business was timed perfectly so that the new victims started up the "road from which there is no return" at the very moment when the last corpses were being hauled to the pits from the gas chambers. And the pits stood open, waiting...

And after another interval the scharführer's whistle would sound again, and again twenty cars would move slowly out of the woods toward the station platform and fresh thousands of people carrying suitcases, bundles and packages of food would pass out onto the square and examine their new surroundings curiously, finding something frightening, something horrifying about this square tamped down by millions of feet...

And the camp commandant seated in his office amid heaps of papers and charts would telephone to Treblinka station. Another sixty-car train under a strong S.S. escort armed with light machine-guns and automatic rifles pulled heavily out of a siding and crawled to the track running between the pine-trees.

The huge excavators operated day and night, digging more huge dark ditches hundreds of metres long and many metres deep. And the ditches stood open. They were waiting. They did not have to wait long.

II

At the end of the winter of 1943 Himmler came to Treblinka escorted by a group of important Gestapo officials. Himmler and his party landed by plane near the camp and drove in two cars through the main entrance. Most of the visitors wore army uniforms. A few, experts of some kind evidently, wore civilian clothes, fur coats and hats.

Himmler inspected the camp in person and one who saw him told us that the minister of death walked over to one of the huge ditches and stared into it for a long time. Those who accompanied him stood at a respectful distance waiting while Heinrich Himmler contemplated the colossal grave already half-filled with corpses. Treblinka was the Himmler firm's biggest factory.

The S.S. reichsführer left the camp the same day. Before his departure Himmler issued an order to the command of the camp that dumbfounded them all,—hauptsturmführer Baron von Pfein, his assistant Korol and Captain Franz. Himmler ordered all the buried corpses to be burned, every single one of them, and the ashes and residue to be carried out of the camp and strewn over the fields and roads. Inasmuch as there were already millions of corpses in the ground this seemed an incredibly difficult task. Moreover, the freshly killed victims were not to be buried but burned on the spot.

What was the reason for Himmler's visit of inspection and his personal order to which so much importance was attached? There was only one reason—the Red Army's victory at Stalingrad. The power of the Russian blow on the Volga must have been smashing indeed if a few days after it was delivered Berlin began to think of responsibility and retribution, if Himmler flew to Treblinka in person and issued orders calculated to hide the traces of the crimes committed within sixty kilometres of Warsaw. Such was the repercussion of the mighty blow the Russians dealt the Germans on the Volga.

At first there was considerable trouble with the cremation; the bodies would not burn. True, it was observed that the bodies of the women burned better, whereupon efforts were made to burn the male corpses by throwing them in with the women. Large quantities of expensive gasolene and oil were used up with insignificant effect. Things began to look serious when there arrived from Germany a thickset S.S. man of about fifty, an expert in his line, who had been sent to supervise the building of furnaces.

One cannot but marvel at the experts begotten by the hitlerite regime—there were expert baby killers, expert stranglers, expert gas chamber designers and experts who specialized in the organized destruction of large cities. Small wonder that they found an expert specializing

in exhuming and burning millions of human bodies.

Under his leadership they began to build furnaces. These were a special type of furnace for neither the Lublin furnaces nor those of the largest crematorium in the world could ever have handled such a gigantic number of corpses in so short a time as was required at Treblinka. The excavator dug a pit 250—300 metres long, 20—25 metres wide and 5 metres deep. Three rows of reinforced concrete pillars 100—120 cm. high were installed lengthwise in the pit to support steel beams that were laid along them.

Rails were then laid crosswise across these beams at intervals of five to seven centimetres. The result was the grating of a titanic firebox. A new narrow-gauge railway was laid from the burial pits to the furnace pit. Soon afterwards a second and then a third furnace of like dimensions were set up. Each of these furnaces took 3,500 to 4,000 corpses at a loading.

Another huge excavator arrived followed soon afterward by a third. Work went on day and night. People who took part in the cremation of the corpses say that the ovens resembled volcanoes; the frightful heat burned the faces of the workers, the flames leapt up to a height of eight to ten metres, clouds of thick black smoke reached the sky and hung in a heavy motionless blanket in the air. Inhabitants of villages in the neighbourhood saw the flame at night from a distance of thirty and forty kilometres as it licked above the pine woods surrounding the camp. The stench of burning flesh poisoned the whole countryside. When the wind blew in the direction of the Polish camp three kilometres away, the people there were almost asphyxiated by the frightful odour. More than 800 prisoners (which is more than the number of workers in the blast-furnace or open-hearth departments of big iron and steel plants) were engaged in burning the corpses. This monster workshop operated day and night for eight months in succession without managing to handle all the millions of buried bodies. True, new batches of victims continued to arrive all the time which added to the load on the furnaces.

Trainloads were brought in from Bulgaria. The S.S. and guards were happy, for these people, deceived both by the Germans and the Bulgarian fascist government and totally unaware of the fate awaiting them, brought large quantities of valuables, good food and white bread with them. Later trains came in from Grodno and Białystok, from the rebellious Warsaw ghetto, trains of insurgent Polish peasants, workers and soldiers.

From Bessarabia came a group of Gypsies, 200 men and 800 women and children. They came on foot with their caravans; they too had been deceived and that is why two guards were able to bring 1,000 people, although even the guards had no idea they were leading them to their death. Witnesses say that the Gypsy women clapped their hands in delight at the sight of the handsome building of the death house and up to the last minute had no inkling of what awaited them, a fact which amused the Germans tremendously.

They had great sport too with a group of rebels from the Warsaw ghetto. They picked out the women and children and took them not to the gas chambers but to the cremation ovens. They forced the mothers, half crazed with terror, to lead their children between the red-hot bars on which thousands of dead bodies writhed and squirmed from the heat, twisting and turning as though alive;where the bellies of dead women with child burst open from the heat and still-born infants burned up inside rent wombs. This spectacle was enough to rob the strongest man of his reason, but the Germans knew that its effect on a mother would be a thousand times worse. There were no such scenes in Dante's inferno.

When they had amused themselves with this spectacle the Germans actually did throw the children into the flames.

It is painful even to read about all this. The reader must believe me when I say that it is even more painful to write about it. "Why write then?" someone might say. "What is the use of recalling all this?"

It is the duty of a writer to tell the truth however gruelling, and the duty of the reader to learn the truth. To turn aside, or to close one's eyes to the truth is to insult the memory of the dead.

The infirmary was also rearranged. A round pit was dug and iron bars laid at the bottom for the burning of corpses.

Around the pit were low benches like seats in a sports stadium, placed so close to the edge that anyone sitting on them was literally suspended over the edge of the pit. The sick and the feeble who were taken into the infirmary were led to these benches facing the bonfire built of human bodies. After enjoying the situation to the full, the nazi barbarians then proceeded to shoot at the grey heads and bent backs of the old people who fell, dead or wounded, into the blazing fire.

We never had a very high opinion of the German brand of humour. It was always far too heavy for our taste. But who could ever have conceived of anything like the humour, the amusements, the practical jokes in which the S.S. men indulged at Treblinka?

Can any human being on this earth picture to himself the humour of Treblinka, the amusements, the practical jokes of the S.S.?

The S.S. held football matches with teams made up of condemned men, forced the victims to play tag, organized a chorus of the doomed. Next to the Germans dormitory was a ménagerie where wolves, foxes and other harmless beasts of the forests were kept in cages while the most terrible wild beasts the world has ever produced walked the earth freely, sat on benches and listened to music. They actually wrote a Treblinka hymn for the doomed unfortunates which included the following lines:

Für uns gibt's heute nur Treblinka
Das unser Schicksal ist.

Bleeding, tormented people were forced a few minutes before their death to sing idiotic German sentimental songs:

... Ich brach das Blümelein
Und schenkte es dem schönsten
Geliebten Mädlein.

The camp's chief commandant selected a few children from one batch of prisoners, killed their parents, dressed up the children in fine clothes, fed them with sweets, played with them and a few days later when he was bored with them ordered them to be killed.

One of the chief sources of entertainment were the night orgies of violence against young and beautiful women and girls who were selected from every group of victims. The next morning the rapers personally escorted their victims to the lethal chambers. This was how the S.S., the bulwark of the hitlerite regime, the pride of fascist Germany, amused themselves at Treblinka.

It must be noted here that these creatures were by no means robots who mechanically carried out the wishes of others. All witnesses speak of a trait common to all of them, namely, a fondness for theoretical argument, a predilection for philosophizing. All of them had a weakness for delivering speeches to the doomed people, for boasting in front of their victims and explaining the "lofty" meaning and "importance" for the future of what was being done in Treblinka. They explained in detail the superiority of their race over all other races, they delivered tirades about German blood, the German character and the German mission.

Their beliefs were outlined in books by Hitler and Rosenberg, in pamphlets and articles by Goebbels.

After a day of "work" and amusements such as those described above they slept the sleep of the just, undisturbed by dreams or nightmares. Their conscience never worried them for the simple reason that they had no conscience. They went in for physical culture, took great care of their health, drank milk, were extremely fussy about their personal comforts, planted flowers in front of their huts and built summer-houses. Several times a year they went home to Germany on leave since their particular "profession" was considered "harmful for the health" and their superiors jealously guarded their health. At home they walked about proudly and if they did not talk about their work it was not because they were ashamed of it, but simply because, being disciplined, they did not dare to violate the solemn pledge to silence they had taken. And when they walked arm-in-arm with their wives to the cinema of an evening and laughed loudly, stamping with their hobnailed boots on the floor in delight it was hard to tell them apart from the average man in the street. Yet these were beasts in the most direct meaning of the word.

The summer of 1943 was exceptionally hot in these regions. There was not a drop of rain, not a cloud, not a puff of wind for many weeks. The burning of bodies proceeded at top speed. For nearly six months the furnaces had been going but little more than half of the dead had been cremated.

The fearful moral and physical suffering began to tell on the prisoners whose job it was to burn the corpses. Between fifteen and twenty of them committed suicide every day. Many deliberately courted death by violating disciplinary rules. "To get a bullet was a luxury," one baker from Kosów who had escaped from the camp told me. It was said that to be doomed to live in Treblinka was a hundred times worse than to be doomed to death.

Charred bones and ashes were carried outside the camp grounds. Peasants from the village of Wulka were mobilized by the Germans to load the stuff on carts and strew it along the roads leading from the death camp to the Polish labour camp. Child prisoners threw shovelfuls of ashes onto the road from the carts. Sometimes they would find melted gold coins or gold dental crowns among the ashes. These juvenile prisoners were called the "children from the black road" because the ashes made the road black as a funeral ribbon. Car wheels made a peculiar swishing sound as they rolled over this road. When I travelled this way I seemed to hear a sorrowful whisper issuing from beneath the wheels like a low, timid lament.

This black, funeral strip of ashes running between the woods and fields from the death camp to the Polish camp was like a tragic symbol of the terrible fate that had linked the nations who had fallen under the axe of hitlerite Germany.

The peasants carted the charred bones and ashes from the spring of 1943 until the summer of 1944. Every day twenty carts were out each making six or eight trips in the course of the day. In every load went 100—125 kilograms or more of ashes and charred bones.

In the "Treblinka" song the Germans forced the 800 corpse-burners to sing were words exhorting the prisoners to obedience in reward for which they were promised "a tiny bit of happiness which passes in a flash." Surprisingly enough there actually was one happy day in the Treblinka inferno. The Germans, however, were mistaken: neither obedience nor humility gave that day to the Treblinka doomed. It was the reckless courage of the brave that brought it into being.

The prisoners conceived the plan of a mutiny. They had nothing to lose. They were all doomed, every day of their lives was hell. Not one of the witnesses of the frightful crimes would have been spared. The gas chamber awaited them one and all; in fact most of them were killed after working for a few days and replaced by new workers from the current groups of victims. Only a few dozen men lived weeks and months instead of days and hours. These were skilled workers, carpenters, stone-masons, or the bakers, tailors and barbers who served the Germans. It was they who formed a committee of revolt. Only condemned men, only men possessed by an all-consuming hatred and a fierce thirst for revenge could have conceived such a mad plan of revolt. They did not want to escape before destroying Treblinka. And they destroyed it.

Weapons—axes, knives, truncheons—began to appear in the workers' barracks. At what a price, at what a tremendous risk was each axe and knife procured! What incredible patience, cunning and skill was required to hide all this from the Argus eyes of the guards! The workers laid in stocks of gasolene to use for setting fire to the camp buildings. How did this gasolene accumulate and how did it disappear without trace as if it had evaporated into thin air? By superhuman effort, tension of mind, will and incredible daring. A tunnel was dug underneath the German arsenal building. Here again sheer daring worked miracles; the god of courage was on their side. Twenty hand-grenades, a machine-gun, rifles and pistols were carried out of the arsenal and secreted in hiding places known to the conspirators alone. The latter divided themselves into groups of five. The extraordinarily complex plan for the uprising was worked out to the minutest detail. Every group had its definite assignment. Each of these mathematically perfect assignments was a piece of sheer madness in itself.

One group was given the task of storming the watch towers where the guards sat behind machine-guns. Other groups were to attack the sentries on duty at the entrances to the camp grounds. Others were to tackle the armoured cars, to cut telephone communications, to attack the barracks, to cut passages through the barbed wire, to build a bridge across the anti-tank ditches, to pour gasolene on the camp buildings, set fire to them and to destroy everything that lent itself easily to destruction.

The plan even provided for the supply of money to the escaped prisoners. A Warsaw doctor who collected the money nearly gave the whole show away. One day a scharführer noticed a fat bundle of banknotes sticking out of his pocket—it was the current sum the doctor had intended to hide. The scharführer pretended not to have noticed and reported the matter to Franz. Franz decided to question the doctor himself. He suspected something immediately. Why should a doomed man need money? Franz proceeded to cross-examine his victim with calm deliberation. Franz prided himself on his ability to torture people. He was convinced no person on earth could stand the tortures known to Hauptmann Kurt Franz. The hell at Treblinka had its academicians of torture. But the Warsaw doctor outwitted the S.S. hauptmann. He took poison. One of the participants in the uprising told me that never in Treblinka had such efforts been made to save a man's life. Evidently Franz was afraid the dying doctor would carry his secret with him. But the German poison worked well and the secret remained unrevealed.

Toward the end of July the heat became unbearable. Steam issued from the graves as from gigantic boilers. The terrific stench and the heat of the furnaces killed men who toiled on the burning of the corpses. They dropped dead, falling headlong into the blazing furnace. Thousands of millions of fat-bellied flies crawled along the ground or filled the air with their monotonous drone. The last hundred thousand corpses were being burned.

The uprising was scheduled for August 2nd. A revolver shot was its signal. Fortune favoured the sacred cause of the rebels. A new flame leapt skywards, not the thick heavy black smoke and flame of burning human bodies, but the bright, hot and dancing flame of a conflagration. The camp buildings burned and to the rebels it seemed that the sun had rent itself asunder and was burning over Treblinka, a symbol of the triumph of freedom and honour. Shots rang out and the machine-guns on the towers captured by the rebels emitted a jubilant rat-tat-tat. The explosions of hand-grenades sounded as triumphant as Truth itself. The air shook from the detonations, buildings came crashing down and the whistling of the bullets deadened the odious buzzing of the carrion flies. Axes dripping blood flashed in the clear, pure air. On this day, August 2nd, the soil of the Treblinka hell was soaked with the evil blood of the S.S. men, and the radiant sky was tremulous with the triumph of this moment of vengeance.

As had happened in similar instances ever since the world began, the creatures who had strutted as members of a higher race, they who had thundered forth "Achtung, Mütze ab!", the creatures with the shattering compelling voices of masters "Alle r-r-r-aus!", these creatures so confident of their power when it was a question of executing millions of women and children, showed themselves to be despicable cowards, miserable belly-crawling worms begging for mercy when it came to a real life-and-death struggle. They lost their heads, rushed hither and thither like frightened rats; they forgot all about the ramified system of defences Treblinka boasted of, the all-consuming system of fire laid out in advance. They forgot their weapons. But is there really anything surprising about that, after all?

When Treblinka was enveloped in flames and the rebels, bidding a silent farewell to the ashes of their fellow prisoners, left the barbed-wire compound, S.S. and police units were sent in pursuit. Hundreds of police dogs were set on their trail. The Germans brought out their air force to hunt down the escaped prisoners. Battles were fought in the forests and marshes and few of the rebels lived to tell the tale. But they died in battle, they died fighting, arms in hand.

Treblinka ceased to exist on August 2nd. The Germans completed the burning of the remaining corpses, dismantled the brick buildings, removed the barbed wire, set fire to the wooden barracks that had survived the mutiny. The equipment of the death factory was blown up or dismantled and shipped away; the furnaces were destroyed, the excavators taken away and the huge innumerable ditches filled in with earth. The station building was razed to the last brick, the railway track and even the ties were removed. Lupine was planted on the site of the camp and a settler named Streben built himself a house there. The house is no longer there, for it has been burnt down since.

What was the object of all this destruction? The Germans wanted to hide the

traces of the murder of millions of people in the hell of Treblinka. But how did they expect to do this? Did they really think it possible to force the thousands who had witnessed the death trains moving from all corners of Europe to the death conveyor to keep silent? Did they believe they could hide that deadly flame and the smoke which hung for eight months in the sky, visible by day and by night to the inhabitants of dozens of villages and small towns? Did they think they could make the peasants of the Wulka village forget the fearful shrieks of the women and children which lasted for thirteen long months and which seem to ring in their ears to this very day? Did they imagine they could compel the peasants who had strewn the road with human ashes for a whole year to keep silent? Did they imagine that they could compel to silence the survivors who had seen the Treblinka slaughterhouse in operation from its launching until August 2nd, 1943, the last day of its existence; the witnesses who have given accurate and corroborated accounts of every S.S. man and guard; witnesses who, step by step, have helped to reproduce a faithful picture of life in Treblinka from day to day? These can no longer be ordered: "Mütze ab!", these can no longer be led off to the lethal chamber. And Himmler no longer has power over these henchmen of his who with bowed heads and fingers that nervously tug at the edges of their jackets recount in dull toneless voices the delirium-like story of their crimes.

We arrived at the Treblinka camp early in September, i.e. thirteen months after the day of the uprising. For thirteen months the slaughterhouse had been in operation. For thirteen months the Germans had endeavoured to hide the traces of its work.

It was quiet. The tips of the pines flanking the railway track barely moved. Millions of human eyes had stared out of the car windows at these pines, this sand, this old tree stump, as trains moved slowly up to the platform. Softly rustle the ashes and crushed slag on the dark road now covered in neat German fashion with white pebbles.

We enter the camp, we are treading the soil of Treblinka. The lupine pods burst open at the slightest touch, burst open by themselves with a faint popping sound; millions of tiny peas roll on the ground. The rattle of the falling peas, the popping sound of the bursting pods merge into a soft, mournful melody like a funeral dirge—faint, sorrowful, gentle—issuing from the bowels of the earth. The soil, rich and juicy as though linseed oil had been poured on it, the fathomless earth of Treblinka, as oozy as the sea bottom, gives under your feet. This plot of land fenced off with barbed wire has consumed more human lives than all the oceans and seas in the world ever since the birth of mankind.

The earth ejects the crushed bones, the teeth, bits of paper and clothing; it refuses to keep its awful secret. These things emerge from the unhealed wounds in the earth. There they are—the half-rotted shirts of the slain, the trousers, shoes, mouldy cigarette-cases, the tiny cog wheels of watches, penknives, shaving brushes, candlesticks, children's shoes with red pompons, towels with Ukrainian embroidery, lace underwear, scissors, thimbles, corsets, trusses. Out of another fissure in the earth crawl heaps of utensils: cups, pots, basins, tins, pans, aluminium mugs, bowls, children's bakelite cups... And beyond, out of the bottomless, swollen earth, as though pushed forward into the light of day by some invisible hand, emerge half-rotted Soviet passports, notebooks with Bulgarian writing, photographs of children from Warsaw and Vienna, letters written in childish scrawl, a volume of poetry, a prayer copied on a yellowed fragment of paper, food ration cards from Germany... Hundreds of perfume bottles of all shapes and sizes, green, pink, blue... Pervading everything is the nauseating stench of corruption, a stench that neither fire nor sunshine, rain, snow or wind have been able to overcome. And hundreds of tiny forest flies swarm over the decaying fragments of clothing and paper.

We walk over the bottomless Treblinka earth and suddenly something causes us to halt in our tracks. It is the sight of a lock of hair gleaming like burnished copper, the soft lovely hair of a young girl trampled into the ground, and next to it a lock of light blonde hair, and farther on a thick dark braid gleaming against the light sand; and beyond that more and more. There are evidently the contents of one, but only

one, of the sacks of hair the Germans had neglected to ship off.

Then it is all true! The last wild hope that it might be a ghastly nightmare has gone. The lupine pods pop open, the tiny peas beat a faint tattoo as though a myriad of tiny bells were ringing a funeral dirge deep down under the ground. And it seems the heart must surely burst under the weight of sorrow, grief and pain that is beyond human endurance.

Scientists, sociologists, criminologists, psychiatrists and philosophers are puzzling over this phenomenon. What is it—innate or hereditary, is it the result of education, environment, external influences, is it predetermined by history or is it the criminal will of the leader? What is it, how did it come to pass? The embryonal traits of racism which sounded so comical when expounded by second-rate pseudo-professors or the puny provincial theoreticians of last-century Germany, the contempt of the German philistine for the Russian, the Pole, the Jew, the French, the British, the Greek and the Czech, the whole of this cheap and taudry German superiority over the rest of mankind that was good-naturedly laughed off by journalists and humorists, was suddenly in the course of a few years transformed from mere childish babble into a deadly menace to mankind, a menace to life and freedom and became the source of incredible suffering, bloodshed and crime. There is definite food for thought here.

Wars like the present are terrible indeed. Rivers of innocent blood have been spilt by the Germans. But today it is not enough to speak of the responsibility of Germany for what has happened. Today we must speak of the responsibility of all nations and of every citizen in the world for the future.

Every man and woman today is bound in duty to his conscience, to his son and his mother, to his country and to mankind to examine his heart and conscience and reply to the question: what is it that gave rise to racism, what can be done in order that nazism, Hitlerism might never rise again, either on this or the other side of the ocean, never unto eternity.

The imperialist idea of the superiority of any nation or race led the Hitlerites logically to Majdanek, Sobibór, Bełżec, Oświęcim and Treblinka.

We must remember that the fascists will emerge from this war not only with bitter recollections of defeat but also with sweet memories of the ease with which it is possible to slaughter millions of defenseless people.

This must be solemnly borne in mind by all who value honour, liberty and the life of all nations, of all mankind.

VASSILI GROSSMAN

A RUSSIAN MOTHER

At the women's barracks of a large German concentration camp in Poland, Clara from Prague, a thin, sharp-featured seamstress, lay dead. When the convoy had come and dragged away the body, something stirred in the straw spread in the corner where she had died, and in the dim light of the lamp a tousled red-haired child's head appeared. It was Clara's daughter, Elly. She sat up on the straw, and remained there, silent, shaking her head like an old woman. Sometimes she would murmur some indistinct words broken by a pitiful cry, and again sit shaking her head. It would have been hard to guess her age; she might have been five, or perhaps much older, for the soft childish face was sallow and wrinkled, and black shadows lay beneath the eyes.

Night fell, the women lay down on the cement floor and fell into a heavy sleep. Silence reigned in the barrack, but in the dark corner the ruddy head still shook, and sometimes a pitiful cry would be heard. Then one of the figures on the floor rose, detached itself from the others, and stepping carefully over the sleepers, made its way to the little girl. The woman picked up the withered little body, and holding it in a warm, motherly embrace, began stroking the tousled head and whispering tender words. Elly understood none of them, they were in a language unknown to her, but with the sure instinct of childhood she

snuggled close to the motherly bosom and felt comforted.

This woman had arrived in the camp quite recently. Her Russian name—Marfa Ossipovna—was strange and difficult for many of the prisoners, and she became known to adults and children alike by the first syllable alone—"Ma," which means the same in all languages.

Soon after, an Italian woman called Lucia died, leaving a two-year-old boy. When anybody came near the child, he hid his face in his hands, kicked and scratched. But he allowed Ma to pick him up and carry him to her dark corner, where he pushed Elly to one side and himself seized the cosiest place close to Ma, clinging to her with arms and legs.

Simone, an eight-year-old French girl, came to Ma of her own accord. It was a long time before the guards took away the body of her mother, who had died of exhaustion. All night Simone sat beside the body, warming her hands with her breath and then pressing them to her mother's face. In the morning, with a gesture of bitter resignation, she covered the dead face with whisps of straw, went to Ma's corner and said: "Madame, allow me to be with you; I can carry water and look after the little ones." Ma did not understand French, but she drew the little girl to her and kissed her.

When a fourth child appeared in Ma's corner—tiny, transparent Stas from Warsaw, then Marfa Ossipovna received a new name—the Mother of All Children. And from that time, when mothers felt death approaching, they would send for her and stammer words of appeal and thanks, pressing their lips to her rough, hard hands. "Well, I should think so," the Mother would say angrily. "They can't be left to die... Of course I'll look after the child!"

The Germans issued on food for children. The ration of a hundred grams of bread (about a quarter of a pound) made of sawdust, and half a litre of skilly was given only to those who worked. Starvation threatened the children. One day, during the dinner hour the Mother of All Children took a kerchief and went round the barrack with it, silently indicating the little ones. The women gave as much as they could, but it was little enough; the children could not sleep at night for hunger, they cried softly and monotonously, rubbing with their little hands their stomachs, distended with starvation.

The women's barrack was separated from the men's by barbed wire. One day, after returning from work, the Mother of All Chlidren went up to the wire and shouted to the prisoners who were lined up for roll-call: "Any Russians among you, help the children. Throw some bread into the hole this side of the wire!"

For this appeal, the Mother of All Children received twenty-five strokes from the whip. She heard the order in silence, removed her blouse and turned her back to the overseer, a sturdy German woman wearing black leather gloves. And when the woman had counted out twenty-five strokes with the wire whip, the Mother threw her blouse over her bleeding shoulders and went to the barrack.

When she saw the blood, Simone wept desperately. But the Mother comforted her, smiling and plaiting the girl's hair afresh. Simone looked into her face suspiciously, she did not altogether believe in the smile and the cheerful talk. But the Mother of All Children pointed to the little ones and repeated time after time: "Bread...bread... now there will be bread..."

"Oh, bread!" Simone nodded understandingly. She knew what that word meant. She had helped to divide the pieces in the kerchief, and had learned that maternal art of unobtrusively choosing the smallest for herself...

In the men's barrack, the prisoners gradually came to know about the Mother of All Children. At first it was Russian rations that flew over the wire into the hole, then came Polish, Czech, Freneh, Italian. But that was only half the job. At night the Mother would steal out of the barrack, crawl to the hole and get the bread. The sharp beam of the searchlight swept and crawled over the ground, machine-guns stood on the walls, and sentries were on the alert for every sound. The Mother of All Children learned to outwit death, and for four months and a half she fed her fosterlings. She herself lost weight until she was as thin as a young girl. The hardest thing of all was the deprivation of sleep. The women would return from work so exhausted that they would collapse on the cement floor and fall asleep immediately. But the Mother of All Children would lie

there, open-eyed, waiting for the moment when the sentry would doze off or leave the barrack. Sometimes it was a very long time.

But during the day, the Mother tried to do her full day's work, which would have sufficed for three men. She had no intention of being labelled "weak" or "disobedient." People with that reputation among the overseers did not live long, and on her life depended that of eleven small children.

Four months and a half had passed. Then one night the searchlight crawling over the ground paused for an instant on a dark figure pressed to the groud. It continued its sweep, then returned, and a moment later the sentry at the nearest post found a target for his tommy-gun.

The children waited for two days. Simone's eyes were dark and hollow with anxiety, but she tried to amuse the little ones; she put together a rag doll and made it do all sorts of amusing tricks. But in the middle of the game the little girl's hands dropped and she began weeping loudly, hopelessly, like a grown-up woman. On the third day she took the kerchief—all that was left of the Mother of All Children—and went round the barrack. Simone pointed to the children, then to the kerchief, repeating:

"Madame, just a little, please. They cannot wait any longer."

For about ten days the women managed to collect food for the children. Then the Soviet troops arrived. In a business-like fashion Simone asked the jolly young lieutenant what she was to do with the little ones? The lieutenant brought an interpreter who listened carefully to all that Simone had to say.

"The little ones!" he repeated. "They'll be sent to the hospital at once; look, there's the doctor coming into the barrack. But that Russian woman, what else can you tell me about her? Let's go to the colonel, and you can tell him about it yourself."

A few hours later the officers and soldiers drew up around the hole near the wire. Nobody knew where the Mother of All Children had been buried, too many people had been shot since that night.

When the volleys rang out, a Pole detached himself from the group of local people who had gathered to watch the ceremony, and approached the colonel.

"I suppose you are honouring some great person, Sir?" he said.

"Yes," replied the colonel briefly, brushing some snow from his knee with his glove. "A very great person."

"Who is it, Sir?" asked the Pole, respectfully removing his cap.

"A Russian mother."

TATYANA OKS

FRIENDSHIP

The letter had been sent from the Ukraine; it bore an address in Kemerovo, in the centre of the Kuznetsk Basin, and finally, after long travels, it came to the addressee—in Moscow.

The letter read as follows:

"...Now, when my wildest dreams have come true, it is you, Irene, more than anybody on earth, whom I want to tell about my happiness. And is there anything wonderful in that? After all, but for your sensitive tact, your friendly encouragement, would I have lived through my desperate despair two years ago, when my whole life seemed shattered to its foundations, and everything seemed so drearily lonely that I just could not endure it... Do you remember, Irene, how you gradually, carefully, planted in me the idea that I might still find my wife and my children again when the Ukraine was liberated, urged that everything is possible in wartime? Do you remember how you first came to my ward to read me newspapers or books, and always chose items which would inspire optimism? I saw and understood your well-camouflaged efforts to comfort me, even if only with the hope in a miracle, one in which—confess it!—you yourself did not believe at the time. But now imagine, my dear, kind friend, just imagine it—your predictions came true, in wartime everything really is possible, and the miracle has happened: I found first both my boys, and now I have found my

wife. All three have suffered terribly, but they are alive and now we are all together again! Whom should I tell about this, if not you? I do not know if my letter will find you in Kemerovo. It may be that like myself and so many others, you have returned to your home and the work that the war interrupted. But I am sure that you are still connected with the factory, and that sooner or later this letter will find you..." The letter was signed: "Your ever devoted friend, Mikhail R."

Irene read the letter through a second time. Two years previously the evacuation wave had carried her and her infant daughter away to distant Siberia where she had become a designer at the Artificial Fertilizer Factory in Kemerovo. When some evacuated military hospitals arrived in town, the factory took one of them under its patronage; the soul of this work was Darya Sh., a middle-aged woman, but lively, energetic and indefatigable, and it was Irene who became her right hand.

That was when Irene came to know Mikhail R., whose story made a deep impression upon her. He was an Ukrainian, an agronomist, and not a professional soldier—on the contrary, he had been a very quiet man, absorbed in his office and his scientific work. Before the war he had lived with his family on a state farm near Kiev, but when the first German bombs burst on Soviet soil, he left his hothouses and the notebooks he had kept for years and volunteered for the army without waiting for mobilization.

He was seriously wounded in battle and picked up when he was almost at his last gasp. He had come to Kemerovo with the hospital.

It was many months before he was able to leave his bed. By chance he met an acquaintance from home who told him that the state farm had been devastated, that the fruits of many years' scientific investigation, nearly completed, had all been destroyed, and that his family had not been able to get away in time. And he well knew what fate would probably await his wife and two little boys when they fell into the German's clutches.

In one instant everything had gone—his creative work which was the passion of his life, and his personal happiness. If only he could have had the comfort of knowing that he could rise from his bed and take vengeance on the enemy with his own hands, destroy him, drive him from his land! But even this comfort was denied him. Mikhail R. would leave the hospital disabled, unfit for active service. Yes, it was certainly enough to make a man despair!

It was at this time that Irene Gherman appeared for the first time by his bed. All he heard about her, as about many others who came into the ward, was that "the patrons have come." But these simple words brought a warmth to the heart. True, for a long time Mikhail had always met sympathetic questions with stubborn silence. Irene, however, was different. She asked nothing, she read him newspapers, books and poems, and always found those which might raise a shadow of hope within him. She told him a great deal about the factory and her work there, and gradually made him part of the great world beyond the hospital walls. It was not only about victories that she told him, about successes on the home front and heroic achievements; no, sometimes Irene would talk about the many terrible cases of suffering which she had seen, of orphaned adolescents, who, to their own surprise and that of all those about them, had become the mainstay of important production work; and always the moral of her stories was that life triumphed. Gradually Mikhail began to feel that there might be a place for him, too, in that great victorious life.

On recovering, he began to work at the hospital as organizer of mass political work. This in itself brought him into frequent contact with the patrons. He valued their work and their care, but knew from his own experience that the most precious thing of all was the friendships formed beside the hospital beds.

It was for this reason that when the doctor spoke to him about Captain Bogachov, his first question was:

"Who is the patron of that ward?"

On the surface, things were going excellently with Bogachov. His temperature was coming down, his wound closing up and all infection had disappeared. But nevertheless, Captain Bogachov was picking up far too slowly.

He had everything a man should need for recovery—careful nursing, good doctors, excellent food, and a comfortable, bright ward. If he had been asked if there was anything he needed, he would quite sincerely have answered: no! But

although himself unaware of it, there was one thing he needed which the hospital could not give him: he needed a friend. He needed a person who would come specially to see him, whose interest and care would be for him in particular. He had a great human longing for friendship. This was what slowed down his convalescence and baffled medical skill.

Bogachov's need was well known and understood by the new organizer of mass political work, so one day the door of Bogachov's ward opened and an unknown woman entered. She went straight to his bed and asked: "Would you like me to read to you?" There was nothing remarkable in the tone of her voice, but in that instant he knew in his heart: "Here is a friend!"

He never remembered what the first book was his visitor read to him; he even forgot to ask her name or where she came from. All he wanted was that she should come again. And the next day she appeared at the same time, just as quiet and simple as before. This time they did more talking than reading—just ordinary conversation about nothing in particular, but again Bogachov felt the same happiness and peace steal through him. As she was leaving he asked her:

"What is your name?"

"Marianna," she replied from the door.

From that time, Marianna Granovskaya appeared almost every day at the wounded man's bed, and with every visit brought the great gift of friendship. He told her all that was in his mind, all that interested or troubled him. So many thoughts and impressions had accumulated during these years of war—he had an imperative need to share them. Marianna herself was rather silent and a good listener, restrained, but with something very soft and womanly about her. And Bogachov's liking and respect for her was heightened when he learned that this woman was herself carrying a heavy burden—for over two years she had heard nothing from her only son at the front, yet at the same time she found the strength to lighten the sufferings of others. One day, when she was reading poetry, Bogachov suddenly exclaimed:

"You read like a real actress!"

"But I am an actress," she smiled. "I work in the theatre here, and the theatre is the patron of this hospital."

Nearly every wounded man had a similar good friend among the patrons. They were of all ages and from the most varied walks of life. There was even a thirteen-year-old girl, Irochka Babich, who looked after a whole ward of blind officers. This was a particularly hard and trying ward—many adults shrank from undertaking it. How can one amuse or comfort strong, healthy men who have lost their sight, and most of whom were doing brain work before the war?

Merry, red-headed Irochka, whose freckled face always seemed to be laughing, was the daughter of a professor of surgery. She first came to the hospital with some of her schoolfriends, announcing:

"My neighbour is a nurse here, and she told me that you have a ward of blind men. We can read to them..."

The girls were given a trial. At first they were shy, but soon got over it, and took turns in reading to the wounded men and singing them songs. When they were leaving, they were showered with questions when they would come again, so they felt that their first visit had not gone off so badly after all.

The next day Irochka Babich looked into the hospital again. In the corridor she met Captain Blinkov, one of her previous day's audience, and greeted him politely.

"You're one of yesterday's schoolgirls, aren't you?" he cried gladly. "I recognized your voice. I happened to be in the ward when you were reading; my comrades are very anxious for you to come to us too. Can't you come in today?"

Blinkov spoke hurriedly, in an excited, imploring tone, and Irochka felt a pain in her heart. "Such a fine man, a hero, and asking me like that!" she thought.

That was the beginning of it. Ward No. 21 was a "real International," as Irochka put it. There was the Georgian Chichinadze, the Ukrainian Bondarenko, the Tatar Mukhtanov, and all of them gave Irochka a great welcome when her step sounded along the corridor. Captain Blinkov, usually so silent, boasted to his comrades:

"Look, what a girl I've brought!"

She found something to do for everyone of them—reading the news for one, writing a letter for another, or telling some amusing story from school to a third. And to each of those grown men it

seemed that he had never had a better pal than Irochka.

One day Captain Blinkov rose and announced solemnly:

"Irochka, in the name of everybody here I declare you the eyes of our ward. And you must understand, Irochka, how important that is—eyes!"

Yes, there were patrons of all kinds and very many of them. And the ways they found of helping the hospital were just as varied. On Captain Bogachov's birthday, for instance, Marianna Granovskaya and other actors and actresses from the theatre organized a real concert in his ward, schoolchildren crossed the river to the taiga and gathered six bouquets of wonderfully lovely autumn flowers, while from the kitchens of the Artificial Fertilizer Factory, the main patron, came a magnificent birthday cake.

Each day the factory looked after some department of the hospital, taking "all responsibility," as they put it, for the work in the wards there. The shop managers were in constant contact with the head doctors, and from them learned of the hospital's needs.

On one occasion the factory collected books for the hospital, and this led to an interesting friendship. Aizenstadt, a shop manager, who was a chess enthusiast, contributed a book on the theory of the game, one which he himself evidently valued highly. When he handed it in, he asked:

"Tell me who finds it interesting."

Captain Belikov found it extremely interesting, and learning this, Aizenstadt came to the hospital to make his acquaintance. They spent several hours over the chess board at their first meeting, and parted friends. But just at that time Aizenstadt was extremely busy at the factory, while chess and friendship demand meetings. Then Aizenstadt started a lively correspondence with Belikov, consisting for the most part of chess moves. Every day letters flew from shop to ward, from ward to shop. If for some reason there was no letter from Belikov in the morning, a worried Aizenstadt would ring up the department doctor:

"How is Belikov today? How did he sleep? What is his temperature?"

When the news of Belikov's promotion to major was received in the hospital, Aizenstadt was the first to hurry to him with congratulations.

"Only I had no time to get any flowers," he excused himself in some embarrassment. "I wanted to be the first."

At last Major Belikov recovered and left to join his unit. But the friendship continued: letters still pass back and forth, although now it is no longer between ward and shop, but between Siberia and East Prussia, where Major Belikov is now fighting. The friends know that it will not be long now to the end of the war, and then they intend to meet again to weld their wartime friendship over the chess-board.

Many are the intimate trifles that link the factory with the hospital. Certainly none of the hospital staff will ever forget how—with the best of intentions!—the patrons swamped them with garlic and onions. Here is the story.

Suddenly there arrived from a hot sector a batch of wounded, part of whose cure was garlic and onions—in large quantities, and at once. The patrons learned of the dilemma, and all the housewives—the wives and mothers of the factory workers—went on a house to house search and sent out an S.O.S. to the collective farm which was also under factory patronage. That same day the first consignment of "medicine"—twenty-five kilograms of garlic and onions—arrived at the hospital.

Great was the rejoicing and hearty the thanks to the patrons.

Next morning, more baskets arrived with aromatic "medicine." Some of the hospital staff, taken aback, tried to hint gently that they really did not need any more. But garlic and onions continued to flow in, an endless stream. They piled them up in the room set apart for Mikhail R.'s work. Chaff flew around his head:

"Setting up a shop, Mikhail?"

He put a good face on it and replied in kind; but on the third day three girls appeared from Elykayevo, twelve kilometres away, carrying baskets in which Mikhail's apprehensive eyes instantly discovered the inevitable garlic and onions.

"This is from the fifth class of our Elykayevo school, and we are daughters of servicemen!" they announced ceremoniously.

"But who told you that we needed onions?" asked Mikhail desperately.

"Why, the patrons," the girl replied firmly, and just as firmly set her basket

down alongside the others adorning the room.

Officers and soldiers discharged from the hospital always go to visit "their" workshop before leaving, and woe betide the shop which is behind with its quota!

During the whole period of the hospital's stay in Kemerovo, the friendship between patrons and wounded became stronger and deeper. But the time came when the front had moved so far away that there was no point in keeping the hospital in the town. Preparations were made for its removal westward. And then it was seen what a warm friendship had grown up. Hundreds of presents, large and small, flowed to the hospital, accompanied by the heartiest good wishes. The girls made handkerchiefs and tobacco pouches, there were lighters and cigarette-cases, hand-made tokens of affection and remembrance. People exchanged addresses and spoke of future meetings.

Many and varied are the ways of friendship. But wherever it springs up—in the coal mine or the gun crew, at the gasworks or by a hospital bed, it brings people new strength.

And it is this friendship that welds the whole Soviet people, welds them and strengthens them.

OLGA ZIV

SON OF THE MOTHERLAND

He has not seen Russia, he does not know our silvery birches perched on the edge of ravines, or our boundless, luscious meadows as cool as the sea; he has not heard the chirping of grasshoppers in the tall steppe grasses on days when it seems that the very steppe, languorous under the scorching sun, is whispering in its sleep. He does not know the majestic Volga, or the swift Dnieper, or the Terek that rushes in a mad torrent between its rocky banks. His acquaintance with the life of our country has been extremely brief. Our selfless persistence in labour, our bold ventures into new scientific fields, our fraternal loyalty to our friends—all this he has barely had time to perceive and grasp.

Something of it he has grasped just the same. For the exploit accomplished by this lad of nineteen, his tremendous, almost superhuman self-control and grim tenacity of purpose prove that the beauty and grandeur of our country quickly capture honest human hearts and that people who but recently entered its bounds are capable of deeds that further enhance the glory of our peoples.

2

In his childhood Marjan Lobik scarcely knew anything about Soviet Russia. He grew up in the foothills of the Carpathians in an out-of-the-way corner of old Poland, all the more neglected for being inhabited by Ukrainians. He was thirteen when events took place that were equally instructive for children and for adults, events which added inches to the stature of all of them. That was September 1939. The German armies invaded Poland. It all happened far away beyond Cracow which was the other end of the world to simple people like Philip Lobik and his neighbours. But before a week had passed crowds of refugees from Warsaw and Cracow filled the forest roads and a stream of luxurious automobiles rolled by carrying Polish government members to Rumania.

"Nobody cares about us simple folk. They are leaving us to our fate," said old Philip, a drill foreman who liked to show his children the derricks that soared over the oil wells he had drilled.

Sure enough, two weeks later German tanks rumbled through the deserted streets of the village en route from Drogobych to Lvov. They created the impression of a terrible, irresistible, invulnerable force. It was not long, however, before these formidable machines came hurtling back in the opposite direction and the Red Army arrived. There was great rejoicing. The grown-ups held meetings and elected deputies. There were plenty of new thrills for the children too: before winter came, a new

school had been built. Marjan will never forget the joy of the teachers and the noisy jubilation of his schoolmates. He himself rejoiced: a seven-year school now took the place of the old four-year school, which meant that he could continue his education.

Time passed. It was only a little more than a year and a half since the new life had dawned, yet it seemed to the boy that he had always loved this vast Soviet land. His father talked about the Baku oil wells and declared his intention of visiting them before he died. He wanted to see how men pushed back the sea to extract oil from the sea-bottom. Marjan used to smile listening to his father's talk. He himself had made up his mind to go to the Arctic but he did not dare talk about it yet.

All of a sudden the avalanche of steel bore down on them again from the West. For several days and nights the mountain valleys echoed to the thunder of battle. Then the German tanks came clattering over the roads once more.

The din of battle subsided and a heavy silence prevailed. But for a long time wounded Soviet soldiers, left behind in the enemy rear, made their way east secretly and by night. Marjan saw one who was wounded in both legs. He moved on his knees leaning on a stick. The peasant woman who fed him asked him wonderingly why he insisted on following the German tanks. Did he think he could ever catch up with them? Didn't he see that nothing could ever stop them?

With complete and indomitable faith the Russian said he would overtake the German tanks. He was a tankist himself, he would get a new tank and come back here to the Carpathians.

3

The Germans took Marjan away from school and made him load coal. He worked all autumn and the first winter of the occupation. He grew up in this time and became quite mature for his fifteen years.

Everything he had learned about the fascists in the Soviet school came true. He had been told that the fascists were brigands; now he saw this with his own eyes and in his own backyard. The Germans levied a tax of a thousand litres of milk a year on the family's only cow, on which it depended for most of its nourishment. And although his old father and sick mother spared no effort searching in meadow and forest for good grazing ground they could not manage the thousand litres and at the end of the year the Germans came and took the cow away. In the school he had been told that the Germans were murderers. This also turned out to be quite correct. Had they not shot Pavlo Kundrik, a quiet man respected by all the Urech villagers? And for what? Merely because they had found a small flour mill in his possession. But after all Pavlo Kundrik's children were starving, they were as thin as reeds from undernourishment, and who but the Germans could condemn a man milling some of his own grain to make a little flour for his hungry children?

In the meantime the battle in Russia continued to rage. However hard the Germans tried to hide it, everyone knew that the Soviet troops were moving westward, clearing town after town. Some people began to believe that they would indeed come here to the foothills of the Carpathians. Old Philip Lobik was often heard maintaining that whatever happened no one could say of Soviet Russia that she abandoned simple folk to their fate. No, Russia spared neither blood nor effort to liberate all her citizens, down to the last man.

4

At dawn on an August morning in 1944 a Soviet scout detail entered Urech and in September Marjan Lobik and other lads of his age joined the Red Army. He learned soldiering and took great pains with his training. Nevertheless no one could have guessed then what a stout heart beat in the breast of this slender, swarthy-skinned youth and how deeply this heart of his was devoted to the new Soviet Motherland.

To be quite frank—Marjan Lobik does not hide the fact either—when first he came to the trenches some of the soldiers did not altogether trust him. They were not quite sure of him. And this is not hard to understand. After all, friendship at the front means more than supping borshch from the same canteen and sharing the same tobacco

pouch. Soldiers are bound by ties of life and death. If your neighbour lets you down at a critical moment, if he should run or even hide in a trench, it is your funeral as well as his.

Sitting in the trench under the bleak January sky, seasoned soldiers talked with Marjan, keeping up his spirits when the shells exploded close to their trench. Marjan was constantly aware of their comradely support, yet they were afraid to pass final judgement on him, they were still waiting for him to prove himself, waiting to see how he would fight for his Soviet Motherland when the long-awaited but grim days of offensive arrived.

Marjan also waited. He waited calmly as befits a man and a soldier. And while he waited he picked up useful hints from the more experienced soldiers, learned how to throw hand-grenades, practised shooting and gradually grew accustomed to the weapons of war.

5

When the offensive began, Marjan Lobik was assigned to a light machine-gun. The road from the Vistula to the Oder gave him more than just army training. It matured him as a man and a citizen. He found out more about Soviet people, and through them about his Soviet Motherland. He fought side by side with men from the shores of the Pacific and Arctic oceans. He observed them as they went over the top, watched them fight, rest and die. He longed to show how much he appreciated their friendship.

In hundreds of Polish towns and villages the Red Army was met with enthusiastic acclaim and Marjan was proud to know that he belonged to this mighty army of liberation. He followed the banners of the Red Army across the German frontier. He knew that millions of people all over the world had lived for more than five years in eager anticipation of this moment, hoping fervently that Germany's crimes would not go unpunished. And now he himself was treading German soil and thousands of his fellow men liberated from German captivity were flocking home.

They were on the other side of the Oder when his platoon, which had advanced deep into the enemy's positions during an attack, was cut off by superior enemy forces. Marjan used up all his ammunition in repelling the enemy's attacks. Shooting from the yard of a German house, he waited until the Germans were right at the gates and then fired a long burst. Wheeling about like mice, they fell one after another. In the heat of battle Marjan did not notice that his right arm was hit, until it grew numb and useless. The Germans had already taken possession of the yard and half of the building when Marjan realized that all his ammunition was gone.

He still had six grenades. He climbed up to the attic and with his left hand he threw five grenades one after the other into the Germans scurrying about in the yard. Then he hid his machine-gun and, descending into the cellar, hid in the coal bin. The sixth grenade he hid under his tunic, gripping the detonator ring with his left hand. He heard the Germans search the house and kill off our wounded. He heard them come noisily down into the cellar to where he lay with closed eyes. One of the Germans threw a chunk of coal at him. He did not move a muscle. Nor did he stir when he heard the click of a revolver. A shot rang out. The bullet pierced his chest near the right shoulder. He did not cry out. He feigned dead. The Germans went away. It was cold in the cellar and Marjan's legs began to freeze but he did not move. He hoped that our troops would soon return and he was determined to fight to his last breath. If the worst came to the worst, there was always the grenade.

Thus began Marjan Lobik's feat of courage in the name of the Motherland.

6

For two days Marjan Lobik lay motionless in the chill cellar, the blood flowing from his wounds. The Germans approached him once more, suspecting that he was still alive. They pulled some rags from under him. Marjan made no sign. One of the Germans shot him through the leg above the knee. He did not groan. He lay with the sharp edges of the coal cutting into his body and waited while his heart sank from weakness.

Marjan Lobik did not die. On the

third morning of his ordeal he heard the voice of a Russian officer.

"Set up a machine-gun! Search the house! Hurry!" said the voice.

... Now Marjan is in a hospital. Marjan will live. He knows it and so do all the others in his ward.

What did he think about during those two long days and nights?—his wardmates ask him.

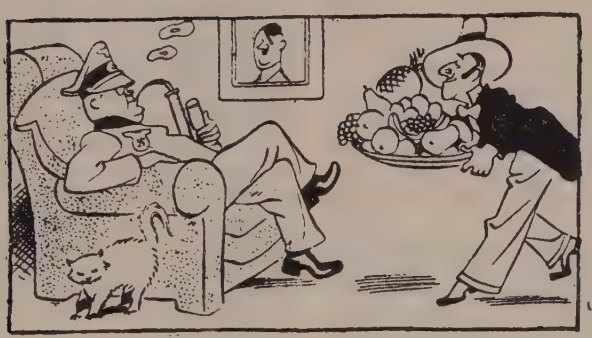
Marjan ponders this question. About his father? Yes, about father as well. Now father may live out his days in peace for no hostile army will march under his windows again. About his other relatives? Yes, from time to time he thought of them all, about his sick mother waiting so impatiently for victory and her son's return; and Marija, his eldest sister, who worked as a secretary of the village Soviet; and his little brother Vassili who now goes to the new school. But most of all he thought about his Soviet Motherland, about the Red Army, about his comrades-in-arms. In them he saw his own salvation and the future of his near ones.

Marjan Lobik is lying in the hospital. Yesterday Colonel Bocharov came from the unit headquarters to congratulate him on his decoration. Soon the Order of the Patriotic War, First Class, will shine on Marjan's breast, the breast pierced by a German bullet, the breast in which beats the true heart of a Soviet citizen and soldier.

SERGUEI KRUSHINSKY

A STATE OF WAR IN ARGENTINE

The Swedish radio reports that as a result of the Argentine's declaration of war on the Axis powers, the crew of the German battleship "Admiral Graf Spree" have become prisoners of war.



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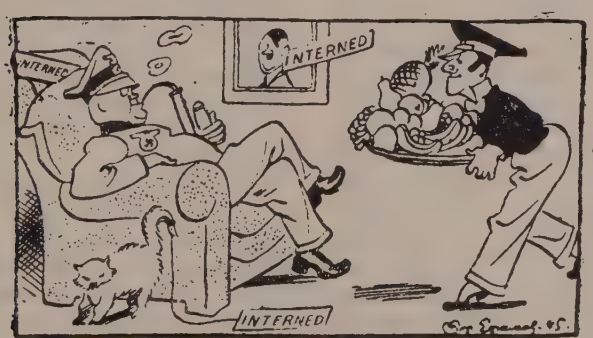

and after

Drawing by Boris Yefimov

FOR CHILDREN ABOUT CHILDREN BY

A LENINGRAD GIRL

"Cutter ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" comes the reply through the darkness.

We descend the boardwalk to the water below. To tell the truth, there is no water—it has all turned to ice piled in large lumps round the little ship. And it holds fast in its grip the small craft whose sharp outlines have been softened by snow. It is a real cutter. True, it is stationary, but inside, in the small cabin, it is warm and light. Behind the desk sits a very stern, very small boy with a name that has often been cause for quarrel—Kulak (the Fist). Volodya Kulak is commander of this boat. And the boat is the Pioneer headquarters of School No. 55 of the Primorsky District. Pioneers hasten here to make their reports. This is where all matters of importance are decided.

"A serviceman's family found, with children, and a grand-mother. And no firewood," is the succinct report of "a man on duty." And, after a brief conference, Volodya issues the necessary instructions.

Two or three days later, the same "man" reports that the family has been provided with firewood and that a Pioneer-girl of a neighbouring school is helping to take care of the children.

It's rather like a game, isn't it? But that makes it all the more interesting. And at twelve, how much more thrilling it is to "storm" the wood-yard than just walk in and collect the order for firewood. But does that apply only to the age of twelve? When Masha Nuzhnova, the senior leader at school, talks about the achievements of her Pioneers, her eyes flash and she begins to stammer with excitement. And Masha is not twelve but twenty-three. That's the wonderful thing about Masha. She had lived through so much, more perhaps than many people in a lifetime, yet she is full of youthful ardour and love for the romantic, bubbling with good spirits and indefatigable energy. And how well she understands children! There is something romantic about everything that Masha's team undertakes. This romanticism is necessary when working with children. Judge for yourself: is it not more interesting to carry on this work on a cutter, with military rules and formalities, reports and everything; especially of an evening when the boat is silhouetted sharply against the snow and looks as though it might cast off at any moment on a fighting assignment. Aboard ship, it is strictly forbidden to litter the place or go about looking untidy, or be discourteous to a comrade. Assignments have to be carried out with exemplary precision and within the specified time. For, you see, the honour of the soldier or the sailor on a warship is at stake.

Of course, Masha took all this into account when she and the children went to ask permission to use the disabled cutter, and together they promised to repair it in time for the next navigation season. Bravely, too, she had withstood the attacks of the mothers who fretted at the idea.

"Just think of it!" they had exclaimed. "A real cutter! Suppose something should happen!"

But nothing did happen. And probably won't. As for the boat, it serves its purpose as a clever and tactful means of teaching. And today the mothers say to Masha:

"Do you know, my son has become so disciplined! Just like a real sailor!"

The group leader must be resourceful and display creative ability in everything. This is not always easy. It is achieved by persistent and careful planning. There are difficult days too. Sometimes, when an interesting under-

taking has just been concluded and something new has to be conceived, the children look bored and the Pioneer Room is not as noisy or crowded as usual. At times like that Masha and the members of the Staff go about looking thoughtful and confer with each other in low voices.

Then, suddenly, a notice appears on the bulletin board with the intriguing words:

"Do you know what a 'Picaral' is? What? You don't know?"

This strange word soon has the whole school guessing. The next day a coded message appears on the board. This too sets the children agog with curiosity. But all to no avail. Nobody knows what it's all about. At last a notice appears naming the day and hour when the "Picaral" mystery will be disclosed in the Pioneer Room. The solution to the riddle turns out to be very simple. It stands for "Pioneer Camp Rally." And the children get to work with a will preparing for it.

Now, all sorts of rallies have been held before. For instance, one of them was arranged for the smaller children dedicated to Krylov. The youngsters, under the guidance of their teachers, learned some of his fables by heart and much fun was derived from making paper costumes. Krylov's beloved heroes sang and danced around the campfire on that occasion.

Then there was the rally devoted to army leaders. That event created a sensation in Leningrad. The preparations for it took several months, but how full of thrills those months had been!

Each detachment chose an army leader from among Alexander Nevsky, Kutuzov, Suvorov, Dmitri Donskoy. The programme included making a study of the period and the biography of the army leader, compiling an album, arranging an exhibition and making costumes. The Public Library placed a separate room at the disposal of the children, not because they were noisy but because they were so many. Assiduously, they sat over books, making notes and drawings; some wrote poems, articles and short speeches. And the school was a beehive of activity, what with all the pasting, cutting, and sketching.

It was worth it, too. For when the detachments of Russian stalwarts, their weapons rattling, marched to the strains of martial music into the spacious hall, all lit up by the campfire, it was a thrilling sight. Later they marched out and down the street, with people watching admiringly from pavements and windows. How proud and happy they felt! Were they not the worthy descendants of the great Russian warriors? Not only did their helmets, armour, plumes and formidable sabres resemble those worn and borne by the heroes who fought for Russia in the past; but in everything, their even gait, clear look, military bearing, courage, honour, daring, the boys tried to emulate the men whose lives they were now studying with such love and admiration.

Their leader, Masha, understood full well the benefits that the children derived from her efforts. The preparations for the rally had not been easy—it had involved sitting up at nights over history books. It must be confessed, she herself did not know history as well and as thoroughly as the occasion demanded. She consulted history teachers and read dozens of books. Her perseverance and diligence set an example for the Pioneers.

In general, Masha enjoyed the love and respect of her children. She is serious, reserved, energetic, possesses great willpower and is most self-exacting. She is a member of the Young Communist League of Leningrad, and she lived through the blockade.

Masha speaks about her experiences simply, without emphasis or emotionalism. Here is the story of the conquest of the will. Swollen, weak, she had worked with other members of the Young Communist League on the construction of an aerodrome. Later, her job at the Ration-Card Bureau had placed on her the responsibility of safeguarding the precious slips through bombings and shellings. What if she were killed and those thousands of cards destroyed? She had worked as a nurse in a hospital, in one of the worst wards, where patients with head wounds lay. She had learned to choke down her tears when, her heart bursting with pity, she fed a patient through a tube injected into what was once a human face. Then she herself had fallen ill. And that meant that

she would die. With an incredible effort, she had forced herself to get up on feet black with gangrene, and gritting her teeth with pain, walked across the room. She drank bitter conifer infusion, did everything to remain alive. And that was far more difficult than to die.

Those grim months had not hardened her heart. On the contrary, she had shared water, bread, warmth. To those who dropped, she had bent over and lent a helping hand. The path traversed by the Young Communists of Leningrad had been her path. Courageous, honest and strong, she is an example to her young disciples, who admire her and gaze with pride at her medal. They try to be like her and come to her with their joys and sorrows, for they know that she is a sympathetic and true friend.

Masha loves children with the true, deep love that was born in those grim days. Like many other Young Communists of the besieged city, she had been asked to search for orphaned children. She found them in empty, ice-covered rooms, frozen stiff, stupefied, often pressed close to the dead bodies of their mothers. And herself very weak, she had picked them up and carried them away.

She took care of them at a children's home, warmed them, washed them, fed them. Later, she took them across Lake Ladoga. The machines were bombed while crossing the ice. She and the children—there were hundreds of them—had shared that experience. Together they had crossed the road leading from death to life, from cold and hunger to safety on the other side of the Lake. They learned to discern from afar the signal "Children Coming," a signal known to all on Lake Ladoga. Its appearance brought soldiers running from all sides, bringing bread, sweets, apples. They folded the little ones in their big strong arms and carried them from the trucks, slipping them the precious food on the way.

Masha returned to Leningrad to search for more youngsters in cold, dark, cave-like rooms. How can she help loving those children now? And today, when she sees them well-fed, strong, healthy, noisy, she is filled with a great joy. She loves her work, loves her children, and is helping them to grow up good, honest people, worthy of the glorious name of the people of Leningrad. She gives them all the strength, knowledge and energy she possesses.

We wish her success in this valiant and noble undertaking.

HELEN USPENSKAYA

THE MEETING

Today Vitya's father was coming to visit him. It was three years since they had seen each other, but now Lyubov Artemyevna, the director of the children's home, had told him that he was to expect his Daddy. To tell the truth, Vitya had rather forgotten just what he looked like—the boy had been less than three years old, when his father had left for the front. He could only remember somebody very tall, with strong warm hands which would toss Vitya up to the ceiling—high, high up in the air, but at the same time so very carefully. His mother he could remember much more clearly, but it was better to try and forget how the German officer in the green greatcoat had shot her with his revolver, how she had fallen, and a trickle of blood had run out from beneath the heavy dark braids of hair. Then neighbours had taken Vitya, and had told him that he had no Mummie any more.

And now he was to see Daddy—Daddy was comming today. Vitya kept repeating to himself all the songs and recitations he had learned in the children's home; he pulled out the picture book which he could read already; and every moment he would run impatiently to the window or even to the big entrance door, although this was strictly forbidden in the home. But Daddy didn't come and didn't come.

It was evening when he at last arrived; the early winter dusk was falling, lamps were lighted in the rooms and the windows were open in the dormitories to air them before the children went to bed.

A swarthy man, not very tall, in mi-

litary uniform, his hair already greying, came up to Vitya as he stood by the dining-room window.

"Do you recognize your son?" asked Lyubov Artemyevna, as she led him up to the boy.

"Vitya," said the father, "how are you, dear lad!"

Then they sat together in the empty dining-room, father and son. Everything was quiet in the house; the children had gone to their dormitories and were already in bed.

A dog was barking somewhere in the garden, and an old voice was calling it softly but insistently:

"Bobik, come here, Bobik!"

"But he doesn't come all the same," said Vitya.

"Who doesn't?" asked the father.

"Bobik. He's the watchdog. He's only got three legs, one was cut off by a tram. He's a very fierce dog, once he nearly bit me."

"Don't go too close to him," said Daddy. "One fine day he may really bite you."

"Why 'a fine day'?"

"Well, that means sometime, when you're not expecting it."

"Oh, I see. When I don't expect it. Daddy, do you remember, we used to have a dog. But he didn't bite, did he?"

"No, that's right, he didn't."

"I've forgotten what we called him, I think it was Pirate."

"I don't remember, dear, maybe it was."

The boy's face clouded, his bright eyes held a shadow. He remembered how Mummie had loved Pirate. She had told him that she found the dog in the forest, when he was quite a tiny puppy... The father was silent, and the arm round the boy's shoulder trembled a little. The boy cuddled close to him, and although his father was longing to smoke, he restrained himself so as not to disturb the child. He could not tear his eyes from the child; he recalled the innocent childish features he had known, the direct gaze of bright eyes, the faint, warm smell from the hair.

"Daddy, when will you be going to the front?"

"Soon, Sonny," replied the father. "Very soon." But he did not say that he would be leaving early the next morning, before the boy was awake.

"Look what I've brought you," he continued, and opening his suitcase, began taking out the presents inside it. It was full of treasures—teddy bears, motor-cars, a railway with a tiny engine and two coaches, and bricks. Nine boys out of ten would have made a dash for those wonderful toys, but not so Vitya. Silently, sadly he looked at his father, and the latter felt his heart contract painfully as he met that gaze.

"No," and Vitya shook his head, "I don't want to play, Daddy. I don't want to."

"Why not, Sonny?"

Vitya was silent for a moment, then began to explain in a low voice. The Germans had taken away all his toys, all that he had, all, all, his old teddy bear, and his engine, and his clockwork toys and even his spade and pail...

The father held his boy's face to his own cheek.

"Don't think about it, little lad," he whispered softly. "Don't think about all that's past and gone. Now everything's going to be fine, you can take my word for it, my darling."

This stern man, with moustaches already going grey, who had lived through three years of fighting, was himself amazed that he could still find so many tender words of fatherly love.

"What do you want most of all just now, Sonny?" he asked.

"Me? I would like to go to Kursk, and see our home," said the child; his voice was already drowsy. "And do you remember how you used to carry me about, Daddy? How nice it was!"

"I remember," replied the father and lifted the child in his big, strong arms.

Vitya wound his arms tightly round his father's neck; his head sank onto the firm, comfortable shoulder and he closed his eyes. He felt safe, happy in these strong arms.

The father carried Vitya up to the dormitory, undressed him, laid him on the bed and tucked the warm blanket over him. The child slept, his long eyelashes casting a shadow on the cheek cuddled in his hand. The father stood there for a moment, his eyes bent on the child in a last, long gaze, then carefully, on tiptoe so as not to

awaken the sleeping children, he left the dormitory.

"Well, and how do you like your son?" Lyubov Artemyevna asked him, when he came into the office to take leave of her.

"Fine," he replied, smiling happily, yet with some confusion, like a man whose face had almost forgotten how to smile. "He's asleep now. I wanted to kiss him good-bye, but I was afraid of wakening him."

"It would take more than that to waken him," smiled Lyubov Artemyevna. "Easy to see you haven't had much to do with children."

He shook his head.

"You're wrong. I had children of my own—two of them. They were killed with their mother in Lvov."

"How big were they?"

"About the same age as Vitya, a boy and a girl. That's why when I wrote to you I asked you to find me a boy not more than six. Well," he continued, "when Vitya wakens in the morning, give him this letter from me, and the chocolate and oranges."

"Certainly I will," said the director. "Tell me," she added after a moment's pause, "do you think Vitya guessed anything?"

"No," he replied. "I was rather afraid at first, but evidently the boy's already had time to forget what his father looked like. Let it stay like that, will you? I would prefer it if he never did know the truth. When the war ends and I come back from the front, I'll take him away and we shall live together."

When he had gone, Lyubov Artemyevna went up to the dormitory and put the chocolate, oranges and the letter on Vitya's little bedside table. On the sheet of paper, in large printed letters, was written:

"My dear little son, I have gone back to the front. Keep on growing big and strong, dear, and wait for me. Soon I shall come back to you, and then we shall go to Kursk together and see our old home. Love and kisses from Daddy."

LUDMILA BERKHINA

STORY ABOUT AN ANT-HILL

Stretching along the bank of a shallow, pebbly river, seventy-five kilometres from the city of Biisk, Altai Region, Siberia, is a large, shady park, whose alluring paths lead to a large house with many windows. The Ant-Hill, as it is fondly called, contains eleven rooms, including bed-rooms, hall, kitchen, dining-room; in a word, everything that its ninety small inhabitants need.

Every ant-hill has its history, I suppose, but probably no other ant-hill in the world can boast of a more singular history than this one. When you hear it, I'm sure you will agree that this is so.

Thirteen children grew up in the family of the Urals peasant, Stepan Yershov. But the most restless of them all was Vassili, the eldest. When he completed his service in the army in the Far East, he did not return to his remote and poverty-

In the Ant-Hill Children's Home. After a war game

stricken little village, but set out to roam the world. Vassili Yershov was in Japan, in the Island of Ceylon and in the ports of the Mediterranean. He tried his luck on the wharves, in prospecting parties and in the goldfields of the Amur. He saw much and thought a lot in the course of his wanderings. But most frequently of all he pondered on the fate of the homeless children, who died by the hundreds on the streets. He shared everything he had with them. But he realized that it was not a piece of bread these children needed, but a home. The dream of creating such a home was with him all the time. His haphazard earnings were meagre. Vassili Yershov became a photographer and then a tailor. And he began to save his money.

In the spring of 1910, Yershov arrived in the Altai, rented a house in a large village from the rich proprietor, and moved in with eight homeless waifs...

One day when he was strolling with them through the forest, Yershov stopped before a large ant-hill.

"Look, children," he said, "how the ants work. Not one of them ever goes idle. And see the big house they have built for themselves. Let us also live in friendship and work. And let our family be called the 'Ant-Hill'."

And that is how this unusual ant-hill began its long and splendid life.

The neighbours regarded with curiosity this "queer fellow" who devoted himself so completely to his wards. The owner of the house charged him a high rent. So Yershov decided to build a house of his own. Unable to acquire a lot of land in the village, he was obliged to erect his house on the marshlands on the opposite bank of the river, drain the swamp and level the hills. Yershov worked from morning till night. Finally, in the summer of 1914, the "Ant-Hill" moved into their nice new home. Gradually, the house was surrounded by a park with a pond in the centre, an orchard and gardens.

However, there was plenty of trouble ahead for Yershov. Two years later he was called to the army. At that time he had twelve charges. He placed six of them with acquaintances and the rest he took with him to Biisk, where he was to serve. There he rented a room for them and paid for their care. Upon his demobilization a year later he collected all his children and the "Ant-Hill" once again seethed with activity.

Life was not easy in the years of postwar ruin and the Civil War. The children had nothing to wear. Yershov sowed flax in partnership with the peasants, prepared it and gave it to the women to spin and weave. This he dyed with various plant roots.

The "Ant-Hill" contained twenty-two children when Yershov came to Moscow and met Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin.

"I remember our conversation in every detail," says Yershov. "He greeted me very simply and cordially as though we were old acquaintances, and asked me many questions about the children, and how we live and make ends meet."

Shortly after his talk with Kalinin and Krupskaya the "Ant-Hill" was converted into a state children's home. Vassili Yershov was appointed its director, a post that he still holds today, at the age of 74.

Although he had had no pedagogical training whatever, and, as a matter of fact, had not even finished elementary school, yet Vassili Yershov was a born teacher.

His influence on children and their love for him know no bounds.

"I have but one desire," he says, "and that is to give the children a love for work, and arouse in them from their earliest years a deep feeling of comradeship."

Each child does his share towards the common welfare of the "Ant-Hill" and early learns gardening, sewing, photography and the care of domestic animals.

Vassili Yershov carefully cultivates in his little wards the qualities of thrift and honesty. There is not a single lock in the house. Each child has his own drawer in the large common table, and it never occurs to anyone to take anything of his neighbour's.

Everything belonging to the "Ant-Hill" is carefully valued by all.

Another large house was built in the autumn of 1941 when the war had already begun. The children's home now has twelve cows as well as sheep and calves. Thirty-five acres of land have been planted with grain crops and vegetables, and they get eighteen centners of fruit a year from their orchard.

Vassili Yershov is known and re-

spected throughout the Altai area. In December 1944 he was decorated with the Order of Lenin. The "Ant-Hill" will celebrate its thirty-fifth anniversary in June. Scores of children have already left the hospitable "Ant-Hill" and gone to all parts of the country. But love for the house they were brought up in and the man who was a father to them is still alive in their hearts. Letters from everywhere are received at the "Ant-Hill," letters filled with tender affection for "Grandpa-Ant," grey-haired but energetic and active as ever. These letters have taught the new "ants" who have found a home at the "Ant-Hill" to love and cherish the Old Man as they do.

E. SEROVA

PERFORMING SQUIRRELS

"Oh, I liked them better than anything I saw in the holidays," a little first-form girl was saying to her schoolmate. "Squirrels, real squirrels! D'you remember the one we once saw up in a pine-tree? But that was a wild squirrel, and these are quite tame. They walk on a tight-rope and run along barriers."

But a short while ago these same squirrels which captivated the little Moscovite and which performed three times daily during the spring holidays at the Moscow Circus, were running wild in their native haunts. They lived far, far away from Moscow, in the forests of the Altai mountains.

People always used to think that squirrels could not be trained. Thought they were too stupid and forgetful, However, Ivan Borgunov, acrobat and juggler, decided to prove otherwise.

Borgunov's childhood was passed in Siberia. His father, an inveterate hunter, would often take his son with him on his expeditions and the boy learned to observe the life of the denizens of the taiga and grew familiar with their habits. Sometimes he was lucky and found a squirrel's nest, an oval globe with two openings—an entrance and an exit. The young naturalist noted how cleverly squirrels stored up their provisions for the winter and how they remembered the exact place where they concealed their hoards.

Many years later, when already a circus artist, Ivan Borgunov revisited his remote Altai village. Here he called the schoolchildren together and said to them:

"Look here, youngsters, you're all splendid hunters. Help me catch some squirrels for my circus, will you?"

Two whole weeks those Altai schoolchildren spent in the taiga. First they tracked the squirrel in the early morning hours when it eats its nuts or sips the dew from the forest grasses. Their dog would drive the little creature up a tree. Then the boys would climb a larch growing close by, swing the branches and shout at the tops of their voices. The frightened squirrel wouldn't know which way to make its escape. Meanwhile Borgunov would nimbly climb up the tree and lower an angling rod terminating in a noose made of horsehair. The squirrel, seeing the noose dangling before its eyes would become motionless with terror and that moment would be seized by the hunter for catching the fragile furry little body in the noose.

Borgunov caught a number of squirrels and put his charges through a six month's training. It was of course a strenuous job, but the result was marvellous. The timid little creatures are now awed neither by the crowd of people filling the circus, nor the glare of the lights. They just go on with their "turns" paying no heed to anyone but their trainer.

Their regime is strictly regulated: daily rehearsals and drills. The bill of fare for each animal is fifty grams of milk, nuts and dried mushrooms; forty grams of carrots, two grams of fats and two and a half grams of sugar.

Borgunov is thinking of making another journey to the Altai. His young friends are eagerly looking forward to his arrival.

"Come to us with your squirrels for the summer holidays," they wrote. "We shall help you catch as many more as you need."

BOOKS AND WRITERS

ALEXEI TOLSTOY

"I grew up in a hamlet in the steppes about ninety versts from Samara," begins the writer's autobiography.

"Orchards, ponds, surrounded by willows and overgrown with reeds; the Chagra stream in the steppes; my comrades, the village children; riding-horses; steppes covered with feather-grass where only the mounds served to break the monotonous line of the horizon... The seasons came and went, each of them a tremendous new event. All this, and more especially the fact that I grew up alone, developed dreaminess in me.

"Until I entered the secondary school at thirteen I lived a contemplative, dreamy life. Of course this did not prevent me from spending days on end in the hayfields, at the harvest or the threshing and on the river with the village children or from paying visits to peasant acquaintances in winter when I listened to their tales, stories, songs, played at all kinds of card games or at knucklebones, faught toe to toe across a patch of soft snow, dressed up for the Christmas holidays, rode unbroken horses without saddle or bridle and so on."

After finishing the secondary school in Samara Alexei Tolstoy entered the St. Petersburg High Technical School but before long literature absorbed all his interests.

Tolstoy began his literary career after 1905, during the years of reaction when many workers in the arts and letters fell victim to degenerate and decadent tendencies. It was not easy in these years for the young writer to find his way. Hard work, a splendid gift of observation and an ability to assimilate what was going on around him brought Tolstoy into contact with that progressive literature which remained true to Russian traditions of realism. His bigger works, those which are typical of Tolstoy's writings at this time, are a collection of stories "Under the Lindens" and the novels "Queer People" and "The Lame Squire." The first stories and novels which Tolstoy wrote provide a striking picture of the disintegration of the landlord class, its social and moral ugliness. The strongest side of Tolstoy's talent immediately made itself apparent—magnificent and vivacious language, rising at times to the level of the powerful language of the Russian classics, and a gift of real lyricism which enabled him to describe the beauties and the glory of the Russian landscape. However, this subject, which limited the writer's outlook to a dying world, could not satisfy young Tolstoy. In this connection Tolstoy experienced a real crisis in his creative effort before the world war of 1914—1918. He was looking for a real, active life that was lit up by great clear-cut feelings.

The events of the war and the Revolution served to break the narrow circle which bounded Tolstoy's work. During the Civil War the writer witnessed happenings of great historical importance; this was an important stage in Tolstoy's artistic development. He saw before him new problems connected with the life of his homeland—Russia. Tolstoy had a clear idea of the role of the people in directing the state and in political struggle. From then on his native land, both as an historical and a contemporary subject, entered permanently into his work. Tolstoy produced some of the greatest Soviet literary works—the trilogy "The Road to Calvary," the novel "Peter the Great (Imperial Majesty)" and the dramatized novel "Ivan the Dread." The gigantic plan which underlies "Peter the Great" was never fulfilled although even when Tolstoy was afflicted with his illness he tried to complete the epic, his "life's work" and did not let the pen out of his hand up to the last days. It was the author's idea to end up with the culminating point in Peter's life, the Battle of Poltava. He said that the depiction of the triumph of Russian arms in the past would resound the more strongly in the light of the present great victories of his country.

The author's glance does not wander indifferently over the vast expanses of history but rests on the peaks from which it is easier to see the future.

"I am attracted by four periods which served as historical turning points," said Tolstoy in an autobiographical sketch, "the epochs of Ivan the Dread, Peter the Great, the Revolution of 1917 with the Civil War and lastly, the present epoch of the Great Patriotic War with its events of a significance without parallel in history."

"It is in such historical periods that the character of the people comes to the fore with particular clarity. A profound knowledge of the fundamental events in our history when the traits of the Russian were formed helps us to understand the secret of the greatness of the present generation."

The writer saw a world of great characters in Russian history, brilliant individuals, people who went confidently forward to fulfil their purpose. They defended their country against the Tatar invasion, they were the victors in the struggle against the German Cur-Knights, against the landsknechts of Charles XII and Friedrich II, they liberated their native land from Napoleon's army of "twelve tongues." The people who produced great military leaders also produced those bold spirits who could not reconcile themselves to serfdom, rebels such as Razin and Pugachov. They went to the Urals, Siberia and the Don steppes in search

of freedom, they conquered the tremendous expanses of their country.

The trilogy, "The Road to Calvary" ("Sisters," "1918," and "Frowning Morn") is written in the spirit of Russian classical literature.

He made a careful search for people who embodied the fundamental, healthy strength of the Russian nation. Tolstoy's characters are simple Russian people—Telegin, Roshchin, Katya and Dasha. They are contrasted to the decadent Kulichkovs, Bessonovs and other similar characters of this grouping who have lost touch with the people.

Tolstoy gives us a very complete picture of pre-war, pre-revolutionary Russia; he drew with great strength the picture of the hollowness of higher government circles and the intelligentsia connected with them and in the figures of Dasha and Telegin he built up types of free-thinking intellectuals, people who could not make their peace with untruths, who understood the greatness of the people and the greatness of contemporary life freed from hypocrisy and servility.

All Engineer Telegin's pre-war life had been one of toil. When he was called up for service in the army he proved to be a good, bold and clever officer. When the time came for him to make his choice Telegin did not stand aside from the struggle of the people. He became a Red Army commander who did his duty honourably and selflessly. "Telegin lived exactly as the others did, in mud and damp, without undressing for weeks at a time, without even taking off his boots."

The lives of the other characters—Roshchin, Dasha and Katya—were shaped somewhat differently. Telegin's experience of life made him capable of feeling for his country, brought him closer to the people; this only became apparent to the others after long waverings in search of the right road, in search of their country. This was their "road to Calvary." Roshchin and Dasha wondered about in a labyrinth before they were convinced that there could be no truth where they sought it, in the camp of those who were fighting against their own people. At the end of the trilogy all four—Telegin, Roshchin, Dasha and Katya—find their native land in the ranks of the people. There is a profound symbolic idea in the scene where they meet in Moscow at a time when the people are making their transition to peaceful constructive labour by entering upon a gigantic plan for the transformation of the country.

"The Road to Calvary" is an extensive and colourful panorama of the country in the flames of the Civil War.

Tolstoy has succeeded in bringing to us the very breath of those years that can never be repeated. The prosaic side is also recorded with great mastery—the life of the soldiers travelling packed in boxcars, the intricate search for the ideals of his heroes and the moral aspect of the enemy—an atmosphere of speculation, looting and cynicism. The action is swiftly transferred over great distances to all parts of Russia. The people in power are fighting for the life of the new workers' and peasants' state. The main forces of the counter-revolution are organized in the South—the mutiny of the reactionary General Kornilov—the formation of the white armies—the battle on the Volga. "1918" and "Frowning Morn" may be described as an artistic chronicle of the Civil War. The swiftly moving cavalcade of facts, events, people, the intricacy of the plots introduced to link up the whole story, are all determined by the nature of the epoch being depicted, a storm-period that was replete with upheavals. Many scenes and episodes are worthy of becoming examples of historical fiction. Tolstoy found new colours for events that had frequently been dealt with in literature and he enriched our understanding of them. Nobody else has depicted with such force the loss of the Black See Fleet, when Russian sailors sank their ships to save the Revolution and their country.

Alexei Tolstoy lived for many years with his characters. During this long period changes not only occurred in the lives of Telegin and Dasha, but also in the life of the artist who created them. Tolstoy himself, when speaking of his many years of work on the trilogy, did not regret the time he had spent on it; "during that time I myself, in my own life, in my attitude towards life, towards reality and towards our struggle became more mature, more profound."

Tolstoy describes the subject of "The Road to Calvary" as "the native land lost and regained." At the outbreak of the World War I and even during the war the conception of "native land" was not strongly felt by the intelligentsia. It is only during the past twenty-five years, especially during the years that immediately preceded the World War II that every man began to sense the unbreakable ties that bind him to his native soil. Many people arrived at this feeling of the possession of a country through profound suffering, through struggle. For a whole century there has probably never been such a deep-rooted and intense feeling of patriotism as there is now.

Closely linked up with the trilogy "The Road to Calvary" is the novel "Bread" in which the author describes the defence of Tsaritsyn, the present Stalingrad. In writing this book the author made extensive use of the documentary records of the Civil War. Interest in the events which Tolstoy describes in this novel has greatly increased since Stalingrad became the hero city of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against Hitlerism.

Tolstoy's "Peter the Great" is a chef-d'oeuvre of Soviet historical fiction. Tolstoy expressively describes the epoch of Peter the Great and the man himself, the great statesman whose firm hand removed everything that hindered the development of the Russian state and the strengthening of its national character.

It is a living, seething nature that Tolstoy describes: his Peter is filled with great ideas and is persistent in carrying them out. Tolstoy makes him an inimitable and very strongly marked individual who will live on in literature which abhors the indefinite.

Tolstoy has a special gift for painting picturesque, brilliant reliefs of the beauty,

poetry and drama of the past life of the people.

The most important historical events of the time pass before us in procession—the insurrection of 1682, the reign of Sophia, the Russian army's campaign in the Crimea under the command of Prince Vassili Golitsyn, Peter's travels abroad, the insurrection of the streltsi and the beginning of the war against Sweden.

Peasants, soldiers, the schismatists of the Church, boyars, courtiers and numerous others form the variegated and colourful crowd that his magic power has brought back to earth and painted with all the rich hues of the epoch. Tolstoy confidently draws a finished picture of the living breath, the flesh and blood of the period where historical documents end. In a letter to Tolstoy Romain Rolland wrote: "I admire the power, the inexhaustible abundance of creative effort which in you seem to be fitted together so simply. I particularly admire the strong and truthful art with which you mould your characters in the surroundings to which they belong. They are an inseparable part of the air, the earth and the light which surrounds and nourishes them and yet with one stroke of the brush you express the finest shades in the environment."

The novel "Peter the Great" can best be characterized as a poetic painting of the past. Tolstoy regarded the artist's interest in his work as being of great importance. He often spoke of this. Of all the possible ways of dealing with any subject he always selected that which was most attractive to him. Especially in the last chapters of the novel we feel that Tolstoy is immersed in the process of creating artistic images; as he says himself, "it has been an interesting task, that of creating, unusually interesting." This free strength of a generous talent is felt by the reader in the same way as he feels the writer's exacting demands: the wealth of characters and colours in the "stern and strict hands" of the master takes on all the plastic lines of sculptured work. It must be added that Tolstoy found excellent material for a novel in the epoch of Russian history which he selected. The historical novel cannot be written around colourless everyday affairs; great events are required, clear-cut characters, that stand out with maximum strength at the turning point in the life of the people.

Tolstoy's great service as an historical writer is not only in his profound treatment of the figure of Peter but in the way in which he gives clear expression to the great creative role of the people. The writer has produced a picture of the selfless toil of the whole Russian people and not a mystic picture of a Tsar in isolation. Like the smaller satellite of a great planet, Menshikov moves with Peter and puts the Tsar's ideas into effect. Russian people, down to the unnoticed, tormented peasant who is digging the foundations for the future St. Petersburg, are devoting their energies to the good of their country. The young master-navigators who learned their business in Amsterdam, the old skilled craftsmen from Voronezh and Archangel, together with craftsmen from Holland and England, built in the Svir shipyards vessels that were at that time new to Russia

The reader of Tolstoy's books will find interest in the history of the building of the navy under Peter the Great and in the war on the Baltic coast.

Peter's intellect as a statesman came to the fore with all its force when he set about to solve the most important tasks connected with the national development of Russia—the creation of an army and a navy in the course of a struggle for the ancient Russian maritime provinces.

The Swedes had at one time seized the Russian coast of the Baltic and had cut Russia off from the sea. Peter decided to complete the work that had been begun by Ivan the Dread. "No, it is not the Black Sea that worries me," he said to his wondering ministers. "We must have our ships on the Baltic." This was a task of great historic importance and the country undertook to accomplish it. The defeat at Narva did not break Peter's will. "The confusion is a good lesson," he said to Menshikov. "We do not seek fame. They will smash us ten times yet but in the end we shall conquer."

After the first battle of Narva King Charles XII became the hero of the European salons. States that were hostile to Russia wanted once and for all to throw the Russian troops back into the depths of "savage Muscovy where they could grovel in eternal ignorance." The people selflessly arose in the struggle for a worthy place amongst the great nations of the world. Victory was won on the Baltic. Kronstadt was founded, St. Petersburg built. The circle of state tasks proposed earlier by Ivan the Dread had been completed. Extensive prospects for development opened up before the country.

In Tolstoy's novel the seamy side of life in a period far removed from the present day is depicted with truthfulness. There are moments of the irreconcilable struggle between "Shakespearean" passions which inevitably gave rise to sharp social contradictions. Tolstoy, however, does not like pictures of horror. The talented poet, Nikolai Tikhonov was right when he said about Tolstoy:

"His is a kind talent. He did not torment people with horrible doubts, he did not lead them to the brink of psychological precipices, he did not preach despair. His was a jolly talent, full of faith in mankind. He marched through the most dismal pictures of the past with his head held high like a man who has confidence in the brighter future of his people. It is therefore not darkness and cold that comes to us from the epoch of Peter the Great but a foretaste of new times when there will be prosperity such as was never known before."

Tolstoy said: "Art carries out the tasks of the memory; from the stream of time it selects the brightest, most important and most exciting colours and records them, crystallized into a book. Art, however, goes farther. It endeavours to develop perspectives ahead of life and not only behind it, it seeks to delve into the future. This is especially true of our period. All our being is in the future...

From the worries of life to the peaks, from the disfiguring mask to Man the Hero."

History is not a stagnant picture in Tolstoy's novels: history moves and we get a clear picture of the prospects and the direction of the movement, a picture of the continuity of the development of the people. Not only the historian and the philosopher, but the average reader will obtain a lesson in history from Tolstoy's characters: the idea of the inevitable spirit of progress, the triumph of the new over the old, the triumph of productive effort over stagnation.

There is a magnificent opening to the sixth and last chapter of the novel: together with Peter we make the joyful, victorious trip to Narva on vessels captured from the Swedes. In the words spoken by Peter the Great to General Horn, commandant of the town of Narva—who out of reckless stubbornness was responsible for thousands of human lives—we hear a threat to every aggressor: "'You will get no honour from me,' said Peter softly. Idiot! You old wolf, you stubborn tiger!' He turned his eyes on Colonel Renn."

The last book of the novel "Peter the Great" is devoted mainly to the new things which the labour of the people gave to that stormy epoch. "You don't seem to know our people. This isn't 1700," said Peter to calm Menshikov who was tormented by his thoughts before the storm of Narva. "This is not 1700." After the important reforms which strengthened the national forces of the Russian state, this phrase no longer sounds like idle boasting. This is a real estimate of the strength of Russia.

In Alexei Tolstoy's work we see a permanent link between modern themes and the historical. In his search for the "roots" of historical progress Tolstoy takes us farther and farther into the depths of the past. In "The Road to Calvary" the author deals with contemporary history—the years of the revolution and the Civil War of 1918—1920. A desire to delve into the ideas and significance of revolutionary periods in Russian history brings Tolstoy to the subject of Peter the Great. The writer goes back two hundred years. The beginnings of the national Russian state go back even farther; they are splendidly and dramatically incorporated in the activities of Ivan the Dread.

The psychological colour of the personality of Ivan the Dread has always attracted artists: he was a man of strong passions and great impulses. The magnetic strength of his personality undoubtedly had a great influence on Tolstoy. In the course of eighteen months he wrote his dramatized novels about Ivan the Dread: "The Eagle and His Mate" and "Years of Trial."

Tolstoy owes much of the artistic strength of his works to the perfection and brilliance of his literary language.

At the very beginning of the war Alexei Tolstoy showed himself to be a passionate publicist. His sincere and ardent words resounded in the days of greatest trials. Millions of Soviet people remember such articles by Tolstoy as "Native Land," "What We Are Defending," "Russian Soldiers," "For Our Soviet Land."

Tolstoy was a man of great public spirit and during the war devoted his skill to the struggle against hitlerite tyranny.

We cannot help but express sorrow at the fact that Alexei Tolstoy passed away shortly before that happy moment in whose coming he was always so unwaveringly confident. His words written during the critical days of the battle at Moscow must stir every human heart. "My country," he wrote in the autumn of 1941, "a terrible trial has fallen to your lot but you will emerge victorious because you are strong, young and good, because you have goodness and beauty in your heart. You are filled with hope in a bright future, you are building up this future with your great hands, your best sons are dying for it. Immortal glory to those who die for their country! Immortal glory is being earned by the living."

VLADIMIR SHCHERBINA

LITERATURE IN THE SOVIET REPUBLICS OF CENTRAL ASIA

The peoples of Central Asia are the heirs of a great artistic treasure accumulated through the ages. The literary history of the Tadjiks originates from Firdousi and Sa'di, Hafiz, Rudagi and Omar-Khayyam. Uzbek literature has for its ancestor Alishir Nevayi, the remarkable 15th century poet, who wrote in ancient Uzbek, or Chagatai, and carried on this same classical tradition. And while among the Turkmenians regular verse dates back only to the 18th century, they have a folk literature which is much older and on which such famous trail-blazers as Makhtum-Kuli, Zeleli and Molla-Nepes were educated.

Even in the days of Central Asia's decline, the creative genius of its peoples did not droop. The people had their own favourite poets in whom the finest traditions of the great national culture lived on.

The heroic lays of Makhtum-Kuli, sung by minstrels in the Turkmen mountain villages, moved warriors to deeds of patriotic valour. The poems of Zeleli, a nephew of Makhtum-Kuli, won him wide renown among his countrymen somewhat later.

The early 19th century brought with it the writings of Mukimi, the great Uzbek classic. Two other fine Uzbek poets of this period were Yuldash Shair and Jassak Halmuhammedov.

The lays of these popular bards were very different from the fulsome odes penned by the court poets. They told of the martial valour of whole generations battling gallantly for the freedom of their native land.

Many poems denounced the cruelty and licentiousness of the feudal potentates and their henchmen, ever the object of the people's hate; satirical tales, ditties, anecdotes held up to mordant ridicule the satraps' ignorance and greed.

The feudal rulers of Khiva, Bohkara and Kokand, and later the Tsar's colonial officials, were unflagging in their persecution of progressive writing. True, they could not wholly silence the fearless voice of the poets; but under their rule of tyranny and oppression no genuine cultural progress, no real development of national literature was possible.

The Soviet revolution, sweeping away the feudal despots and the colonial règime in Central Asia, afforded unprecedented opportunities for the development of national culture. In the very first years under the Soviets, the villages of hill and plain rang with new songs and verses by unknown authors, extolling the liberated people and their leader, Lenin. These folklore pieces mirrored vividly the young Soviet republics' fight for their liberty; recounted in them were the deeds of heroism performed by the men of the Red Army in battle against the counter-revolutionaries, the forces of intervention, and the basmach raiders.

A part of major importance in the development of the new literature was played by the foremost representatives of the older generation of writers, who saw at once the true significance of the historic upheaval that had taken place.

One of them was the Uzbek writer Hamza-Hakim-Zade who took his stand without hesitation in the camp of the revolution and became a dauntless fighter for the Soviet order. He died in 1929, struck down by an assassin whom enemies of the people's government had instigated.

Hamza-Hakim-Zade was a poet, a musician, a playwright. From his pen came "The Landlord and the Labourer," "The Storm," and many other pieces which won popularity and which have gone down as classical works of Uzbek literature. To this day they are part of the repertory of the republic's dramatic theatres and opera-houses. The work of Hamza-Hakim-Zade, devoted as it was to the theme of social emancipation, stimulated new trends in the literature of the neighbouring republics as well. As to the Uzbek writers, they regard him as their teacher, ranking him with such literary giants as Nevayi, Mukimi and Turdi. His "Storm" was used as the ground work for the first Uzbek opera produced on the stage of the Tashkent Opera and Ballet theatre. The Drama theatre of the Uzbek Republic bears the name of Hamza-Hakim-Zade.

Another leading writer and pioneer of Soviet Central Asia's new literature is Sadreddin Ayny, celebrated as a scholar. A native of Bokhara, he fought from his early youth against the despotism of Bokhara's rulers, and suffered for it more than once. The revolution in Bokhara in 1918 freed him from the horrible "Zindan"—one of the underground dungeons in which the Emirs buried alive all who came under suspicion of "seditious sentiments" or even of liberalism. Ayny belonged to the "Young Bokhara" (the Diadids)—then the only opposition party in the Emir's domain. However, unlike most of his fellow-members, who were a bit too moderate, he was a genuine champion of democracy, and in temperament—a born fighter. Dedicating his encyclopaedic knowledge and literary ability to the people's service, he came to be one of the leading figures in the field of national culture. Ayny writes in Tajik; his literary and public activity, however, is closely associated with Bokhara, which forms part of Uzbekistan. Both Tajiks and Uzbeks, accordingly, regard him as belonging to themselves.

Ayny's very first book "Odina," or "The Adventures of a Poor Tajik" was written in the realistic novel style, then quite new in Central Asia. In Uzbek, Tajik and Turkmenian literature up to that time verse had been predominant. But fine as was the poetic tradition handed down from the great Eastern classics, it could not compensate for the absence of prose. Predominance of poetry marks the earlier stages of cultural development; prose writing, and particularly the realistic novel, usually makes its appearance after considerable social and cultural progress in the nation's history. In nearly all the Eastern countries—Turkey, for example, and India and Iran—new literary trends took shape about the turn of the last century, in close connection with the general development of public life and of the movement for national liberation which characterized the period. This was the period in which prose carrying the ideas of democracy and national liberation had its origin.

Ayny abandoned the old Eastern tradition of aestheticism in literature; he avoided the inevitable decorative ornament, the florid description that marked the canonical Oriental poetry of "the rose and the nightingale." His hero was a plain village lad with a tragic life-story, full of trouble and tribulation. The action was not set in sumptuous apartments and lovely gardens, but in the squalid huts of a remote Tajik hamlet, the workers' barracks on a railway construction job, a poor man's cheap tearoom in Samarkand or the casemate of the Bokhara prison-house. Ayny's first novel gave utterance to the sentiments prevailing in Central Asia's intellectual world just before the revolution. The writer felt painfully the injustice of the old social system, but he did not see, as yet, the road that should lead to the future. Everything in his novel looked hopelessly black. Losing the battle with life, Odina perished.

Later phases of Ayny's work revealed much that was different—for now the writer was witnessing and joining in the people's new life. In his next novel, "Dokhunda," we do not find the former sentimentality and passivity. Here, too, the hero sets out from a poverty-stricken Tajik village on a quest for a new, free and just life—but his fate is unlike Odina's for he joins the camp of the people embattled. With other revolutionaries, he is confined at first in the ghastly

mediaeval dungeons of Bokhara; the victory of the revolution, throwing off the tyranny of the Emir, saves his life. He enters the Red Army to fight against the reactionary basmach gangs active until 1922 in the remoter parts of Central Asia. When the country settled to peace, the young Tajik becomes an active builder in the titanic work of construction undertaken in Soviet Tajikistan.

Twenty years pass, and Dokhunda—as Tajik rustics were once contemptuously dubbed in Bokhara—comes with his wife to revisit the scenes of their youth. Everything has changed: the country, the landscape, they themselves. Search as they may, they cannot find the hidden mountain gorge where their hamlet was huddled.

"With every step, their bewilderment increased... The streams that had once trickled fitfully down the mountain-side were now joined in one big channel. With the aid of a dam and special devices, the water was distributed evenly over the fields. In the whole of the gorge, not a patch of uncultivated land was left. Most amazing of all were the fields of cotton, which in the old days no one had dreamed of having in these parts.

"'Now you see that I was not mistaken, Gulnor,' Dokhunda said. 'This is indeed our Dara-i-Nihan. Was there in those days a single place so well tended in the whole of Tajikistan? Evidently, much has changed in our republic in the intervening years, and you and I will have the pleasure of seeing much that is new." Now Gulnor, too, gazing with admiration about her, no longer doubted that it was Dara-i-Nihan which she saw.

"With hands joined, they strode vigorously ahead, to see this happy valley, regenerated, yet so familiar."

In spite of his age, Sadreddin Ayny is still making manifold contributions to Tajikistan's cultural life. He has written further works of fiction, has made a number of interesting historical studies and researches into the history of literature and he has lent a willing hand to literary beginners.

Besides these celebrities of the older generation new promising young poets, authors, critics and journalists have come to the fore. The main source from which literature drew fresh forces was the new educational establishments—the philology departments of the University of Central Asia and of the teachers' institutes of the Uzbek, Turkmen and Tajik republics. Many of the young people who studied the humanitarian sciences here came from the remotest villages and hamlets. And from their midst emerged many a well-known writer, poet, critic or literary historian.

Equally valuable was the contribution made by the national language press of the Central-Asian republics. Throughout the countryside the newspapers of Central Asia have regular correspondents among the schoolteachers, the leaders of the collective farms and even among the ordinary workers and peasants. Some of these correspondents have shown real literary ability and subsequently became professional men of letters.

But it was not only the young that joined the literary ranks. I recall an interesting encounter I had, which gave a vivid idea of the peculiar ways in which the new national literatures were developing. In the summer of 1931, at the offices of the Stalinabad "Tajikistan-Ye-Surkh"—the republic's principal paper—I ran across a middle-aged Tajik, quite indistinguishable from the usual crowd of peasants. One might have thought he had come for advice or to lodge a complaint of some kind. It turned out, however, that this was a contributor of long standing—a country correspondent and poet whose verses had been printed in several issues of the paper. In the traditional forms of Eastern poetry, his verses told of the new life in his native village, of the first tractor in the cotton-fields, of his first sight of the railway. The man's name was Rabei. It was at the school for the elimination of adult illiteracy that he had learned to read and write. He read everything he could lay his hands on—the poems of Rudagi and Hafiz, school primers, pamphlets on cotton-breeding and on tractor repair, newspapers and textbooks. Just a few years before he had been an illiterate peasant; now he was an active fighter for the liberation of the labouring peasantry. The rich men of the village promptly got their knife into this "muckrake"—he was hounded and threatened. Outraged and indignant at this persecution, Rabei sat down and wrote. The first thing he sent in was an account of his fight against the village diehards. He took it to the editorial office at Stalinabad, and ever since, items have been appearing in the paper under his name. About the same time, Rabei started writing poetry. His literary efforts attracted attention, and before very long he became well-known in Tajikistan. Some of his poems have been translated into Russian and included in a "Tajik Collection" published in Moscow.

The Soviet literature of the Central-Asian republics have had to contend with a number of reactionary trends.

One of these was the doctrine of a "totally different," "totally separate" Eastern feudal culture—a doctrine that, in effect, attempted to turn the culture of the Central-Asian peoples back to the Middle Ages and prevent communion with the modern democratic thought and culture of Soviet Russia and Western Europe.

Another trend, ostensibly the diametrical opposite of this one, operated with "ultra-left" phraseology, repudiating all that past centuries had produced in the realm of ideas and art and reviling the great national poets as mystics and religious fanatics.

Both trends were equally prejudicial to the development of Soviet national culture; today neither has any foothold or supporters to speak of in any of the Central-Asian republics.

The general line of development in the literature of Central Asia, as in other fields of its artistic endeavour, is summed up in Stalin's well-known formula: "A culture national in form and socialist in content." The meaning of the formula is that the writer, the poet, the artist essays to combine

the finest national classical traditions, the treasure wrought by the people's artistic genius, with the progressive ideas of our age, with the new outlook and social system of the Soviet land.

In the past five or ten years quite a few Central-Asian writers have been translated into Russian and other languages and won popularity outside their own republics. Among these rank the Uzbek poets Ghafur Ghulam, Hamid Alimjan, Aibek, Sheikh-Zade and Uigun, the Turkmen prose-writer and dramatist Berdy Kerbabayev, the Turkmen poets Aman-Kekilov Nasyrly, Monton Jan-Murakh, Sarykhanov and Seidov, and the Tajik writers and poets Hassem Lahuti, Azizi, Rabei and, of course, Sadreddin Ayny. The contemporary literature of the Central-Asian peoples is intensely national and truly steeped in Eastern colour. The familiar images, the traditional Oriental verse forms, the characteristic symbols and metaphors, the popular songs, ditties and anecdotes are never lacking in the stories and poems, lending them vivid colour and extraordinary fragrance and charm.

This peculiar Eastern colouring does not, however, degenerate into specious "exoticism."

Hamid Alimjan, the Uzbek poet, in one of his poems says:

A land of scorpions and of snakes
My country you dare not dub today.
Bashi-bazouks at every turn...
An Asia primitive, terrible, fierce?
It's all slander, monstrous prejudice,
You will find no such Asia here!
We laugh at all such exotic stuff,
My country has nothing in common with that!

There are still shortcomings to be noted in the work of some of Central Asia's writers, as is only natural at the present early stage of development of the national literatures. But considerable successes have been scored. Some of Central Asia's men of letters are real masters—as witness the brilliance of form of the poets Alimjan, Ghafur Ghulam and Aibek.

The literatures of Central Asia are shedding their former aloofness from the world. While drawing freely on the treasure-store of national poetry, they are developing in close communion with the famous men of Russian and other great literatures. Pushkin and Gogol, Tolstoy and Chekhov, Gorky and Mayakovsky, Shakespeare and Dickens, Balzac and Flaubert, Longfellow and Mark Twain are eagerly read today by the Uzbek, Tajik and Turkmen intellectuals, and share the popularity of the national classics—Sa'di, Hafiz, Nevayi, Babur, Mukimi, Makhtum-Kuli, Zeleli and the others. An Uzbek translation of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin" has been made by Aibek, while Hamid Alimjan has provided fine Uzbek renderings of Pushkin's "Prisoner of the Caucasus" and "Mermaid." "The Gypsies," "The Captain's Daughter" and many of Pushkin's lyrical poems have also been translated, just as the best-known works of Lermontov, Gogol, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Ostrovsky and Gorky, as well as the literary criticisms of Belinsky and Dobrolyubov. Among the West-European classics "Hamlet" and "Othello" have been translated, and also Molière's "Tartuffe," and several works by Balzac. Translations have appeared of the classics of other Soviet nationalities: Taras Shevchenko, the great Ukrainian poet, Shota Rust'hveli's famous Georgian epic "The Knight in the Tiger's Skin," and others.

As to the modern Soviet writers, nearly all of them are well-known to the reading public of the Central-Asian republics. Many read them in the original. In addition, much of Alexei Tolstoy, Mikhail Sholokhov, Nikolai Ostrovsky, Alexander Fadeyev and Alexander Serafimovich has been translated into the Central-Asian languages. Maxim Gorky's popularity in Central Asia is enormous. Many a budding Central-Asian writer, poet and critic applied personally to Gorky. For the whole of the present generation in literature Gorky has been a well-loved teacher, and writers in many national minority languages have dedicated to him poems and recollections of personal encounters.

Since the outbreak of war, the writers of Uzbekistan, Turkmenia and Tajikistan have been making a fine contribution to the country's war effort. Their wartime writings ring with patriotism, devotion to the progressive ideas of democracy and national independence, and implacable hatred for nazism. Poems, short stories, plays, all tell of the wartime exploits of Soviet men and women at the front and in the rear. Berdy Kerbabayev, the Turkmenian dramatist, has written a play about Kurban-Durdy, the famous Turkmenian Red Army man, one of the first to be honoured in wartime with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Abdullah Kakhar has written a biography of Kuchkar Turdyev, the Uzbek hero in which he traces Turdyev's inner growth, the forming of his personality and the origins of his future magnificent deeds of valour.

Aibek, the celebrated Uzbek poet and prose-writer, has described in "A Heroic People" the construction of the famous Tashkent canal which was built in wartime by the population of Tashkent and the country round about.

An interesting play—"The Eagle's Flight"—was written in 1942 by Izzat Sultanov, another Uzbek author. The action takes place in 1920, and one of the chief personages is Mikhail Frunze, the celebrated Red Army leader of those days. The playwright recalls to the spectator's memory the ideas which actuated the fathers and elder brothers of the fighting men of today. Here is a characteristic scene: Frunze gives a responsible post to an Uzbek named Umar Jurayev. Umar has no confidence in himself and will not accept the responsibility at first. "I'm just an ignorant Uzbek," he says. The famed general reminds him of the old Uzbek tale: "Young eaglets fear at first to leave the nest and fly. So the eagle will take a little eaglet in his talons, rise with it to the topmost summit, and push the eaglet down. Flying up to his offspring now from the right, now from the left, he teaches it to fly.

The great Russian people is such an eagle. It has many eaglets, all the oppressed peoples of old tsarist Russia... So be bold and dare!"

The national pride and heroic traditions in the work of Central Asia's artists have nothing in common with chauvinism. The Soviet poet prizes the independence and culture of all freedom-loving peoples. It is with the deepest sorrow and anger that Sheikh-Zade of Uzbekistan writes of the sufferings of Europe's nations under the German barbarians' yoke:

In halls where the art of the ages was stored,
There remain only ashes and screeching owls.
Europe! Charred woods and ravaged fields
And earth dug up by the fury of tanks,
A wave of deadly poison around,
And peoples that died in these horrible fumes.
The market-place pitted, the houses mere shells,
Dungeons vaulted with numberless skulls.
The maid her lover will ne'er see again,
The child for its mother is waiting in vain.

"The strength of Soviet patriotism," says Joseph Stalin, "lies in the fact that it is based not on racial or nationalistic prejudices, but on the people's profound devotion and loyalty to their Soviet homeland, on the fraternal partnership of the working people of all the nationalities in our land. Soviet patriotisim blends harmoniously the national traditions of the peoples and the common, vital interests of all the working people of the Soviet Union. Far from dividing them, Soviet patriotism welds all the nations and peoples of our country into a single fraternal family."

These words are the key to an understanding of the spirit of Central Asia's Soviet literature. The literatures of these republics are strong in the fine traditions of their ancient culture and also in their youth, which holds out to them the promise of rising to glorious heights in the united family of Soviet nationalities and in intercourse with the other freedom-loving nations of the world.

EUGENE STEINBERG

NEW BOOKS

In his Order of the Day issued on Red Army Day, February 23rd, 1942, during one of the most difficult and tense periods of the war against German fascism, Marshal Stalin quoted the following words of the great Russian writer, Maxim Gorky: "If the enemy does not surrender, he will be destroyed." The Russian soldier has carried these words all the way from the Volga to the Oder, from Orel to Berlin.

Maxim Gorky's burning hatred of his fatherland's enemies can be measured only by his passionate love for his country and its people. We realize his great patriotism in the collected volume "Gorky on the Fatherland," issued recently by the State Literary Publishing House. The collection comprises extracts and quotations from the writer's bigger works, as well as from his essays, letters and articles. The work of composing a collected volume of this kind is by no means easy and not always justified. But in this case we have a volume of undoubted value.

Gorky fought hard and bitterly against everything that stood in the way of human happiness, that hampered the development of harmonious human individuality. "Man is born for a better life," was his favourite motto. He firmly believed that in his country, where a new life was arising, man would become the creator of his own happiness. Although a genuine people's author, Gorky at the same time preserved and carried on the best traditions of classic Russian literature. His descriptions of the life of his people are so vivid and colourful because he was, in his own words, "a man who came from the people and who will never lose contact with them." Gorky greatly esteemed his country's past. As early as 1912 he wrote: "Let everybody live and toil in freedom on the land fertilized with the ashes of his ancestors and adorned by their great labour and then we shall all feel ourselves in our own Russia like children at their mother's breast."

Whether he writes of the boundless expanses of the Russian steppes, of "the broad-breasted Volga," of the people's art and creative efforts, of the remarkable representatives of the Russian people (the book contains extracts from Gorky's reminiscences of Lenin, Tolstoy, Chekhov and others), or about the everyday life of the Soviet Union—in every line of his writings one feels his warm affection for his native land. He wrote with profound respect of the men of labour and their "fabulous courage." He rejoiced in the fact that "the working class has shown itself... an excellent manager, a heroic builder of the state."

As early as 1906, Gorky wrote to Anatole France: "I know the Russian people, and am not apt to exaggerate its merits, but it is my belief that this people can bring to the spiritual life of mankind something deep and original, something important for us all."

Averse to all kinds of philosophizing about "the mystical Slavic soul," Gorky clearly perceived the originality and strength of his compatriots and contemporaries. He was never tired of glorifying Russian "path-finders, discovering new lands." He emphasized that "we are living among a people gifted by nature" and considered his people "exceptionally, fantastically talented and original."

Gorky hated and despised fascism. He, that great lover of mankind, wrote: "A fascist... cannot be called a wild beast, it is something immeasurably worse—a mad beast, that must be destroyed." Fighting for honour and independence, the Soviet people is defending also the great heritage of its writer-patriot. This new volume reminds us once more of Gorky's place in the life of his country and his people.

The State Literary Publishing House has issued a historical romance by the Georgian writer, Constantine Gamsakhourdiya. It is entitled: "The Hand of the Great Master" and takes us back to the Georgia of the 10th century.

In the town of Mtskhet, the ancient capital of Georgia, situated a few miles from gay

and noisy Tbilisi, stands the wonderful temple of Svetskhoveli, erected nearly a thousand years ago.

On the northern wall of the temple an unknown master sculptor has wrought a human hand holding a bevel. The sculpture bears the following inscription: "Hand of the slave Arsakidze. For absolution." Two human figures are beside the inscription: a youth in old Georgian costume and an old man in Persian attire.

The story of the creation of the temple served the author as a plot for his novel.

During the reign of George I Bagration, the king's chief architect was Farsman the Persian, a crafty and selfish old man, who built temples, castles and fortresses. The king had a special liking for the latter, for those were troubled times in Georgia. In spite of the recently concluded peace with Georgia, the Byzantian Caesar, Basil II Bulgaroktonos still cherished his aggressive designs. The Emir of Tbilisi was subdued, but not conquered. The powerful princes, "eristavs," were dissatisfied with the king's policy and were hatching secret conspiracies.

The most rebellious among them was the eristav of Kvetara, Talagva Kolonkelidze, who more than once instigated mountain tribes against George I, besieged the king's fortresses and looted Christian temples. George I always forgave the mutinous eristav; not because he was able to forget the evil done to him, but for the sake of Kolonkelidze's daughter, Shorena, the fairest girl in Georgia.

George I was married to the Armenian princess Mariam, a bigoted woman whose views and habits were quite foreign to the king. He did not love his wife and was casting amorous glances upon Shorena who had been spoken of as his bride in the days of their childhood.

But later, when the eristavs had decided in favour of Mariam, Shorena became affianced to the brave Chiaber, the son of another powerful prince, Mamamze, who was Kolonkelidze's secret ally.

The mutiny was swelling, the unity of the state and the king's own life were imperilled. So the king decided to act.

Chiaber was poisoned, Kolonkelidze rendered sightless and his soldiers slaughtered. Shorena became George I prisoner. Among the king's new slaves was a modest young man named Constantine Arsakidze, belonging to the tribe of Lazi.

Having by chance found out the young slave's abilities at drawing architectural plans and building temples, George I made him pupil to Farsman the Persian. But Arsakidze was already thinking out a work on his own and in this he was helped by mere chance. The Catholikos Melchizedek was dissatisfied with all three designs of the future temple in Mtskhet submitted by Farsman. George I also expressed his dislike of the drawings made by the Greek masters who had been invited by the Catholikos from Byzantium.

The simple yet imposing plan of the temple of Svetskhovely, designed to stand for centuries, was made by Farsman's pupil, the obscure youth, Constantine Arsakidze, the king's slave. He alone was entrusted with the construction of the temple that had no equal in Georgia.

The young Arsakidze worked untiringly, neglecting food and sleep.

He overcame all trials and the snares prepared for him by his teacher, the envious and malicious Farsman. He emerged triumphant through the terrible calamity—the earthquake that destroyed hundreds of houses in Mtskhet but recoiled from the solid walls of the half-built temple.

Plague smote the builders of the edifice. Scorning death, Arsakidze entered the dwellings of the sick to hearten them and to urge those remaining to continue the work. Dangerously ill himself, he fought the sickness for the sake of his great task. Even his love for Shorena was thrust into the background. He decided that until he had completed his great work there must be no thought of love.

Arsakidze sacrificed everything to accomplish his dream which was eventually embodied in the desired form of harmonious perfection. The temple of Svetskhoveli was finished, but so, too, was the great architect's life.

How did this come about?

The numerous enemies and those envying Arsakidze were not idle. His former mistress Vardisakhar, who, rejected by him some time before, had become the wife of old Farsman, placed an article of Shorena's clothing beneath the pillow of the sick architect. This was later used as evidence of their supposed relations. The jealous George I ordered that Arsakidze's right hand should be severed and despatched Shorena to a convent.

So runs the legend intermingled with historical truth and revived by Gamsakhourdiya in his interesting novel.

A Montenegrin poet, Radule Stiensky, has for several years been living and working in the U.S.S.R. His poems often appear in our press and several collections of them have been issued by the Soviet Publishing Houses. The last of these, "The Cradle of the Yunaks" (Moscow, State Literary Publishing House, 1945) has just appeared in print. Besides the poems in which Stiensky has made wide use of the folklore of his native land, the volume contains two large poems describing the freedom-loving traditions, valour and heroism of the Montenegrin people, which has covered itself with glory in the struggle against the German enslavers.

More than ten Soviet poets and writers took part in the translations of the poems comprising the collection. The happiest translations, in our opinion, are those of Tarkovsky.

The days of the Great Patriotic War have witnessed an enormous increase in the interest taken by the Russian people in the military past of the Fatherland. This subject is treated in the recently issued collection of historical documents entitled "From the Fighting Past of the Russian Army." The documents published in the book include extracts from orders, dispatches, reports of commanding officers and even extracts from private letters of enemy officers. They cover almost two hundred years of the fighting activities of the Russian army.

The first chapter deals with the Northern

War of 1700—1721 between Sweden on one side, and the alliance of Russia, Poland, Saxony and Denmark on the other. For Russia, this war meant the struggle for the return of ancient Russian lands along the Baltic coast. Peter I laid the foundations of the new epoch in the history of the Russian army and was the creator of the victorious Russian navy.

Documents dealing with the Seven Years' War (1756—1763) are collected in the second chapter. In this war, Russia supported Austria against Prussia. As can be seen from the documents published here, many outstanding victories of the Russians over the army of Frederic II, who thought his troops invincible, including the taking of Berlin by the Russian troops, were the result of the vast moral and tactical superiority of the Russian army over the Prussians. "It is not enough to kill a Russian soldier—he must be felled to the ground," said Frederic II who had himself discovered the attacking power of the Russian army. Highly interesting are the letters of German officers who took part in the battle at Zorndorf and from their own experience learned that "nobody can withstand the Russian grenadier."

In the third chapter we read with sincere emotion Suvorov's dispatches containing accounts of his numerous campaigns and battles including the victory at Turtukay, the capture of Kinburn, the storming of Ismail and the unprecedented march through the Saint Gothard pass. These dispatches were written by the hand of the Field Marshal himself and their style, laconic and stern yet impetuous and full of poetical feeling, bears the impress of Suvorov's genius.

No less stirring are the pages devoted to the National War of 1812 when the Russian army led by another great general Michael Kutuzov put an end to Napoleon's conquests and annihilated his magnificent army. Kutuzov's inspiring words addressed to his troops are full of an unshakable faith in victory, in the patriotism of his people and in its high moral qualities. Came the memorable day of the final liberation of Russian soil from the invader. When the Russian troops crossed the frontier, Kutuzov addressed his valiant veterans with the following words: "Let us complete the rout of the enemy on his own fields. But we shall not follow the example of our enemies in their outrages and violence which are degrading to the soldier's name... Let us be magnanimous and distinguish between the enemy and the peaceful citizen... It is not vain glory for which we strive but liberation from distress and oppression of even those same peoples who took up arms against Russia."

The documents contained in the last chapter tell the story of the unsurpassed bravery of Russian soldiers and sailors in the eleven month's defence of Sevastopol (1854—1855). During the gloomy reign of Nicholas I, Russia was not prepared for war. However the memory of the exploits of the Sevastopol heroes who defended their fatherland with staunchness and fortitude will for ever remain in the hearts of the Russian people.

In addition to the orders of the celebrated organizers of the Sevastopol defence Admirals Kornilov and Nakhimov, the reader's attention is attracted by documents revealing the patriotic feats of Sevastopol women who fearlessly helped the soldiers on the bastions and with rare presence of mind rendered first aid to the wounded under fire.

The book devotes proper attention to the most conspicuous campaigns of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries. They had a decisive influence on the course of Russian history and in many respects determined both the fighting qualities of the Russian soldier and his moral outlook.

"Admiral Nakhimov" is the title of a small brochure by the military historian Major-General Serguei Naida. It deals with the life and work of the famous Russian captain.

The name of Pavel Stepanovich Nakhimov, the creator of the celebrated victory at Sinop and the leader of the heroic defence of Sevastopol in 1854—1855, is remembered by every Soviet man and woman. He is famed not only as a most talented and renowned naval commander, but also as one possessing a noble soul and high moral purity, who in his deeds and character embodied the characteristics of the Russian national spirit. In the beginning of 1944, the Soviet government established the Order and Medal of Nakhimov awarded to officers and men of the Red Navy for fighting services, distinguished seamanship and personal valour.

The author of the brochure describes Nakhimov's years of training and his service under the creator of the Black Sea Fleet, Admiral Michael Lazarev.

With a thorough knowledge of his subject, Serguei Naida outlines Nakhimov's activities as a great captain and educator of Russian seamen. In conformance with historical truth, Nakhimov is pictured as a man of advanced views, a sincere humanist possessing a strong personal charm. Nevertheless, this book as regards the vividness of narration and the delineation of the hero is inferior to the work on the same subject by Academician Tarle who succeeded in combining in his essay the precision of a scientific study with a truly artistic representation of the figure of the great admiral.

Colonel Fyodor Kuznetsov's small volume, "The Brussilov Thrust," describes a remarkable operation of the Russian army during the war of 1914—1918—the piercing of the Austro-German positions in 1916. This operation entered history under the name of its organizer and leader and became known as the "Brussilov Thrust." Its great importance has been recognized both by Russia's allies and by her enemies.

Commander-in-Chief of the Russian armies of the South-Western front, General Brussilov was one of the outstanding military leaders in Russian and world military history. His method of smashing a positional front which he applied for the first time in the history of warfare, was a valuable innovation in military science. He proposed to effect the break-through by means of several smashing blows. In organizing his offensive he planned the smashing of enemy positions not in one but in four places simultaneously. The "Brussilov Thrust" clearly brought to light the terrible menace that lurked in the war on two fronts for Germany. Austria never recovered from Brussilov's smashing blows.

There were many reasons why the old Russian army was unable to solve the problem of a strategical break-through and that of obtaining operational freedom under conditions of trench warfare. This problem of transforming a tactical success into an operative one has today been brilliantly solved by the Red Army plentifully equipped with modern arms and inspired by patriotism. But, nevertheless, many of the modern large-scale break-through operations spring directly from the thrust of 1916, planned and executed by the gifted Russian general whose activities worthily terminated in 1924 while holding a high post in the Red Army.

BOOKS IN ENGLISH

The struggle of a people against fascism—what nobler and more realistic subject could be chosen for a novel issued in 1944? That is why we could expect much from a book bearing such a promising title as "Guerillas" (Lord Dunsany, "Guerillas," 1944).

We regret to say that this book of Lord Edward Dunsany is disappointing. It can serve as a convincing proof that so palpitating a subject cannot be treated in the manner of an allegorical narration or as an exercise in archaic style. The disagreement between form and content would be too violent, it would ruin the artistic style of the book.

A few words about the contents of the book.

The scene is laid in a certain mysterious country, designated as "The Land." Judging from several of the personal names we have reason to suppose that it is either Yugoslavia or Greece. The Germans invade the country and its best sons go off into the mountains. The resistance is organized there by an old man, Hlaka, who often appears in shepherd's apparel. The chief hero of the story, a young man whose parents have been shot by the Germans as hostages, also escapes into the mountains and takes part in the engagements between guerillas and Germans. He falls in love with a charming girl who, as one might expect, proves to be the daughter of the partisan commander. During the course of events, the situation of the guerillas becomes increasingly hazardous and they are threatened with imminent encirclement. At the last moment, however, salvation arrives in the form of an English flyer, Dick Malone, who removes the whole detachment on his transport plane.

It is difficult to say anything definite about the characters of the novel, for both Germans and partisans appearing in it are not full-blooded men and women, but schematic images, conventional figures in whose real existence the reader finds no reason to believe. They all speak in an equally unnatural grand style; all of them are equally lifeless and artificial and their existence hardly probable.

The fact that the characters of the book are devoid of any individuality and tend to standardization, is an unmistakable sign of the author's creative failure. Even the episode with the traitor, introduced by the author to enliven the story, comes short of the author's ex-pectations. The love affair of the novel is just as lifeless and schematic.

The failure of "Guerillas" arose not only from the author's evident remoteness from the people's struggle which he aimed to describe, but also from Lord Dunsany's definite conception of his work in which he tried to relate the events of the present time in such a way that his readers should not be reminded of these days.

VISSARION SHEBALIN

As far back as 1926 that stern and exacting scholar of music, Andrei Rimsky-Korsakov, son of the famous composer, wrote in an article he dedicated to the young Moscow composers:

"If we follow the path of comparison and relative appreciation, then preference must be given to the youngest, Shebalin. He has an unmistakable talent for developing and expressing his thoughts on a symphonic plane, he has constructive fantasy, though it is not yet sufficiently mature, and he has a gift for free-flowing melody."

When his First Symphony, conducted by Constantine Saradjev, was heard in Moscow in 1926, the composer was still a student at the Academy of Music.

Shebalin arrived in Moscow in 1923 from Omsk where he was born on June 11th, 1902, spent his childhood, and received his early education. His father was a teacher. The boy was drawn to poetry and the verses he wrote as a youth attracted attention by their freshness of feeling and the vividness of their imagery. And while he toiled to master the subtle technique of verse, he continued the music lessons begun when he was a boy of ten, first at home, later in the Omsk Music School where studies in theory were combined with piano lessons. These helped the composer to formulate his first creative concepts. At the graduation examinations in autumn 1923 at the Omsk Musical Technical School Shebalin's works were performed in public. The compositions chosen were songs to words by Tyutchev, the Russian lyric poet, a mazurka and two preludes played by Shebalin himself.

That same year Shebalin was accepted as a student in the Moscow Academy of Music where he studied in Nikolai Miaskovsky's class in composition. His teacher has remained his best friend to this very day.

In 1928, when Shebalin graduated with laurels from the Moscow Academy of Music, he was the author of a symphony, a string quartette, a string trio, a piano suite and many ballads composed to words by Alexander Blok, Anna Akhmatova, Serguei Yessenin and the poems of Sapho.

Shebalin is not only a composer of musical works of widely-differing genres, from the monumental symphony to songs accompanying films; he is also a teacher in composition, training young composers. Outstanding among these is Tikhon Khrennikov. Shebalin has completed, edited and instrumented such masterpieces as Glinka's "Symphony-Overture on the Themes of Two Russian Folk Songs," and Mussorgsky's "Sorochintsy Fair."

For several years in succession Shebalin was chairman of the Moscow Union of Soviet Composers and has been the head of the Moscow Academy of Music since 1942. Neither his pedagogical, social nor literary activities proved a hindrance to his creative work as a composer.

In the course of twenty years he has composed four symphonies, a symphonic poem entitled "Lenin," three overtures, two suites, and a number of other orchestral pieces, a comic opera "The Suitor from the Embassy," a concerto for the violin and orchestra, a concertino for the French horn and orchestra, six string quartettes, a string trio, a sonata for violin and alto, two sonatas, three sonatinas, several small pieces for the piano, marches for wind instruments, a great number of ballads and songs, and the music for theatre productions and films.

The composer's characteristic traits—laconicism of expressiveness, collectedness of thought, and austere restraint—became evident at a very early stage, while his style was still in process of formation, and bore the traces of his youthful enthusiasms. One of the very earliest of these influences was Scriabin, whose influence is reflected in Shebalin's First Quartette. But the music of his mature period shows another trend in his development.

Though his contact with Miaskovsky is felt in the First Symphony, one becomes aware of more profound searchings for a style of his own. Such a style soon emerged, stabilized itself and became well-defined. The general colouring of this symphony is severe and concentrated, with culminating passages of intense feeling, like a warning of something ominous. The two allegro, or to be more exact, mobile opening and concluding movements, frame, as it were, the central movement, contemplatively serene and melodious.

Melodiousness is the word used to define to a great extent the quality of this composition and of Shebalin's music as a whole. It

is the heritage of the Russian folk melos, with its poetic richness, expressiveness and plastic nature.

At the same time Shebalin comparatively rarely resorts to the direct use of melodies from folk songs (with the exception of orchestral variations on the theme of the Russian song "Ah, thou, my field," taken from Balakirev's well-known collection of songs). He learned from the great Russian masters, in the first place from Glinka, Borodin and Taneyev, to probe the inner essence of folk music, and he was attracted by stylization. He learned from them to be bold in innovation, aiming not at experiments to be carried out in his study, but the unceasing search for what Mussorgsky called "new shores."

This led to the composition of the First Symphony, which is epic in principle, and to the Second, which was completed in 1929. This work had a lyrical quality, and to a certain extent, a contemplative mood and great dynamic intensity. Shebalin brought into play the entire arsenal of contemporary symphony music, and created an impression of concentrated tension, the atmosphere preceding a storm. The feeling of the imminent thunderstorm is also felt in the Third Symphony, written in 1934—1935, and seems a response to the scene of alarm and anxiety that spread through the world in those days and foreshadowed the terrible struggle to come. It is like a song about the stormy petrel, winging fearlessly to face the rising tumult. A lyrical contrast to the first movement is the adagio, calm and light and full of profound rêverie. This passes into a scherzo, sparkling with the motley hues of carnival gaiety in which the robust vitality of the people finds outlet. The symphony culminates with a monumental Passacaglia and a fugue, in which the epic mood of conscious power and the inward tension which gathers immense force in the finale, predominate.

The epic nature of this composer's gifts are particularly striking in his "Russian Overture" written during the first months of the war and embodying the imagery of the people's greatness and invincibility. Very clear is the link with the heroic symphonic music of Borodin, a link which is also felt in Miaskovsky's music.

Nevertheless the lyrical mood is predominant, in particular in chamber-instrumental ensembles and in the violin concerto completed just before the war.

The song-principle as the foundation of national music, with its profound thoughts and intimate narratives of the complex world of human feelings, is clearly perceptible in Shebalin's quartettes.

It appeared in its most definite form in the Third Quartette, written in 1939, and also in the Fourth Quartette, which was composed a year later. Both consist of four movements, in which the changes are built upon emotional contrasts, established in classical music.

It is interesting to remark that the slow movement of the Third Quartette was evolved from music written for a declamatory piece on Pushkin's poem "The Memorial" (suggested by Horace's "Exegi Monumentum") and included in one of the theatre-productions on the centenary of the poet's death in 1937. Also dedicated to the poet's centenary was the composer's cycle of twelve ballads; these have won wide popularity.

Shebalin's Fifth Quartette was completed during the war, in 1942, and was given the title of the "Slav Quartette." It is in five movements, on themes from Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Serbian and Czech folk songs. During the Slavs' struggle against their inveterate enemy, Germany, the composer desired to stress the inner kinship and unity of the musical cultures of the Slavs. In the Fifth Quartette he preserves the individual traits of the selected melodies and at the same time attains the integrity and harmony that is founded on the common characteristics of Slav song-music.

One of Shebalin's latest works, his Sixth Quartette, is one of his best. Once more he turns to Russian folk-song, and employs colouring typical of folk instruments. For example, in the scherzo one catches the flute-like timbre of the Russian reedpipe, embodied with virtuosity of the violins' flageolets.

The composer's manysided work has found appreciation abroad as well as in his own country. As we are aware, many of his instrumental works are performed and published in England and America. In 1941 the honorary degree of doctor of the Sciences of Art was conferred upon him. In 1942 he received the title of Merited Art Worker and the following year a Stalin First Prize for his Slav Quartette.

In 1944 the Soviet Government presented him with the Order of the Red Banner of Labour.

Recently Shebalin finished writing the music to "Hamlet" which the Moscow Art Theatre is to produce, and began work upon the score of his Fifth Symphony. On completing this, he intends to write an opera on the theme of "The Merry Wives of Windsor." [1]

Professor IGOR BOELZA

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[1] The complete list of works on Shebalin in English is as follows: "Handbook of Soviet Musicians" (Pilot Press, London, 1943).

An analysis of this composer's "Russian Overture" with musical examples, in my article "Shebalin's Overture," "Modern Music," vol. XX, No. 3, N.Y., March-April, 1943.

See also Shebalin's article on his teacher Miaskovsky, "Dean of Soviet Composers," "Modern Music," vol. XXI, No. I, November-December, 1943.

"THE RESURRECTION OF STALINGRAD"

(A New Documentary Film)

The new documentary film "The Resurrection of Stalingrad" is the product of close and patient observation over a period of nearly two years by a party of Soviet newsreelmen, who day after day and month after month recorded the various stages of rehabilitation in the hero city on the Volga.

Boris Agapov, the writer, Joseph Posselsky, the director, and three cameramen—Vladimir Dobronitsky, Vladimir Tsitron and Alexander Khovchin—came to Stalingrad in the early spring of 1943, when the last shots of the 160 days' battle in which a German army of 300.000 was annihilated, had only just died away. We see on the screen general views photographed from the air, and close-ups of the ghastly ruins and the appalling destruction. Hardly a single house intact; at best, charred or caved-in shells are left, with one or even two of the walls missing, without roofs or floors, ceilings or staircases, with yawning holes in place of windows. Streets and pavements are pitted with shell-holes and cluttered with rubble. There were half a million people in this city once. They had their schools and clinics, hospitals and theatres; their famous tractor plant and the giant "Red October" plant, smelting high-grade steel. Now on the site of the factories we see a primordial chaos of piled metal, twisted girders, smashed and mangled machines.

The newsreel party found shelter in the only building more or less fit to live in. It was a basement that a short time ago had housed the headquarters of the German Sixth Army. Into it led a down-sloping passage, so that lorries could drive in; lighting was provided by two torches made of shell-cases and perched on half of a shattered piano. Holes in the basement walls showed the city, the skeletons of its houses.

Each day yielded priceless, unique material to the cameramen; had they not filmed all, had their picture not been made, it would seem a miracle, would remain a riddle, how in such a short time life could be renewed among these ruins and ashes.

It was a miracle wrought by human hands, by the determination and enterprise of men and women who had shouldered this most arduous, but most glorious of tasks.

Moving slowly among the debris are the tentacles of the mine-detectors. The inhabitants of the city are eager to return, if only to the charred remains of their homes; but before they can come, the multitude of enemy mines, planted with fiendish cunning, must be located, and their sting drawn. 1,200,000 mines were extracted!

From far and near Stalingraders make for the place where their city stood. Slow oxen draw waggons over the country roads. People tramp on foot, their few remaining belongings in knapsacks or bundles on their backs. Kiddies run along by the grown-ups' side, delighting in the first rays of spring sunshine and in the new grass that shoots up, just the same, between the cobblestones. People huddle in mudhuts, in cellars, in gutted tramcars. They pitch camp in the open, Gypsy-fashion, on the cold, damp ground. Each tries to establish himself in his own "street," in the place where he lived before the war. And already they feel at home—though of their homes only the broken walls and brick chimneystacks remained. There's a family digging up a trunk full of stuff that they hid underground before evacuating. Out of it, plates and spoons appear. Neighbour families fix up to spend the night together, to cook their meals together; their primitive housework is done of an evening, in the morning they go out together to the common work of clearing what a short time ago was a broad avenue or smooth asphalted square.

The city still looks like a battlefield. But already architects have come from Moscow, and among the debris they are planning Stalingrad's tomorrow. Here there will be a fine new square; here arrow-straight thoroughfares; here magnificent new dwelling-houses and theatres, schools and hospitals. But first there is the urgent, vital problem of *bread*. Hands and fuel are wanted to bring up the flour. The cameramen shoot the first bakery; it is located in a basement, with the fire blazing in hastily built ovens and women kneading dough in an enamelled bath-tub that survived somehow among the wrecked houses.

The water-mains are smashed, and volunteer water-carriers drive around in little waggons with barrels of water from the wells.

There are the telegraph wires being strung up, and a loudspeaker fixed on a street post.

The film shows the first post-office in the town: a single desk on the pavement outside the smashed Central Post, with a notice saying: "Post Restante." The one and only postwoman threads her way among the ruins, satchel slung over her shoulder, deciphering the chalk or charcoal inscriptions that make up the street-signs and house-numbers.

Boys and girls dressed in rags climb the staircase of a shell-gutted house. A room with only two walls left and with no ceiling or even roof, is the class-room; in less than a month after the battle ended, classes are being held! The wind ruffles the notebook sheets, the teacher shivers, the children's fingers turn numb with cold. But the lesson proceeds in this extraordinary class-room, as it did in other days in the light, modern school-house.

A squarish hole in the wall, and over it the sign: "Box Office." The first picture house. We see also the first concert of the folk instruments orchestra, on a platform mounted among tumble-down walls. The conductor, attired in correct tail-coat, waves his baton, face alight with inspiration. Part of the audience sit on rows of benches, many stand, others again have installed themselves on the fire escape or cling to projecting pieces of ruin.

The managers of the Stalingrad tractor plant pace with anxious faces through the

huge factory grounds, cluttered with disorderly heaps of metal scrap. Veteran workers and foremen stream back to the factory they love. But their numbers are far too few. Where to get labour is a problem. Volunteers come, but they are novices who have never seen the inside of a factory. Where to begin? What to tackle first? Where to get tools? The old hands can find their way splendidly even among the debris; they find the place where the toolstores used to be, and dig up tools from the mountains of rubbish. Side by side with the navies the engineers work, unsparing of themselves, to clear their factory of rubble. The first source of current is a tank Diesel. On April 20th, less than three months after the fighting ceased, the first machine starts. Tanks are repaired here—still in the open, for the time being, and on April 22nd, the first overhauled tank leaves the yard. Work begins on assembling a whole tank column.

The great Red Army offensive in 1943 called for a tremendous exertion of the country's effort. Nevertheless, the State Defence Committee, at Marshal Stalin's suggestion, resolved on the speedy rehabilitation of the industries and public utilities of the Stalingrad city and region. Responding to Marshal Stalin's call, young people streamed to the city from all parts of the Soviet Union. Fifteen thousand boys and girls arrived one sunny day in May. We see them striding through the city, with their accordions and guitars, singing "This is Stalingrad, our Fighting City." Of their free will they have left their homes and colleges, their families and the work they love, to lend a hand in rebuilding the city that bears Stalin's name.

They take up their quarters underground; a little while ago, the army of war was living there; now an army of restoration has come. Some girls fix up a grounded nazi plane as living quarters and soon curtains appear on the windows. The girls have brought with them to Stalingrad a smile and a touch of home. But their new work is unaccustomed and hard. 'They're working with brick-layers', plasterers', carpenters' tools, which most have never handled in their lives. One has just left secondary school; another was managing a shop, a third was a village farming expert, a fourth a schoolteacher. But perseverance, doggedness does the trick. Bricklaying proceeds at a rate nothing short of fantastic, and out of the mass of ruins, new factory buildings rise.

Now comes the problem of equipment for the factory, amid this graveyard of machinery, of mechanisms mangled by shells or deliberately blasted by the Germans. All this is only fit to be scrapped, to be shovelled into the furnaces and smelted down.

But that's something the Stalingraders refuse to accept. We see a tractor hauling an indescribable ruin lying on a piece of armour-plate. It is turned in for repairs to the "sanatorium" over which Engineer Anikeyev presides. Under this competent "surgeon's" hands, the ruin will once again become a piece of machinery and will go back into production. For twenty hours a day Anikeyev and his assistants work without stirring from the job. By the skill of the tractor plant's mechanics hundreds of machine-tools are resurrected.

At what used to be called Stalingrad Station, trains come in from everywhere, bringing gifts for the hero city. The first train's arrival is a momentous event.

"When we were making our shots at Stalingrad Station," Boris Agapov recalls, "we couldn't tell what the film would be like, for moisture dimmed the cameramen's eyes: the whole of Stalingrad was crowded on the one platform; thin, emaciated little kiddies stood in front; they held up 'Welcome' signs written on old newspaper sheets and adorned with little bows made of odd bits of red stuff."

A train pulls in, and from it step Turkmenians in striped silk robes. They have brought as gifts medicine chests and telegraph outfits, window panes and school-room desks, cotton wool for quilts and dried fruit for the kiddies, shovels and dishes and felt-boots...

In all the country's factories, people stay on after hours and come on their free days to work for the hero city. Tins of meat and fish are sent here, field-kitchens and building material, clothes and shoes, sweets and dolls. Nikolai Lunin, the famous engine-driver, brings a trainload of coal—1,150 tons of it, bought with his own savings. A whole trainload of gifts arrives from the Saratov region; in charge of it is Ferapont Golovaty, the collective farmer who in 1942 initiated the national movement to collect funds for Red Army tanks and planes.

Parallel with the rebuilding of the tractor plant proceeds restoration work on the hydro-electric station. The Germans dropped four hundred HE bombs upon it, they gave it a thousand shells. But now a long, piercing whistle sounds over Stalingrad, announcing that the station has been rebuilt. It is one more splendid victory scored.

Beginning with June 1943, the whole city turns out for rehabilitation work. This patriotic movement is started by Alexandra Cherkassova, a serviceman's wife, and herself a kindergarten employee. With seventeen of her colleagues, she undertakes to restore the famous "Pavlov House" held to the last during the siege by a party of Soviet guardsmen under Sergeant Pavlov. And Cherkassova's women work as gallantly as Pavlov's men fought.

Restoration of the "Red October" mills is undertaken by arrivals from the Urals. With their usual foresight and provident ways they have brought with them houses all ready to be assembled.

The second spring after the Germans were driven out finds Stalingrad with a working water-supply, with some of the homes heated and electrically lighted, with the telephone functioning. Classes have been resumed at the Stalingrad Institute of Medicine and in the rebuilt secondary schools. In Stalingrad's own printshop, a newspaper comes off the press.

Pieces of newsreel from Britain have been included showing British workers making the sword of honour for Stalingrad. And on the anniversary of the victorious termination of the battle, Marshal Budyonny presents

to a Stalingrad delegation this gift from King George to the people of the hero city, "strong as steel," "in token of the British people's profound admiration." From the Emperor of Ethiopia comes a shield representing Stalingrad's defence of the peace and independence of all the freedom-loving peoples. Marshal Stalin is presented with letters from President Roosevelt to the citizens of Stalingrad and Leningrad—those "synonyms for fortitude of spirit and tenacity which," the president wrote, "enabled us to resist."

How unlike these views of Stalingrad sixteen months after the battle's end are to those at the beginning of the film! Yet it is no dream, no fairy-tale, though more miraculous than any.

Streets and squares around the Stalingrad tractor plant have been asphalted and "Buffaloes" are steam-rollering the asphalt between the different shops. Trees and shrubs have been planted. The factory buildings are flooded with light. In the new machine shop, the steel ribbon of the main assembly line is already crawling along and the summer of 1944 sees the first, trial tractor coming off it. The machines are manned by new workers come to Stalingrad, who are learning the difficult art of tractor building. Most of them are still living in tents, as though on the march.

"But it is the march along the road to a happy future," the announcer's voice says.

Songs and music float over the Volga. Young people are seen dancing in the evenings in the open space before the factory...

"The Resurrection of Stalingrad" is a remarkable document. What makes it particularly valuable is the detail and method with which the material was filmed and arranged. The scenarist, the director and cameramen do not strive for spectacular effects. It is real life they show, in its unembellished truth and all-conquering force.

OLEG LEONIDOV

ART NEWS

"At the Walls of Leningrad," a new play by Vsevolod Vishnevsky and produced by Alexander Tairov, has been staged at the Moscow Kamerny Theatre.

The plot, dealing with Leningrad's heroic struggle, describes the days of September 1941, when the sailors of the Baltic Fleet came to the rescue of the beleaguered city and heroically defended its outskirts from the onslaught of the enemy hordes.

The play may be regarded in its way, as a continuation of "An Optimistic Tragedy," an earlier play of Vsevolod Vishnevsky produced by the same theatre some ten years ago. By this new production the theatre has advanced yet another step in the creation of the Soviet heroic play.

The theatre's best actors are in the cast. The music is by Lev Knipper.

"It Is a Family Affair—We'll Settle It Ourselves," is the first play written by Alexander Ostrovsky, one of Russia's foremost playwrights. This comedy first appeared in print in the year 1850, but did not reach the footlights until many years later. Too sharp by far was the criticism it levelled at the life and manners of the Russian merchant class of the time.

Now the works of Ostrovsky are to be found on the syllabus of every Soviet school for his plays are replete with artistic and educational content. "It Is a Family Affair—We'll Settle It Ourselves" is being staged by the Moscow Theatre for the Young Spectator. The producer, Valentine Kolessayev, has succeeded in creating a performance instinct with life, vividly reviewing before the eyes of the youthful spectators characteristic pages from their country's past history.

The theatres of Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, are active. "Les Cloches de Corneville" by Planquette is at the Opera House. The Dramatic Theatre has staged a revival of the Russian classical comedy, Gogol's "Inspector General."

Constantine Simonov's modern Soviet play, "Thus It Will Be," is being performed at Kuibyshev.

The Kalinin Theatre is staging "Marussia Boguslavka," the well-known Ukrainian tragedy. It is produced in the Russian translation.

A scene from Ostrovsky's play "It Is a Family Affair,—We'll Settle It Ourselves."

A new opera theatre has been opened at Novossibirsk. Its repertoire contains classic operas by Russian and world composers

A puppet theatre has been inaugurated in the city of Vilnius in Lithuania. A play entitled "Yel, the Queen of Snakes" from a poem by Salomée Neris, scored a thundering success among the youthful audience.

Chaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin" with the text translated into Tajik by the poet Amin-Zade has been added to the repertoire of the Tadjik Opera House.

Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream" is being acted at the Buriat-Mongolian Theatre.

A dancing school to accomodating 150 pupils has been opened at Minsk, capital of Byelorussia.

"The Duel" is the title of a new film which deals with the Soviet Intelligence Service. It is produced by Vladimir Legoshin and the scenario is by the brothers Tour and Lev Sheinin.

Engineer Leontyev, a Soviet inventor, journeys out to the front to see for himself how his new, high-capacity gun is working. Stalking Leontyev are German spies—experienced sleths who are determined to seize him, dead or alive. Events happen swiftly, tensely. The hidden springs of the machine are made visible to the spectator at a number of points, sometimes separated from one another by a thousand miles: the capital of a certain neutral state which is the centre of the espionage agency; the sleeping-car of a Trans-Siberian express; a comfortable room in the "Moskva" Hotel; a fascist school for spies in Germany; an office of the Soviet Intelligence Service, and a sector of the front where the new gun is being tried out for the first time... The developing struggle abounds in startling situations and unexpected changes of events. The German agents are pursuing their own ends with cunning and insolence. There is one decisive moment when the enemy triumphs exultantly. Engineer Leontyev is in their hands. But a new move on the part of the Soviet Intelligence converts the opponent's temporary success into final and utter defeat. The group of Germans is trapped—their prisoner is rescued. And it is only then, in the very last sequences of the film, that the audience makes the acquaintance of... the real Engineer Leontyev. It appears that the Germans have all the time been on the trail of the wrong man. To safeguard the life of the inventor, his place at the very outset was taken by Sergueyev, a major of the State Security Organization. As the substitute, he plays his part to perfection, deceiving the wily enemy and thereby himself capturing an international fascist spy.

"The Duel" is an adventure film of the best type and the fascinating succession of thrilling events never for a moment obscures the plot's main theme: to be vigilant and always on the alert in the fight against fascism.

The life of bees has from time immemorial been a source of wonder to men. Aristophanes and Pliny wrote various treaties on these small insects. Bees existed in glass-cases on the writing-table of Maurice Maeterlinck. To the author of "The Blue Bird" belongs an interesting essay entitled "The Life of the Bees" in which strict authenticity is combined with a poet's delicate intuition.

Bees, their world and habits is the theme of a new Soviet popular scientific film, "The Sunny Tribe." In the summer of 1944 a group of cameramen set out for a big apiary situated near Maikop in North-Caucasus. One of their many tasks was to endeavour to tame the winged artists and reconcile themselves to... getting stung.

The film shows the life of this industrious insect. A swarm of bees homing in the hollow of a large tree. The entrance is guarded by bee-sentries who let no one pass but their own. The thieving wasp and the mouse trying to get at the forbidden sweets receive the welcome they deserve. The signal is given—warrior bees fly out from the hive. They drive off the would-be invaders and perish in the action.

In the wax-sealed cells repose the chrysalides. When their hour comes they nibble through the roof and emerge into the light of day to begin their brief life of labour. The newly emerged bee, feeble and small as it is, immediately proceeds carefully to clean its cell. Beneath the dome of the hive is suspended a large immobile cluster of bees. In this condition the bees remain for a space of eighteen to twenty-four hours. They are swarming. Then disaster overtakes the hive. Hot air has penetrated its walls. The honey begins to drip, the walls of the faultlessly regular cells begin to crumble. The entire population of the apiary swarms to the place of the catastrophe. A garland is formed overhead, a living bridge of bees. And along this bridge the "builder-bees" are hastily swarming.

For hours on end, motionless as statues, the cameramen would sit watching for the moments suitable for shooting. The result of their assiduous labours is an interesting film familiarizing us with the intelligent and original modes of life of the industrious "sunny tribe."

Exceptional interest has been displayed by Soviet audiences in the documental film of the Crimean Conference featuring the leaders of the three great Allied Powers.

In this film the successive stages are recorded of the historical event that has played such a tremendous part in the struggle of the democracies of the whole world against German fascism.

"Invasion" is an exciting film produced by Abraham Romm after the play of that name by Leonid Leonov. We are carried back to the grim days of the autumn of 1941, when the danger threatening Russia was greatest.

The principal role of Fyodor Talanov is played admirably by Oleg Zhakov. Indeed, all the members of the cast have created life-like characters faithfully depicting a page of the titanic struggle staunchly waged by modest, devoted Soviet citizens.

The death, in March 1945, of Vyacheslav Yakovlevich Shishkov, a Russian realist of outstanding merit, one of the most prominent Soviet artists of the written word, was felt as a great loss to the literature of this country.

His initial literary efforts were made comparatively late in life—at the mature age of forty. Consequently he approached his task with an immense experience of life. From his earliest years, Shishkov had been in close contact with the working people of town and village. As a technician and a member of various technical expeditions to Siberia, he had had opportunities to study the character and customs of the Siberian population, and never ceased to love the stern beauty of that country.

The future author gained a great deal from the exploration and prospecting which he undertook during these expeditions. They brought him into close contact with nature and the toiling people. All this proved an excellent school for him.

When his first book, "The Taiga," appeared, Shishkov was recognized as an unusually talented portrayer of nature; he was observant, clever and skilful in his descriptions of life. The scenes he presented of the life, customs and habits of the Russian working people were vivid and masterly.

This book was followed by others, as vivid, as original in colouring, as diverse as his first production. In his tale "The Working Team," he shows the Siberians' dramatic struggle for freedom. In "Lake Peipus" he portrays telling pictures of the Civil War in the Pskov countryside.

The next works to be published by Shishkov were his "Tales Told in Jest," which sparkled with all the humour of the common folk. Apt and witty characteristics, infectious laughter, sparkling gaiety, are features of this author's humorous writings. They reflect the wholesome spirit of our people—their liking and readiness for a good laugh.

One of his most important works was the two-volume historical novel "Ougrum River," which plunges the reader deep into Siberia's eventful history.

Original and significant as were the books we have named, it must be pointed out that his talent as a historical novelist and realist was displayed to the full only in the epic novel dealing with the people's hero, Yemelian Pougachov, and his times. This is a vast canvas painted with a powerful brush and represents ten years of labour. From the pages of this novel, Russian life at the time of the peasant movement arises in all its complexity and variety. It is greatly to be regretted that the main theme remained unfinished. The destiny of a people forms the underlying motive of the novel—the conception of a people's freedom and happiness.

Shishkov was a true artist of the people. In his autobiography he tells us:

"It was with deep emotion that I traced the course of the incredible events in the life of the people. I worked with particular zeal, I was in a joyous exalted mood, yet never for one day did I conceive of my own personal joy and sorrow, and especially my destiny as a writer—as things apart from the destiny of the people."

Proud of his close kinship with the people, he devoted the whole of his great and brilliant talent to them. But during the present war he has thrown himself into his work with more than his usual perseverance and with the unselfishness of a Soviet patriot. In besieged Leningrad, throughout the terrible winter of 1941 and the spring of 1942 he was engaged on his historical work "Yemelian Pugachov." Nevertheless he found time and strength to lecture to the troops defending Leningrad, to write articles and stories for a paper published at the front, "Guarding Our Country," and to speak over the radio. Everything he produced at this time was imbued with a fervent belief in the victory of the Soviet people, and a passionate hatred of their foes.

To the end of his life he remained at his post as a writer, full of youthful energy and good spirits. The Government awarded him the Order of Lenin, the Order of the Red Banner of Labour and the Leningrad Defence Medal.

The seventieth birthday in October 1943 of this talented writer was regarded as a great event by Soviet public opinion. In his speech at the gathering held in his honour, he said: "Very near now is the end of the war, very near is our victory! What powers our country will demand of us, what gigantic scope, if we are to depict for history all that will be connected with the restoration of what has been devastated, with our unparalleled postwar prosperity."

He was not destined to live to see the joyous day of our final victory over the enemy, the day that now has come. A master of the written word, a writer-patriot, he will always live in the memory of the Soviet people.

CONSTANTINE LOMUNOV

One hundred and twenty-five years have now elapsed since the birth of Alexis Pisemsky, the well-known Russian writer.

His writings are indissolubly bound with the general development of Russian literature. A contemporary of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Saltykov-Shchedrin, Pisemsky was a friend of Turguenev and Ostrovsky and collaborator of Nekrasov and Goncharov. He was seventeen years old when Pushkin died.

A follower of Gogol, a writer of the realistic school and a profound observer of mankind, Pisemsky has created a series of life-like works such as "The Indolent Man," "The Rich Suiter," "Sketches from the Life of the Peasantry," "A Thousand Souls," "A Bitter Fate"—all narratives reflecting the progressive ideas of his time. His writings testify to man's inherent distaste for fine words and spectacular gesture which not infrequently only serve to mark the paucity of inner content. With simple and austere strokes, his brush paints truthful pictures depicting the life of Russia.

The influence he exercized on his contemporaries was immense. Democratic critics of the sixties turned to his writings again and again for illustrations of one or another aspects of the realities of Russia life.

Pisemsky loved his own people with a fervent devotion and wrote a number of excellent stories of peasant life. "A Bitter Fate," the first peasant drama by a Russian writer, gained him a prize from the Academy of Sciences.

When the news that Louis Pasteur, the French scientist, had invented a serum for inoculation against hydrophobia spread throughout the world, a young Odessa physician, Nikolai Gamaleya, set out for Paris to make the personal acquaintance of Pasteur and gain from his own lips all the particulars of his method. This occured in the year 1886. The two men met on common ground and Nikolai Gamaleya soon became a close associate of the world-renowned French scientist.

Upon his return to Russia, Gamaleya proceeded to work in the province of science that interested him most, deservedly gaining for himself the title "Father of Russian microbiology."

Many decades have rolled by since that day. In the great book-case standing in the study of Nikolai Gamaleya, Honoured Academician and Merited Scientist, may be seen hundreds of books and pamphlets belonging to his pen. He is the author of two hundred and fifty major publications, the greater number of which have been translated into various foreign languages. A mere list of the scientific discoveries of Academician Gamaleya cover several closely-printed pages.

In the course of a long life he has made investigations into many of the scourges afflicting mankind: the plague, glanders, tuberculosis, diphteria, scarlet fever, malaria, typhus, smallpox, trachoma and encephalitis. Included in the treatment of each of these diseases is the "Gamaleya Method."

Despite his eighty-six years he continues to work unremittingly on his scientific researches. At the present moment his efforts are mainly directed to the problem of cancer. Professor Gamaleya has been awarded the Order of Lenin and a Stalin Prize for his outstanding scientific works.

Soviet scientists have learned with great satisfaction that Professor Vladimir Filatov, a prominent figure in Soviet medicine, has been decorated with the Order of the Patriotic War, 1st class.

Academician Filatov is a well-known ophthalmologist. He has elaborated a method for transplanting the cornea and has widely introduced this operation into medical practice. The transplantation of the cornea restores vision lost through the formation of maculae. Academician Filatov has also contributed in no small measure to the study of glaucomia, and the device known as the Filatov round skin-flap, used in plastic operations, has gained wide recognition among surgeons.

The Professor has personally performed one hundred thousand operations connected with the preservation of eyesight. He has trained a generation of Russian ophthalmologists of whom many have already made their mark in the world of science. Academician Filatov heads the Ukrainian Institute for Diseases of the Eye, situated in Odessa. The Institute was destroyed during the German occupation and the valuable equipment looted. Restoration activities are at present forging ahead.

The scientist and patriot, Professor Filatov, recently celebrated his seventieth birthday. His unremitting labours have wrought inestimable service in the cause of the treatment and cure of war-injuries.

In Kuban, in the vicinity of the Cossack village of Taman, are situated a number of burial mounds harbouring graves of great antiquity. These, from time to time, have been dug up by the Cossacks in search of hidden treasure. On one occasion in the year 1916, in one of the excavated barrows, a marble coffin was brought to light. Archaeologists who were summoned to the spot were amazed at the rare beauty of the find. What they saw was a sarcophagus of Greek workman-

ship, bearing in its ornamentation traces of rose-coloured patterns and gilding. Hardly any such monument of Greek art, if we exclude the sarcophagus in which was buried Alexander of Macedon, has hitherto been known to science. It was eventually established that the sarcophagus in question, hewn from a single block of marble, had most probably been made in Attica in the 4th or 3rd century before the Christian ere.

The precious structure was with great difficulty removed to Taman, carried on sleighs drawn by sixteen pairs of horses. It remained at Taman where it proved the subject of many studies and investigations and entering archaeological science under the name of "The Taman Sarcophagus."

When in the course of the Patriotic War the Germans entered Taman, they hastened to ship the sarcophagus to Kerch, intending to have it transported to Germany. But these designs were frustrated by the Red Army. In their hurried retreat the Germans blew up the sarcophagus. Fortunately only the lid, formed like the two-sloped roof of a Greek temple, was damaged. The sarcophagus was discovered by Soviet soldiers at the entrance to a crypt which had been used by the Germans as a refuge.

It was finally decided to send the sarcophagus off to Moscow. The task, far from easy, was entrusted to Natalie Pyatysheva, a young research worker from the staff of the Historical Museum. But now all the difficulties of the journey are a thing of the past. The sarcophagus is at the Historical Museum in Moscow. Hoisted by means of an electric windlass into the centre of the Hall of Antiquities, it is inspected with untiring interest by archaeologists. Experts are labouring from morning till night at the restoration of this relic of hoary antiquity. A special solution of soap and spirits is used which, without injuring the texture of the marble, will completely cleanse the monument of filth and grime. The Germans had used it as a store-room.

Under efficient handling, traces of gilding and delicate chiselling are gradually emerging and it will not be long before the sarcophagus sparkles once more in all its pristine loveliness.

For the second time since the beginning of the war Soviet circuses are displaying the new items on their programmes. In the various towns, during 1944, seventy-five new large-scale items were prepared of which the thirty best figured on the programme of a review which was held at Moscow.

A number of the turns were performed by representatives of old circus families who faithfully carry on and improve on the old time honoured traditions. Such are the jugglers Alexander and Violetta Kiss who display outstanding mastery and a really splendid technique.

Balancing in the air, Ivan and Leo Papazov-

Review of circus art. The jugglers Kiss

Koch gave a display of great agility in a variety of daring and hazardous exercises on a swinging structure where the customary trapeze was substituted by an oar.

The traditions initiated by Vitalius Lazarenko, the famous Russian clown and caperer, are carried on by his son. His capers are marvellous.

In his acrobatics on horseback, Leonid Okeanos-Olkhovikov may justly be said to have revived the old, classical equestrian circus.

The feats of Nikolai Zherebtsov, the Russian strong man who can hold up two live bulls, have earned him deserved success. Zherebtsov with seeming ease supports on his person the weight of a merry-go-round carrying twelve passengers and freely manipulates dumbbells weighing one hundred and twenty pounds.

Hearty applause and laughter were the reward of a hilarious football match played by four-footed sportsmen—the performing dogs trained by Claudine Beskaravaynaya.

The appearance on the traditional carpet of a slight short man in crumpled hat, huge boots and long-skirted coat—the clown Karan d'Ash, was greeted with customary delight. His ready wit and inventiveness are an ornament to any programme, a never failing source of pleasure.

People are very fond of the circus in the U.S.S.R. Among the audience there is always a goodly sprinkling of servicemen, soldiers, officers, generals, amid the workers and students, authors and children of all ages. The circus has undoubtedly made huge strides in the right direction during war-time.

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No. 7, Vol. XII July 1945

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