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THE YOUNG GUARD

When the fascists temporarily occupied the Ukraine, an underground youth organization, the Young Guard (described in No. 11, 1943, of our magazine) arose in Krasnodon (Donbass). The initiators and organizers of the Young Guard were sixteen-year-old Oleg Koshevoy, seventeen-year-old Seryozha Tyulenin and nineteen-year-old Ivan Zemnukhov, Oulya Gromova, Lyuba Shevtsova, Vladimir Osmukhin, Valya Borts and others followed them along the path of active struggle against the invaders. Oleg Koshevoy was commissar of the Young Guard.

These young people had remained behind the occupied territory for various reasons, Some of them had tried to evacuate, but when a crowd, composed mainly of women and children, had gathered at a river crossing, the fascists turned their guns upon them and shot at them from the air, and the few who escaped from that hell, including Oleg Koshevoy, Ivan Zemnukhov and Oulya Gromova, were forced to return to Krasnodon. Some of the young people had simply not been able to evacuate in time, among them were Seryozha Tyulenin and Valya Borts. Osmukhin was seriously ill at the time of evacuation.

Soon after the invaders' arrival the Young Guard commenced active operations. Under conditions of fierce terror they set up four secret wireless sets and every day informed the population of the Soviet Information Bureau communiqués. They distributed leaflets giving the true situation on the fronts and calling for struggle against the fascists. On Soviet holidays they hoisted crimson banners on buildings and on trees. They procured weapons and prepared an armed uprising. The shock group carried out wrecking and terrorist acts.

These heroic activities of the Young Guard under conditions of such danger, raised the spirits of the Soviet people in the enemy rear, strengthened their confidence and raised their hopes.

In the end the Gestapo succeeded in ferreting out the organization and arresting its members. They were savagely tortured—their bones were broken, their eyes gouged out; they were suspended by the hair, seared with red-hot iron, stars burned on their backs. But all of them remained true to their country to the very end, not one of them would say a word to the butchers. And in the end they were tortured to death.

Oleg Koshevoy, Seryozha Tyulenin, Ivan Zemnukhov, Oulya Gromova and Lyuba Shevtsova were posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Alexander Fadeyev's new novel, *The Young Guard*, deals with the life and activity of these young heroes of Krasnodon. The first part ends with the birth of the organization.

The excerpts of this first part, given below, acquaint the reader with the main characters of the novel. Valko, who figures here, was one of the leading figures in the Krasnodon mining industry. It was he who, together with Lyuba Shevtsova's father, had blown up the pits before the fascists' arrival. He was at the crossing when the Germans fired upon it, and when Lyuba's father was killed. Oulya Gromova speaks of this slaughter of peaceful civilians.

In a future number we shall print excerpts from the second part of the novel, dealing with the fighting activities of the Young Guard.

Never since the great trek had the Don steppes seen such a mass migration as in those July days of 1942.

Along every road beneath the sun's scorching rays moved retreating Red Army units with their carts, their artillery and tanks, kindergartens and children's homes; herds of cattle, lorries and refugees in ragged columns or in separate groups, pushing handcarts carrying their worldly goods, with children sitting on bundles of top the pile.

They trudged along, trampling the golden wheat, some of which was ripening, some ready for cutting; and nobody gave a thought to it—neither those who had sowed it or those trampling it down—it no longer mattered to them. It would remain for the Germans. The orchards and vegetable plots belonging to the collective and state farms were open to all; the refugees dug up potatoes and baked them in the ashes of fires made from straw or fenceposts which they tore up as they passed, and everybody carried cucumbers, tomatoes, melons, or pieces of watermelons. A cloud of dust hung over the steppe so thick that one could look at the sun with the naked eye.

The Germans had taken Millerovo, a large railway centre on the Voronezh-Rostov line and their tanks and mechanized units moving on Morozovka, a station on the line linking the Donbass with Stalingrad, had cut off the Voroshi-

lovgrad and Rostov districts from the central regions of the country, threatening Stalingrad and isolating the southern army.

To the superficial gaze of some individual drawn into the current of retreat like a grain of sand into a swift river, and feeling his subjective reactions rather than the objective situation, all this would have looked like a spontaneous, unguided movement of panic; but actually, this mighty human and material flood had been brought into complicated, organized movement by the efforts of hundreds and thousands of people, by the state mechanism of war.

The army of the Southern front had placed a rearguard at Voroshilovgrad and the River Miuss, and throwing out a strong flanking guard, was retreating in the direction of Novocherkassk and Rostov, in order to cross the Don and avoid a deep flanking blow from the north. And the large factories and institutions evacuated from Voroshilovgrad and district were travelling in the same direction.

Other, smaller currents of retreating troops were flowing towards Kamensk, a town forty kilometres from Krasnodon, lying south of Millerovo at the point where the Voronezh-Rostov line crosses the Northern Donets, and towards Belokalitvenskaya, the other side of the Likhaya, a station lying on the Donbass-Stalingrad line just where it crosses the Northern Donets. These units were to cover the right, northern flank of the retreating Southern front units.

As always happens in a forced retreat, besides this main mass of troops and civilians travelling with difficulty, but according to plan, there were smaller factories and collectives, groups of refugees, troops or supply columns which had lost connection during the fighting or missed the way, and groups of soldiers left behind because of wounds or sickness, or for lack of transport, winding along all the roads or even straight across the steppe towards the east and south-east. These groups, large and small, with only the vaguest idea of what was really happening at the front, took whatever road seemed to them better and safer; they clogged all the veins and pores of the main movement, especially the crossings over the Donets and Don, where huge camps of people, lorries and carts milled at the ferries and pontoon bridges, exposed to enemy bombing day and night.

Although it seemed utterly senseless to make for Kamensk, when the Germans had already crossed the Donets and advanced a long distance on its far side, nevertheless a considerable number of refugees from Krasnodon were moving just in that direction, because troops were going that way. It was this ill-directed current that caught up the cart drawn by two fine bays in which Oulya Gromova, Anatoli Popov, Victor Petrov and Victor's father were driving.

The last village buildings had barely disappeared, and the stream of carts and lorries were pouring down the slope, when the hideous roar of engines sounded from the sky, and again German dive-bombers roared down over their heads, blotting out the sun, flaying the road with their machine-guns.

Victor's father, a tall, deep-voiced energetic man with a leather cap shading his fleshy face, suddenly paled.

"Onto the steppe! Get down flat!" he shouted with horror in his voice.

But the children had already leaped from the cart and hurled themselves into the wheat. Victor's father dropped the reins, shot off the cart with them and disappeared like some ghost. Only Oulya remained on the cart—she herself could never have said why she did not run with the others. But in that instant the frightened horses took to flight with such a jolt that they nearly flung her off the cart.

Oulya tried to grasp the reins, but was unable to reach them. The horses, after barely avoiding crashing into the vehicle ahead, reared and tore to one side, nearly breaking the traces. The long, solid, roomy cart, converted from an oxcart, nearly overturned but rocked back onto its wheels. Oulya was holding onto the edge of the cart with one hand, and clutching a heavy sack with the other, but it took all her strength to avoid being thrown out onto the steppe, where she would have been instantly trampled to death by other frenzied horses dashing about, dragging vehicles after them. The huge bays, frantic with terror, raced over the trodden grain, rearing, snorting, tossing off flecks of foam. Suddenly a tall, broad-shouldered lad, with fair head bare, jumped down

from a droshky ahead and seemed to fling himself right under the horses' hoofs.

Oulya did not at first realize what was happening, but in an instant between the two horses' heads with their flying manes and gnashing teeth, there appeared a very young, fresh, rosy face, with high cheekbones, and sparkling eyes with an expression of strength and intense effort.

Seizing one of the snorting animals by the reins with one strong hand, close to the bit, the youth got between the horse and the shaft and pressing with all his strength against the horse in order to avoid the shaft, he stood there like a statue—tall, neat, in a well-pressed grey suit with a dark red tie, and the white bone cap of a fountain pen peeping out from his breast pocket. With his other hand he reached over the shaft in order to seize the reins of the second horse. Only the muscles swelling beneath his jacket and the distended veins of the sunburned hand restraining the animal showed the effort that it cost him.

"Woa, woa!" he said, not very loudly, but authoritatively. He succeeded in seizing the reins of the second horse and instantly, both of them suddenly acknowledged his mastery. They still tossed their manes and rolled wild eyes at him, but he did not let them go until they were quite quiet again.

The youth dropped the reins, and the first thing that he did—to Oulya's no small surprise — was to smoothe his neatly parted fair hair with the palm of his hand—although it was barely ruffled. Then he raised his wet face to Oulya—the face of a lad, high-cheekboned with large eyes shaded by long golden lashes —and a broad, guileless and merry laugh rang out.

"Fine horses, they m-might have smashed you up," he said, stammering a little, and turning his broad smile on Oulya, who was still holding the edge of the cart and the sack, nostrils trembling, looking at him with respect in her black eyes.

People began returning to the road, seeking their carts and lorries. Here and there groups of women had gathered, probably beside wounded or dead. From these groups the sound of groans and curses could be heard.

"I was so afraid that they'd injure you with the shaft!" said Oulya, her nostrils still trembling in agitation.

"I was rather afraid of the same thing. But they're not vicious horses, they're geldings," he said naively, and carelessly patted the nearest animal with his long-fingered sunburnt hand.

From the distance, somewhere on the Donets, came the dull yet sharp thud of bombing.

"I'm so terribly sorry for all the people," said Oulya, glancing round her.

On either side of them, as far as the eye could see, carts and people were flowing past like some noisy river.

"Yes, so am I. And especially our mothers, think what they are going through! And what still lies before them," said the youth, and a serious look fell upon his face, while long lines ill-suited to his years, seamed his forehead.

"Yes, yes," said Oulya in a barely audible voice, as a picture of her own mother lying there so small, pressed to the scorched earth, flashed before her eyes.

At that instant Victor Petrov's father appeared beside the horses as suddenly as he had vanished, and began with exaggerated care testing the traces, breeching and reins. After him came Anatoli Popov laughing and shaking his head guiltily in its vivid Uzbek cap, but still preserving something of his usual serious look, followed by Victor, also somewhat embarrassed.

"Is my guitar all right?" Victor asked quickly, his eyes searching the cart anxiously. Seeing the blanket-wrapped instrument in its place between two bundles, he glanced at Oulya with his brave, but sad eyes, and laughed.

All this time the youth had been standing between the horses. Now he suddenly dived under the shaft and a horse's neck and came to the cart. He walked well, and his large head was finely set on his broad shoulders.

"Anatoli!" he cried gaily.

"Oleg!"

They grabbed each other's arms, while Oleg glanced at Oulya and suddenly gave vent to a merry, full-throated laugh.

"Koshevoy," he introduced himself, and held out his hand.

One of his shoulders, the left, was higher than the other. He was very

young, hardly more than a boy, but his sunburned face, tall, slender figure, even his well-pressed clothes, with the dark red tie and the white fountain pen, his whole manner of moving and speaking, his slight stammer, gave such an impression of freshness, strength, kindness and frankness that Oulya felt at once that she could trust him.

He, for his part, with the swift observation of youth, had instantly taken in her slender figure in its white blouse and dark skirt, the strong, supple body of a country girl accustomed to working in the fields, the black eyes bent upon him, the finely cut nostrils, the long, slender, sunburned legs under the knee-length skirt—he came to himself with a start, turned sharply to Victor and shook hands in some confusion.

Oleg Koshevoy had been studying in the Gorky school at Krasnodon, the largest in the town, situated in the local park. This was his first meeting with Oulya and Victor, but he and Anatoli had long maintained one of those casual long-standing friendships common among active members of the Young Communist League renewed with each Young Communists' meeting.

"Well, so this is where we meet!" said Anatoli. "Remember, it's only three days since we came to your house, the whole bunch of us, for a drink of water, and you introduced us to... your grandmother!" He laughed. "Where is she—is she with you?"

"No, G-Granny stopped behind. And Mother stayed too," said Oleg, and the lines appeared again upon his forehead. "There are five of us: Kolya,—that's Mother's brother, I just can't make myself call him uncle!" he smiled; "then there's his wife and their boy, and G-Grandad, who's driving," and he jerked his head towards the droshky in front, where the people had already called to him several times.

This droshky, drawn by a swift dun horse, kept its place ahead, but the bays followed it so closely that their hot breath was upon the necks and ears of the people sitting in it.

Oleg Koshevoy's uncle, Nikolai Korostylyov, or "Uncle Kolya," a geological engineer of the Krasnodon-Coal Trust, was a handsome, blue-eyed, black-browed man, slow-moving, wearing a dark blue suit. He was only seven years older than his nephew and they were the best of friends. Now "Uncle Kolya" began teasing Oleg about Oulya.

"Can't let this pass," he boomed in his monotonous voice, without looking at his nephew. "Think of it—saved a girl from death, more or less! We'll have to be thinking of a wedding, nothing else for it. Isn't that right, Marina?"

"Oh, go along with you! I was scared out of my wits."

"But she is pretty, isn't she?" Oleg asked his young aunt. "Simply lovely!"

Oleg began to think about his mother, with her soft gentle hands...

"Mother! Mother! I remember your hands from the time when I first understood anything. In the summer they always became sunburned, even in winter the brown never quite left them. It was such a delicate colour, even, only just a little deeper at the veins. It may be that they were rough, those hands of yours—they had so much work to do—but to me they always seemed so soft and tender, I loved to kiss them right on the darkened veins.

"Yes, from my first awakening to a realization of the world, until that last moment when softly, wearily, you rested your head on my shoulder speeding me along the hard road of life, I always remember your hands working. I remember how they flashed among the soapsuds as you washed my sheets, when those sheets were still almost as small as nappies, and I remember you in your sheepskin in winter carrying buckets on a yoke; you would rest your little hand in its sleeve on the front part of the yoke, yourself as small and plump as the sleeve. I can see your fingers, with the slightly thickened joints, moving among the letters of the alphabet as I repeated after you: "b—a, ba." I see your strong hand guiding the sickle under the corn which the other hand has bent towards it. I see the gleam of the sickle and then that smooth movement of arm and tool, a movement so soft and womanly, flinging the ears into the pile so as not to break the stalks.

"I remember your hands, stiff and red from the water where you were rinsing washing through a hole in the ice when we lived alone—quite alone in all the

world, it seemed; and I remember how easily and painlessly those hands could remove a splinter from your son's hand, how swiftly they threaded a needle when you were sewing and singing—singing just to yourself and to me. For there was nothing on this earth which your hands could not do, which was too difficult for them, or which they disdained! I have seen them mixing lime with cow-dung to plaster the cottage, and I have seen your hands peeping out from silk, with a ring upon the finger, when you raised a glass filled with red Moldavian wine. And with what tenderness your plump, white arm encircled my step-father's neck when he would pick you up in fun—my stepfather, whom you taught me to love, and who seemed to me like my own just because you loved him.

"But most of all, as long as I live, I shall remember how tenderly they stroked my hair and face and chest, those hands, a little rough, but at the same time so warm and cool, when I lay half-conscious in my bed. And whenever I opened my eyes, you were always there beside me, the night-light was burning and you would look at me with your hollow eyes, as though out of the darkness, while you yourself were so quiet and bright, as though you were in vestments. I kiss your pure, sacred hands!

"You have sent your sons off to the war—if not you, then another like you. You will not have to await their return for ever, but if this cup has passed you by, it has not passed others like you. But if in these days of war people have a piece of bread to eat, and clothing to wear, if ricks stand on the fields and trains run along the tracks, if cherries blossom in the orchards and fire blazes in the furnaces, if there is an invisible strength to raise the warrior from the ground or from his bed when he is sick or wounded—all this is done by the hands of my mother—mine and his, and his.

"Look about you for a moment, young man, my friend, look around you like me, and tell me whom you have hurt more than your mother—is it not I, is it not you, is it not from our failures and mistakes and our grief that our mothers become grey? But the hour will come when the heart's bitter upbraidings will recall all this at a mother's grave.

"Mother! Mother! Forgive me, for only you alone, only you in all the world can give pardon, can lay your hands on my head as you did in childhood and forgive..."

Such were the thoughts and feelings, that lay heavy on Oleg's heart. He could not forget that his mother had remained "there"; and his grandmother Vera, she who was also a mother, the mother of his mother and of Uncle Kolya who had just been booming away about something far removed from life—Granny Vera had also stayed "there."

And Oleg's face became still and serious, and the large eyes under the golden lashes were moist. He sat there, stooping, his legs hanging, his long fingers twisted together, and the sharp line was again on his brow.

In spite of all that was happening around them, and all over the world, the boy and girl confessed their love. They could not help it, for they had to part. But they did it as is possible only in youth, that is to say, by talking of everything in the world except love.

"I'm so glad that you came, Vanya, it's like a weight off my heart," she said, looking at him with her shining shimmering eyes, and the little tilt of the head which he thought the sweetest thing in the world. "I was afraid that we'd go and I wouldn't be able to see you."

"But you understand why I haven't been here these days?" he asked in a deep bass, taking her in from head to foot with his near-sighted eyes in which the flame of enthusiasm always seemed ready to burst forth like fire from beneath ashes. "No, I know that you understand everything, all of it... I ought to have gone three days ago. I had everything packed, and had even put on my best suit to come and say good-bye to you, when suddenly the Youth district committee sent for me. The evacuation order had just come in, and everything was upside down. I felt pretty bad, seeing my school going, leaving me behind, but the boys asked me to lend a hand, and I could see myself that they needed all the help they could get... Yesterday Oleg offered me a place in a droshky to Kamensk—you know, he's a friend of mine—but I felt awkward about going..."

"You know, it's such a weight off my heart," she said stealing a glance at him with her shimmering eyes.

"To tell the truth, I was really glad inside of me—I thought, that means I'll be seeing her a lot more times. Damn it all!" he growled, unable to take his eyes from her, enthralled by the warmth he could feel coming from her blushing face and full neck, from the whole of her body through the thin white blouse. "Well, can you imagine it?" he continued. "The Voroshilov School, the Gorky School, the Lenin Club, the children's hospital—all on my shoulders. Good thing I found a fine helper—Zhora Arutyunyants. Remember him? From our school. There's a fellow for you! Came and offered of his own accord. I can't remember when we both slept last. We're running about day and night, it's carts, lorries, loads, fodder, here a tire's gone to blazes, there a droshky got to go to the forge. The grey horse injured... But of course, I knew you hadn't gone yet: I heard from my father," he added with a self-conscious smile. "Last night I was passing your house, and I thought my heart would break. What if I knock?—I thought." He laughed. "Then I remembered your parents, and I thought—no, Vanya, stick it out..."

"You know, such a weight..." she began.

But he, carried away by all that he was telling her, gave her no chance to finish.

"Yesterday, it's true, I'd made up my mind to let it all go to the devil. Clear out. She will go, I thought. I'd never see you anyway. And what do you think? It transpired that the children's home that was organized for orphans in the winter—you know, the "Eight Houses"—wasn't evacuated yet. The director—she lives quite close to me—well, she came to me almost in tears. 'Comrade Zemnukhov, help me out. Get me some sort of transport, maybe through the Youth committee.' I told her: 'The Youth committee's gone, you should try the education authorities.' 'I've been in touch with them,' she says. 'All these days they've been promising to get us away soon, but this morning when I went there, they hadn't enough carts for their own people. And while I was running about, the education office disappeared...' 'But where could they have gone,' I said, 'if they had no transport?' 'I don't know,' she said, 'they've sort of evaporated...' The education office evaporated..." Vanya Zemnukhov gave such a shout of merry laughter that long strands of hair fell onto his forehead and ears. He flung them back with a sharp jerk. "There's nitwits for you," he laughed. "Well, I thought, that's the end of your hopes, Vanya. No more chance of seeing Klava than of seeing your own ears. And then, what do you think, Zhora Arutyunyants and I got to work, and found them five carts. And where do you think we got them? From the army. When she said good-bye, the director cried all over us till I swear there wasn't a dry stitch on us. But don't think that was all. Today I said to Zhora: 'Run home and get your things together while I pack mine.' Then I just hinted to him that there was somewhere I wanted to go, he was to come to my place, wait a bit for me if I should be delayed, and so on... Well, I'd barely got my knapsack packed when who d'ye think fell on me? Why, Tolya Orlov, the one we all call 'Rolling Thunder'."

"But you know, it's such a weight off my heart," she said in a low voice, her eyes shining and passionate, succeeding at last in checking his stream of words. "I was so much afraid that you wouldn't come, for after all, I couldn't come to you," she continued and her voice was low and velvety.

"But why not?" he asked, taken by surprise.

"Oh, why can't you understand?" she said in confusion. "What would I say to Father?"

This was probably as far as she could go—to make him realize at last, that their relationship was not quite an ordinary one, that there was a secret in it. She would have to remind him of it, if he did not want to speak about it himself.

He fell silent, and bent upon her such a look that suddenly her whole face and full white neck were flooded with colour, right down to the opening of her pink blouse.

"But you mustn't think that he doesn't like you," she continued swiftly, her slightly slanting, almond shaped eyes shining. "How many times he's said: 'A sensible fellow, that Zemnukhov...! And you know," and again her voice

took on that low, velvety note, "if you like, you could come away with us."

This sudden possibility of going away with the girl he loved had never entered his head; and the idea was so alluring that he lost his bearings for a moment, looking at her with an awkward smile; then suddenly a serious expression overspread his face and he looked absent-mindedly down the street. He was standing with his back to the park, and the whole road, running south, was filled with burning sunshine which glowed on the face turned to it. In the distance the road broke off short where it dropped to the second crossing, and far, far away was the blue rolling steppe, with the smoke of distant fires rising behind its contours. But of all this he saw nothing, he was too short-sighted. He could only hear the roar of guns, the whistling of locomotives in the dépôt and that peaceful sound, familiar from childhood, the switchman's horn sounding light and clear under the steppe skies.

"But I haven't any of my things with me," he said sadly and confusedly, and spread out his arms as though indicating his bare head with its falling strands of russet hair, his washed-out sateen shirt with its short sleeves, the worn trousers with brown stripes, also somewhat short, and the sandals on his bare feet. "I didn't even bring my glasses, I can't see you properly," he joked sadly.

"I'll ask Dad to go round for your things," she said softly and passionately, looking up at him from under her lids. She even made a move as though to take his hand, but then drew back.

"And you see, in came that Tolya Orlov—you know him?" said Vanya Zemnukhov in a deep bass.

"No, he must be from the Voroshilov school," Klava replied almost inaudibly.

"Well, in a word, he said to me: 'Comrade Zemnukhov, a few houses away from you lives Volodya Osmukhin, a very active youth. He had an operation for appendicitis not so long ago and went home too early. Well, now his wound has opened and it's discharging. Can't you get some sort of conveyance for him?' You see my situation how it is. I know Volodya Osmukhin well, he's a splendid fellow! You see how I'm placed? 'Well,' I said, 'go along to Volodya, I've got somewhere I want to go, and then I'll try to get something and come to you.' And then I came along here. And so you can see why I can't go with you, can't you?" he concluded apologetically, trying to look into her eyes, which had filled with tears. "But Zhora Arutyunyants and I..." he began again.

"Vanya," she said, suddenly raising her face so that it was quite close to his, and the perfume of her breath enveloped him. "Vanya, I'm proud of you, so proud of you, I..." A groan escaped her, a sound that seemed to come not from the lips of a young girl, but of some adult woman; and with that groan, forgetting everything on earth, with a movement that had nothing of the immaturity of girlhood about it, she put her cool, firm arms around his neck and pressed her lips passionately to his...

At home Vanya found Zhora Arutyunyants, thoroughly tired of waiting. His father was also at home, and Vanya knew by that that the Kovalyovs had gone.

Zhora Arutyunyants was seventeen years of age. He was lanky, although half a head shorter than Zemnukhov, naturally very dark and well sunburned in addition. He had beautiful long, curly lashes, black Armenian eyes and full lips. In general, there was something about him that made one think of a Negro.

Despite the difference in their years, these past few days had made them firm friends. They found a common interest in a passionate love for books.

Vanya Zemnukhov was even nicknamed "the Professor" at school. He had only one good suit, grey with thin brown stripes, which he used for best, and which, like everything belonging to him, was already somewhat short. But when he walked down the school corridor in his white shirt and brown tie, his horn-rimmed spectacles, with pockets full of newspapers, beating his shoulder absent-mindedly with a book he carried,—as he strode along, quiet, taciturn, his pale face illumined by that quiet enthusiasm which burned within him, all his schoolmates, specially those from the younger classes, the Pioneers he led, would involuntarily make way for him as though he were indeed a professor.

Zhora Arutyunyants even had a special exercise book in which he wrote down every book he read, the author's

name and brief remarks about it. For example:

"N. Ostrovsky: How the Steel Was Forged. Splendid!

"A. Blok: Poems of a Beautiful Lady. A great many obscure words.

"L. Tolstoy: Hadji-Murat. A fine portrayal of the mountaineers' struggle for freedom.

"S. Golubov: Military Glory. The mountaineers' struggle for freedom not brought out sufficiently.

"Byron: Childe-Harold. I can't understand why this work so excited clever people when it is so dull to read.

"V. Mayakovsky: Good! (No remarks.)

"A. Tolstoy: Peter the First. Splendid. Shows that Peter was a progressive man."

There was a great deal more in that exercise book. In general Zhora Arutyunyants was very methodical, clean, firm in his opinions and a lover of order and discipline.

All those days and nights when they had been busy with evacuating schools, clubs, children's homes, etc., they had never been silent for a moment; they had talked eagerly about the second front, Constantine Simonov's poem *Wait for Me*, the Northern Sea Route, works by Academician Lyssenko, deficiencies in the Pioneer movement, the strange conduct of the Sikorsky government in London, the poet Shchipachov, the radio-announcer Levitan, Roosevelt and Churchill. There was only one point on which they disagreed—Zhora Arutyunyants considered it far more profitable to read newspapers and books than to run after girls in the park, whereas Vanya Zemnukhov said that as far as he was concerned, he'd have run after them himself if he had not been so shortsighted.

Vanya took leave of his weeping mother, his older sister and his father, who stood angrily clearing his throat, trying not to look at his son—until at the last moment he suddenly made the sign of the cross over him, and pressed his dry lips to the lad's face. Meanwhile, Zhora was trying to convince him that if he had not got a conveyance, there was no sense in going to Osmukhin. But Vanya said that he had given his word to Tolya Orlov, and he had to go and explain.

They hoisted their knapsacks onto their backs, and Vanya took a last look at his favourite corner by his bed-head, with its portrait of Pushkin by Karpov, its shelf of books including Pushkin's works and slim volumes of poems of Pushkin's time. Vanya gazed at all this, and then with an unnecessary jerk pulled his cap down over his eyes. They went to find Volodya Osmukhin.

Volodya was lying in bed wearing a white singlet, the quilt covering him to the waist. An open book which he had probably been reading that morning lay open on the bed beside him. It was a textbook of electro-magnetic telegraphy.

Piled in a corner, so as not to clutter up the room, were tools of all kinds, coils of wire, a home-made cinema apparatus, and parts of a wireless set—Volodya was enthusiastic about inventions of all kinds, and dreamed of being an aircraft engineer.

Volodya's best friend Tolya Orlov, known as "Rolling Thunder," an orphan, was sitting on a stool beside the bed. He had been nicknamed "Rolling Thunder" because he had a continual cold, winter and summer, and coughed incessantly—a deep, hollow cough that seemed to come from the bottom of a tub. He was sitting there, slightly stooped, his long legs spread widely. All his joints and limbs, knees, elbows and wrists, feet and legs were unusually well developed and bony. Thick ash-blond curls waved wildly all round his large head. His eyes were sad.

"Then you can't possibly walk at all?" Zemnukhov asked Volodya.

"Can't even think of it. The doctor said the wound would gape and the intestines come out," said Volodya gloomily.

It was not only the necessity of staying behind himself that depressed him, but the knowledge that his mother and sister were remaining on his account.

"Show me the wound," said Zhora Arutyunyants in business-like tones.

"But how can he, it's bandaged up," cried Volodya's sister Lussia who was leaning against the bed, in fright.

"Don't worry, everything'll be quite all right," said Zhora, his polite smile and pleasant Armenian accent giving his words special weight. "I've taken a first-aid course at school and I know all about bandaging..."

"But it's not hygienic," Lussia protested.

"The latest wartime practice, used in the impossible conditions of the battlefield, has proved all this to be a prejudice," Zhora replied in tones that permitted of no discussion.

"You read that about something else," said Lussia superciliously. But the next instant she was looking with a certain interest at this dark, Negro-like boy.

"Drop it, Lussia," Volodya told his sister angrily. "I could understand if it was Mum, she's nervous anyway, but you should know better than to interfere in what doesn't concern you. Go away, get out of here," and he threw off the quilt exposing his muscular, sunburned body. He was thin, but neither illness nor confinement to bed could take away his sunburn and his muscles. Lussia turned away.

Tolya Orlov and Vanya supported Volodya, while Zhora drew down his blue shorts and removed the bandages. The wound was discharging and in general was in a very bad condition, and although Volodya made a great effort to keep the pain from his face, he paled noticeably.

"Pretty foul. Yes," said Zhora, with a grimace.

"Not too good," Vanya agreed.

They tried not to look at Volodya, whose narrow brown eyes, usually twinkling with mischief and confidence, were turned on them in wistful questioning as they silently bandaged him again.

Now they were faced with the hardest thing of all—to leave their comrade, knowing all that threatened him.

Then Tolya Orlov rose from his stool—that same Tolya Orlov who was so badly clothed that he was never without a cold, that Tolya Orlov whose incessant cough had brought him the nickname of "Rolling Thunder"—and said that if his best friend Volodya could not go then he intended to stay with him.

For a moment everybody was taken aback. Then Volodya embraced Tolya with tears in his eyes, and a wave of emotion, of gladness filled everybody. Lussia flung herself on "Rolling Thunder's" neck and began kissing his cheeks, eyes and nose—never had he known a happier moment. Then she gave an angry look at Zhora Arutyunyants. She was very anxious for that neat-looking negroid youth to remain too.

"That's fine. That's what I call a friend. You're a trump, Tolya," said Vanya Zemnukhov in his deep voice. "I'm proud of you," he added suddenly, "both Zhora and I are," he corrected himself.

He gave his hand to Tolya, and Zhora did the same.

"But you don't think we shall just live here," said Volodya, his eyes shining. "We shall fight, shan't we, Tolya? It's impossible that there's nobody left here from the Party committee for underground work. We shall find them. Do you think there's nothing useful we can do here?"

During the summer work on the state farm, Valya Borts had made friends with Styopa Safonov, a short lad with very fair hair, a turned-up nose and lively eyes. She herself was a girl who had developed early but still retained much of the child. Her sunburned arms and legs were covered with a fine golden down, her dark grey eyes with their dark lashes were rather cold and independent in expression and her mouth had a proud set. Two reddish-golden plaits dangled down her neck.

Valya was in the ninth class, Styopa in the eighth. This might have been a hindrance to their friendship had Valya made friends among the girls, or if there had been any of the boys whom she specially liked. But neither was the case. She was a well-educated girl, played the piano well, was older and more developed than her years, and well-accustomed to being admired by lads of her own age. It was not because he liked her that Styopa Safonov suited her, but because he amused her. Underneath all his boyish mischief he was actually a quick-witted and good-natured lad, a good friend—and a terrible chatterer. Valya herself was rather silent, trusting her secrets only to her diary, dreaming of daring exploits—of course she wanted to be a flier, and the hero of her dreams also had to achieve great exploits. And just for this reason Styopa Safonov amused her with his chatter and endless ingenious pranks.

The first time Valya ventured on any serious talk with him was when she asked him straight out what he intended to do if the Germans came to Krasnodon.

Her cold, dark-grey eyes that kept everybody at a distance were turned on Styopa very seriously, proving. And the

heedless boy, the zoological and botanical enthusiast, always thinking of what he would do when he was a celebrated scientist and never of what he would do if the Germans came, said without a moment's consideration that he would wage unrelenting underground warfare with them.

"That's not just talk? You mean it?" Valya asked coldly.

"Why should it be only talk? Of course it's true," Styopa replied unhesitatingly.

"Swear it..."

"All right, I swear it, then... Of course, I swear it. What else could we do, anyway? We're Young Communists, aren't we?" asked flaxen-headed Styopa, raising his brows in surprise, and at last giving thought to what was being asked him. "And what about you?" he continued with some curiosity.

She brought her lips right up to his ear and replied in a low menacing whisper:

"I swe-e-ar..."

Then pressing her lips to his ear she suddenly snorted like a horse, nearly splitting his ear-drum, and said:

"All the same you're an idiot, Styopa! An idiot and a rattle-pate!" With that she ran off.

It was night when they left the state farm of Krasnodon. A dappled patch of light from the dimmed lamps ran across the steppe ahead of the lorry. A huge, star-filled sky arched above them, and there was a wonderful fragrance coming from the steppe—a mingling of hay, ripening wheat, honey and wormwood. The warm, heavy air fanned their faces, and it was hard to realize that they might well find the Germans awaiting them at home.

The lorry was crowded with young people. In other times, they would have been singing the whole night through, whooping, or perhaps exchanging kisses somewhere in a corner. But now all sat there silently, huddled together, only occasionally making some remark in low tones. Soon the majority began to doze on their bundles, pressed close together, their heads swaying as the lorry bumped over rough places in the road.

Valya and Styopa were in the very back of the lorry—they had been appointed orderlies. Styopa began to doze off too, but Valya who was sitting on her knapsack, stared ahead into the darkness of the steppe. Now that nobody was looking at her, her full lips had lost their proud set and had the lines of a sad, hurt child.

Again they hadn't accepted her for the flying-school—how many times she had tried, but they had refused her—the fools! She had no luck. What was there for her now? Styopa was nothing but a rattle-pate. Of course, she would be ready to work underground, but how was it to be done, and who would be leading and organizing it? And what would happen to her father?—Valya's father was a Jew. And what would happen to their school? So much life and strength she felt within her, she had not even had time to fall in love, and this was what her life had led to. No, she certainly had no luck. Valya would never be able to stand out in the world, to make a name for herself, to achieve fame and glory. Tears of injured pride rose to her eyes. But they were the right kind of tears, not those of barren self-love, but rising from the girlish dreams of a strong character.

Suddenly she heard a strange sound coming from behind her, as though some cat had made a spring and was scratching up the back of the lorry. She turned swiftly, and gave a slight start.

Something—either a boy, or a short, thin young fellow wearing a cap had a tenacious grasp of the edge; he was already over as far as the waist, and was in the act of throwing a leg across, at the same time glancing swiftly at everything in front of him, his eyes gleaming in the darkness.

Was he trying to steal something? What was it he wanted? Valya made an instinctive movement to push him off the lorry again, but then thought better of it, and decided to waken Styopa in order to avoid startling people.

But the boy, or young fellow, who seemed to be unbelievably quick in his movements, was already inside. He had seated himself beside Valya, and bringing his face with its laughing eyes close to hers, laid a finger on his lips. Evidently he did not know the person with whom he was dealing. Another second—and he would have found out to his cost. But in that same instant Valya had given him a swift, appraising look. He was a lad of her own age, his cap pushed to the back of his head, his face evidently long a stranger to soap and water, but filled with an expression of noble boyish cour-

age with laughing eyes which flashed in the darkness. That second in which Valya examined the lad decided things in his favour.

She made no movement and said no word, but looked at the boy with that same cold, independent expression which she always wore when there were other people present.

"What lorry is this?" he asked in a whisper, bending over towards her.

Now she could see him still better. He had curly hair, probably wiry, a strong mouth with generous lines, thin lips, pouting a little as though they were swollen.

"What about it? Haven't they sent the one you were expecting?" Valya answered coldly, likewise whispering.

He smiled.

"Mine's gone in for repairs, and I was so tired that..." he concluded his sentence with a gesture that said plainly that nothing more mattered.

"I'm sorry, the sleeping compartments are all engaged," said Valya.

"Well, I haven't closed an eye for six days, so another hour won't make much difference," he said with friendly simplicity, not in the least offended by her manner.

All the time he was swiftly examining everything in sight, trying to see the faces through the darkness.

The lorry swayed as it rumbled along, and sometimes Valya and the stranger lad were forced to hold on to the edge. Once Valya's hand fell upon his, but she immediately removed it; he jerked up his head and looked hard at her.

"Who's that sleeping there?" he asked, bringing his face closer to Styopa's, which was swaying from side to side with the movement.

"Styopa Safonov!" he said suddenly, no longer in a whisper. "Now I know what lorry this is. It's the Gorky school! You're coming from the Belovod district."

"How do you come to know Styopa Safonov?"

"We met in the gulley, by the stream."

Valya waited to hear more, but the lad fell silent.

"What were you doing by the stream?" she asked.

"Catching frogs."

"Frogs?"

"Yes, frogs..."

"But what for?"

"At first I thought he was catching them for sheat-fish bait, but it turned out he was catching them to kill them!" And the lad laughed scornfully at Styopa Safonov's strange ideas of amusement.

"And what happened then?" she asked.

"I persuaded him to come and catch sheat-fish and we went next night. I caught two, one was a little one, about a pound, but the other was quite a decent size. But Styopa didn't get anything."

"And then?"

"I got him to come and bathe with me at dawn; he did it, but came out blue all over. 'I look like a plucked goose,' says he, 'and my ears,' he says, 'they're full of cold water.'" The lad snorted. "Well, I taught him how to get warm at once, and get the water out of his ears too."

"And how's that?"

"Why, close up one ear and jump on one leg and shout: 'Katerinka, dear, take the water from my ear!' Then you stop the other ear and shout again."

"Now I understand why you made friends," said Valya, her brows rising slightly.

But he did not catch the irony in her words, and with a sudden turn to seriousness, began staring ahead into the darkness.

"You're rather late," he said.

"What of it?"

"I think the Germans'll be in Krasnodon tonight or tomorrow morning."

"Well, and what if they are?" asked Valya.

Whether she was wanting to test the lad, or whether she wanted to show that she was afraid of no German, she herself could not have said. He turned his bright eyes upon her, with their direct courageous expression, then lowered them without answering.

Valya suddenly became conscious of a feeling of enmity for him, and as though sensing this, he said placatingly:

"There's nowhere to go."

"But why go anywhere?" she said, to annoy him.

But he had no wish to be on bad terms with her and again spoke placatingly:

"Yes, that's right."

All he needed to do was to introduce himself and satisfy her curiosity, and immediately everything would have been all right between them. But either it did

not enter his head, or else he did not wish to mention his name.

Valya remained proudly silent, and he began to doze, jerking his head up with every jolt of the machine and every voluntary or involuntary movement Valya made.

The first buildings of Krasnodon loomed up out of the darkness. At the first railway crossing the lorry slowed down; but there was nobody there, the barriers were open and the lamp was out. The machine rumbled over the boards, the rails creaking.

The lad started, felt for something at his belt under the jacket carelessly flung over a dirty singlet with torn-off buttons, and said:

"I'll walk from here... Thanks for your kindness."

He rose, and it seemed to Valya that there were some heavy objects in the worn pockets of his jacket and trousers.

"I don't want to disturb Styopa," he said, once more bringing his bold, laughing face close to Valya's. "When he wakes up, tell him that Seryozha Tyulenin wants him to come."

"I'm not a post office or a telephone exchange," said Valya.

A look of sincere chagrin spread over Seryozha Tyulenin's face. He was too upset to find an answer; only his lips seemed to pout more than ever. Then, without a word, he jumped out of the machine and disappeared into the darkness.

Valya suddenly felt very sorry that she wad offended him. And the worst of it has that after what she had said, she could not tell Styopa about it and rectify her unfairness to the bold boy who had so suddenly appeared, only to disappear in the same way. She kept remembering his cold, laughing eyes which had become so sad after her brusque words, and the thin lips that looked as though they were swollen.

The whole town was wrapped in darkness, there was no glimmer of light in any window, in the shelters at the mine entrances or at the crossings. The cool air held the smell of smouldering coal from the still smoking pits. But not a soul was to be seen in the streets, and it was strange not to hear the accustomed noise of work in the region of the pits and along the railway lines. The barking of dogs seemed to emphasize the silence.

Swift and silent as a cat, Seryozha Tyulenin slipped along a branch railway line till he came to the huge deserted space where the market was held in normal times, and sliding past the dark mud-walled cottages at Li-fan-chi, surrounded by their cherry-orchards, he quietly approached his father's house, shining amidst similar clay farm-buildings which were innocent of whitewash.

Without making a sound, he opened the gate, looked around, then stole to the shed and a few seconds later emerged holding a spade. Finding his way without difficulty through the darkness in his familiar surroundings, another minute took him to the kitchen-garden, to the acacias shading the fence.

Between two bushes he dug a pit—the soil was light—and at the bottom laid several lemon-shaped grenades and two brownings with cartridges, which he took from his pockets and belt. Each object was wrapped in a cloth, which he did not remove. After that he shovelled the soil back again, smoothed it over with his hands so that the morning sun would dry it and conceal all traces of his work, wiped the spade with the hem of his jacket and after returning it to its place, knocked softly at the house door.

A door-latch rattled from the passage and he heard his mother's heavy steps as her bare feet scraped along the earthen floor of the passage to the outer door.

"Who is it?" she asked, in sleepy, alarmed tones.

"Open the door," he said quietly.

"My Lord above!" cried his mother softly, in agitation. He could hear her fumbling excitedly with the lock, unable to turn the key with her trembling hands. Then the door swung wide.

Seryozha stepped inside, and sensing in the dark the familiar sleepy smell of his mother's body, flung his arms round her large, beloved form and laid his head on her shoulder. For some time they stood there in the passage held in a close embrace silently.

"Where on earth have you been? We thought you'd either evacuated, or been killed. All the others came back, but no sign of you. You might at least have sent a message with somebody what was happening to you," said his mother in an angry whisper.

Some weeks previously, Seryozha, to-

gether with a number of other Krasnodon women and youths, had been sent to other parts of the district to dig trenches and fortifications on the approaches to Voroshilovgrad. All the Krasnodon people had returned a week previously, but Seryozha had neither come with them nor sent any message where he was.

"I was held up at Voroshilovgrad," he said in his usual tones.

"Quiet—you'll wake Granddad," said his mother angrily. It was her husband, Seryozha's father, to whom she referred. There had been eleven children in her family, and she already had grandchildren of Seryozha's age. "He'll give you what for!"

Seryozha took no notice of the warning. He knew that his father would do nothing to him. The old miner had been almost killed by a loaded coal truck that had torn loose on the Almaznaya station, belonging to the Annensk mine. The tough old man had lived and done plenty of work on the surface, but during the past few years he had begun to break up. He could barely move, and even when sitting down had to keep a specially padded crutch under his shoulder, as the bones and muscles of his waist had no strength to carry the weight of his shoulders.

"Are you hungry?" asked the mother.

"Hungry enough, but I'm so tired out that I can't think of anything else."

Seryozha tiptoed through the first room where his father lay snoring, to the bed-room where his two sisters slept—Dasha with her baby of a year and a half, whose father was at the front, and his favourite younger sister Nadya. Another sister, Fenya, lived in Krasnodon with her children—her husband was also at the front. Life had scattered Gavrila Petrovich's and Alexandra Vassilyevna's other children to various parts of the country.

Seryozha passed through the stuffy room where his sisters slept, made his way to his own bed, threw off his clothes, dropping them anywhere, and lay down on top of his bed, caring nothing that he had not washed for a whole week.

His mother, her bare feet scraping on the earthen floor, entered the room, and laying one hand on his head with its crisp curls put a large crust of fragrant, new, home-made bread into his mouth with the other. He seized it, quickly kissed his mother's hand, and despite his weariness, began eagerly eating the wonderful wheaten crust, staring into the darkness with excited eyes.

What an unusual girl that had been on the lorry! A girl of character! What were her eyes like?.. But she had not liked him, no doubt about that. If only she had known all that he had been through these days, all he had experienced! If only he could share it, even if with one person! But how good it was to be home, how grand to feel himself in his own bed, in the familiar room, among his family, and eat this fragrant wheaten bread of his mother's baking! He had thought that as soon as his head touched the pillow he would sleep like the dead, sleep for not less than two days on end, but now it seemed impossible to sleep unless somebody, at least, knew what he had just experienced. If that girl with the plaits knew! No, he had done right to tell her nothing. Heaven alone knew where she came from and what she was like! Maybe tomorrow he would tell Styopa Safonov everything and at the same time learn what kind of a girl that was. But Styopa was a chatterer. No, he would only tell Vitka Lukyanchenko, if he was not gone... But why wait for tomorrow, when he could tell everything, all of it, to his sister Nadya right away, at once?

Silently Seryozha slipped from his bed and made his way to his sister's side, the piece of bread in his hand.

"Nadya... Nadya..." he said softly, sitting down on the edge of the bed beside her and shaking her shoulder.

"Eh?.. What?.." she asked him sleepily.

"Sh-h-h..." and he laid his unwashed finger on his lips.

But she had already recognized him, and rising swiftly, embraced him with her warm bare arms and kissed him somewhere near his ear.

"Seryozha... you're alive... dear brother... alive!.." she whispered happily. Her face was hidden by the darkness, but Seryozha could picture to himself her happy smile and her cheeks flushed with sleep.

"Nadya! I haven't been to bed since the thirteenth, and ever since that morning until this evening I've been in battle all the time," he said excitedly, chewing on his bread in the darkness.

"Oh! You!" she breathed touching his arm and sat up in bed in her shift, tucking her legs under her.

"All of ours were killed, but I got away... They weren't all dead yet when I went, there were fifteen left, but the colonel said: 'You go, why should you be lost?' He was covered with wounds himself—his face and arms and legs and back, all bandages and blood. 'There's no hope for us anyway,' he said, 'but there's no reason for you to be killed.' So I went... And now I think there's none of them left alive."

"Oh... you... you!.." came Nadya's horrified whisper.

"Before I went, I found a trenching tool and took the dead men's arms into a little trench, there by Verkhneduvannaya—there are two hills and a copse to the left, it's a place you can easily recognize—well, I took the rifles there, the grenades and revolvers and the cartridges and buried them all, and then I left. The colonel kissed me. 'Remember my name,' he says: 'Somov. Somov, Nikolai Pavlovich. When the Germans go,' he says, 'or if you get through to ours, write to the Gorky military office so that they can inform my family and anybody it concerns that I've died with honour...' I told him I would..."

Seryozha fell silent and for some time ate wet, salty bread, trying to control his breathing.

"Oh... you!.." sobbed Nadya.

Yes, her brother must have gone through something. She could not remember when he had cried, not since he was seven years old. He had always been like a little flint.

"How did you come to be with them?" she asked.

"It was this way," he said, with the vivacity returning to his voice, and tucked his legs up on his sister's bed. "We had finished the fortifications, and the units withdrew from Lissichansk way and took up their positions there. There were some of our Krasnodon folks with them, so off I go to the senior lieutenant and ask him to enroll me,—he was the company commander. But he told me: 'I can't do it without the regimental commander's permission,' that's what he said. I asked him to put in a word for me. I kept on at him, and there was a corporal who took my part too. The other men laughed at me, but he was decent. Well, while we were chewing the rag over it all, the German artillery started off, and I went into the dugout with the men. They didn't let me go till it was night, let me stop there, but then they told me to be off. Well, I just crept out of the dugout and stopped there, lying down beyond the trench. In the morning the Germans attacked, so back I went to the trench, took a rifle from a dead soldier and started firing, like the rest of them there. We kept on beating off attacks for several days, and nobody tried to send me away any more. Then the colonel heard about me, and he says: 'If we weren't doomed men, I'd enroll you in the unit,' he says, 'but it's a shame to do it, you've got a long time you can live yet!' Then he laughed and he said to me: 'You can count yourself a kind of partisan.' So I retreated along with them nearly to Verkhneduvannaya. I've seen the Jerries as close as I can see you," he continued in a terrible, low, hissing wisper. "I killed two of them myself... Maybe I got more, but there's two I saw I'd potted," and his thin lips twisted. "And now I'll kill those snakes everywhere, wherever I see them, mark my words..."

Nadya felt it was the truth Seryozha was speaking—both that he had already killed two Jerries and that he would get more.

"You'll be killed," she said in terror.

"Better that way, then lick their boots or just let everything slide."

"Oh, dear me, what's going to happen to us all!" said Nadya desparingly, with a sudden more vivid realization of what was awaiting them tomorrow, perhaps even that same night. "There are over a hundred wounded at our hospital, can't move from their beds. The doctor stayed with them, Fyodor Fyodorovich. All the time we were walking about among them, we were thinking, the Germans'll kill them all for sure," she concluded sadly.

"The people should have taken them into their houses. What have you all been thinking about?" said Seryozha disturbed.

"The people! And who can tell what's in anybody's mind these days? Over there at Shanhai, they say there's some stranger hidden in Ignat Fomin's house, and who knows what sort of person it is? Maybe it's someone from the Germans

to spy? If it's at Fomin's, it'll be nobody good."

Ignat Fomin was one of the miners who had several times received premiums for his work, and even been mentioned in the newspapers. But here in this district inhabited for the most part by mine workers including many Stakhanovites, Ignat Fomin was looked upon as an upstart, and a rather mysterious character to boot. He had appeared at the beginning of the thirties, when many strangers came to Krasnodon and to the whole Donbass for that matter, and had settled down in Shanhai. There were a good many rumours about him, and it was to these that Nadya referred.

Seryozha yawned. Now that he had unburdened himself and eaten his bread he felt really at home, and terribly sleepy.

"Lie down, Nadya..."

"I shall never be able to sleep any more now."

"But I shall," said Seryozha, and made his way to his own bed.

Barely had his head touched the pillow, however, when he saw once more the eyes of the girl on the lorry. "I shall find you all the same," said Seryozha smiling, and then everything before him and within him sank into darkness.

Seryozha Tyulenin was the youngest in the family, and had grown up like the grass on the steppe. His father, who was from Tula, had come as a boy to work in the Donbass, and in forty years' mining had acquired those traits of naive self-esteem, a despotic pride in his profession which reaches its heights only among miners and seamen.

When a man loses his working capacity while still in the prime of life, it's no simple matter to bring up three lads and eight girls—eleven in all—teach them a trade and get them started in life. But the ten older ones were already earning their way and the youngest, Seryozha, still at school. He never had new clothes or shoes—everything he wore had come down from the ten older ones; he was hardened to sun and wind, rain and frost, the soles of his feet were as horny as a camel's, and whatever bumps and bruises life brought him, healed on the instant as in the old fairy-tales.

Suppose you have the heart of an eagle, but you are still small, you are badly dressed, there are callouses on your feet. What would you do, reader? Of course, first of all you would achieve some daring exploit. Who is there that does not dream of exploits in childhood—but it is not always possible to carry them out.

In the summer holidays you can be the most sunburned of all, you can be the best diver and swimmer and catch little pikes under snags with the naked hands better than anybody else. But of course that's not sufficient. And on one of those days that are just like any other day, you jump out of a first floor window right into the school yard, where all the children are having their usual recess. And for an instant, hurtling through the air, you have a thrilling moment of terrified delight in the flight itself, mingled with the longing to show off, and a consciousness of the squeals from the girls of all classes, from the first to the tenth. But everything else seems nothing but disappointment and loss.

Seryozha Tyulenin was born at a time when there was no reason for doing any underground work. He had nothing to flee from, and nowhere to flee. He had jumped out of the first floor window, and as he now fully realized it had been merely silly. And his only devoted follower was Vitka Lukyanchenko.

But one must never lose hope. Ice-fields, gripping the waters of the Arctic in their iron clutch, cracked the hull of the "Chelyuskin." And the whole country heard that crack, that terrible crack in the still of the night. But the men did not die, they landed on the ice. The whole world watched to see if they would be saved. And they were. There are men in the world with the hearts of eagles, full of valour. These were simple, ordinary men, just like you or me. They flew through frost and blizzard to the ship-wrecked group, they brought them away bound to the wings of their aircraft—these first Heroes of the Soviet Union.

Chkalov! He was just an ordinary person like yourself, but his name resounds through the world like a challenge. The flight across the North Pole to America—the dream of humanity! Chkalov, Gromov. And the Papaninites on their icefloe?

And so life goes on, filled with dreams and everyday work.

Throughout the whole Soviet Union, and in Krasnodon itself, there are a number of people, ordinary people, like yourself, whom fame has marked out for its own—people of a type who never used to be mentioned in books. In the Donbass, and not only in the Donbass, everybody knows the names of Nikita Izotov and Stakhanov. Any Pioneer can tell you who is Pasha Anghelina, and Krivonoss and Makar Mazai [1]. And everybody respects them. And Father always asks you to read him those parts in the newspaper which mention such people, and then mutters unintelligibly and hums for a long time afterwards, and you can see he feels it very bitterly that he is old and that the truck injured him. Yes, he had got through plenty of hard work in his life, Gavrila Tyulenin, "Granddad," and Seryozha could easily understand how hard it was for him now that he could not take his place in the ranks with these people.

It was real fame these people had. But Seryozha was still too young, he had to go to school. He would find all that later, in adult life. But for achievements like those of Chkalov and Gromov he was fully ripe—he felt it with all his heart. The trouble was that he was the only one who knew it. He was alone in the world with this consciousness. Sometimes he would even catch glances directed at him which said very plainly: "Has this lively lad got designs on my pocket?"

Thus he was, when the war came upon him. He tried again and again to get into a special flying-school—he felt he had got to be an airman. But he was not accepted.

All the schoolboys went to help in the fields, but he, cut to the heart, went to work in the pit. In a fortnight he was already at the coal face, cutting coal side by side with adult men.

He himself was not aware how much he rose in people's estimation. He would emerge from the cage, covered with coal-dust, only his bright eyes and thin lips lightening his black face; he would walk along with the grown men, dignified, with a swinging stride; he stood under the shower, blowing and rasping like his father, then walked leisurely home barefoot—his working boots he left at the pithead.

He arrived home late, after everybody else had eaten. He was given his dinner separately. He was an adult, a man, a worker.

Alexandra Vassilyevna would take an iron pot of borshch from the stove and pour out a full bowl of it straight from the pot which she held in a cloth with both plump hands. The steam rose, and never in his life had the home-made wheaten bread seemed to taste so good. The father would look at his boy, his piercing eyes sparkling from under the bushy brows, his moustache twitching. Without humming or caughing, he would converse quietly with his son as with another worker.

Everything interested him—how things were going at the pit, and how much coal each had cut. The father asked about the tools and the mining-clothes. He talked about galleries, drifts, clinker, the coal face, and shafts as he would talk about the rooms, corners and sheds of his own home. For that matter, the old man had worked at almost all the pits in the district, and when he was no longer able to work, heard all about them from his comrades. He knew in which direction a tunnel was being driven and how the work was going, and he could explain, stabbing the air with a long, bony finger. the exact layout of the workings and everything that was being done there.

During the winter, Seryozha would go straight from school without a bite to his friends among the artillerymen, sappers, mine-layers or airmen; at midnight he would prepare his lessons, his eyes closing with weariness, and at five in the morning he was already at the rifle range where one of his sergeant friends would teach, him to fire a rifle or light machine-gun, together with his own group. Actually, he could fire a rifle, revolver, mauser, Maxim and other kinds of gun no worse than any of the soldiers there, he could hurl grenades or fire-bottles accurately; he could dig in, fill mines, mine and demine a field; he knew the construction of aircraft of all countries, and he could take the detonator out of bombs. And in all this he had as his faithful follower Vitka Lukyanchenko, whom he took every

[1] Famous Stakhanovites in industry and agriculture.

where, and who regarded him much as Seryozha himself regarded Sergo Orjonikidze or Serguei Kirov.

That spring he made one more desperate effort to be accepted, not at the special flying-school for boys this time, but at the real training school for adults. Again defeat. He was told that he was too young, he had better come again next year.

Yes, that was a bitter defeat. Instead of flying-school, to go and help build fortifications in front of Voroshilovgrad. But he was quite determined not to return home.

How many arts and wiles he had used to be enrolled in the unit! He had not told Nadya a hundredth part of the shifts and humiliations he had gone through. And now he knew what battle was, and death, and fear.

Everything was so silent in the town that one would have thought it was not there, and only their house with the sleeping Germans stood alone in a void. Suddenly there was a bright flare somewhere above, the other side of the crossing, near the park. For an instant it illuminated the whole void—the hill, and the school and hospital buildings. A second later—another flare, still brighter, and again everything leaped from the darkness—even the inside of the room was lighted up for an instant. It was followed by something—not so much an explosion as a kind of soundless vibration, as though from some very distant explosions, one after the other. Then—darkness again.

"What's that? What's that?" asked Elizaveta Alexeyevna[1] in alarm.

Volodya started up in his bed.

Lussia's heart seemed to stop beating as she stared into the darkness, in the direction of the flare. Somewhere on the height there was the glow of some invisible conflagration, sometimes stronger, sometimes dying down, so that the roofs of the District Executive Committee building and that of the "Crazy Landlord" alternately stood out against it, and faded into the dusk. Suddenly a tongue of flame shot up in the centre of that strange light, casting a crimson glow over the sky and illuminating the whole patch of vacant land, the whole town; the room was so light that furniture and even faces were clearly visible.

"A fire," said Lussia with an inexplicable note of triumph in her voice, as she turned back to the room; then again gazed at that tall tongue of flame.

"Close the window," said Elizaveta Alexeyevna, with fear in her voice.

"It's all right, nobody can see," said Lussia, shivering as though with cold.

She did not know where the fire was, or how it had broken out, but there was something in that lofty, tumultuous, victorious flame that seemed to clear the spirit, something exalted and terrible. And Lussia could not tear her eyes from it, but stood there, her face bathed in its light.

The glow spread over the centre of the town and far beyond. The children's hospital and the school building could be seen as clearly as though it were midday, and not only those, but the further districts lying beyond some vacant ground, close to the First-bis pit. That ruddy sky, and the glow upon the house roofs and the hills, presented a fantastic and enchanted but at the same time awe-inspiring picture.

The whole town had awakened and come to life. There were sounds of movement from the centre, voices, cries and the rumble of lorries moving somewhere. Germans awakened and stirred along the street where the Osmukhins house stood, and in their yard. Dogs—those which the Germans had not yet managed to shoot—forgot their fears of the day and barked wildly at the fire. Only the drunken Germans in the room across the passage heard nothing and slept on.

For about two hours the fire raged, then began to die down. Again the hills and the distant parts of the town slipped back under the blanket of night except when an occasional spurt of flame brought out prominently the curve of a hill or a cluster of roofs, or the black cone of a coal tip. But over the park, the sky for a long time held that ruddy glow, now brightening, now dying down, and for a long time buildings of the District Executive Committee and of the "Crazy Landlord" were visible. Then they too became dimmer. And darkness

[1] Volodya Osmukhin's mother.

gathered again, denser and denser, on the vacant ground before the house.

But still Lussia sat there by the window, excited, staring in the direction of the fire. Elizaveta Alexeyevna and Volodya also found themselves unable to sleep.

Suddenly it seemed to Lussia that a cat slipped across the vacant ground to her left, then something rustled by the house wall. Somebody was stealthily making his way to the window. Instinctively she shrank back and was about to close it when another sound stopped her. She heard her name called in a whisper:

"Lussia... Lussia..."

She stood motionless.

"Don't be frightened, it's me, Tyulenin," the voice whispered, and Seryozha's head, his crisp curls bare, rose to the level of the sill. "Are there any Germans at your place?"

"Yes," Lussia whispered, looking with a mingling of fear and joy in Seryozha's daring eyes. "And at yours?"

"Not so far."

"Who's that?" asked Elizaveta Alexeyevna, a chill of fear running down her.

The distant glow of the fire lighted up Seryozha's face, and both Elizaveta Alexeyevna and Volodya recognized him.

"Where's Volodya?" asked Seryozha, crawling over the sill.

"Here I am."

"Anybody else stopped behind?"

"Tolya Orlov. I don't know of anybody else, I don't go out anywhere, I've got appendicitis."

"Vitka Lukyanchenko and Lyubka Shevtsova are here," said Seryozha. "And I've seen Styopa Safonov from the Gorky school."

"How did you get here to us? It's night," said Volodya.

"I've been watching the fire. From the park. I began to make my way home through Shanhai, and then I saw from the gulley that your window was open."

"What's been burning?"

"The Trust."

"Oho!"

"That's where they've fixed up their headquarters. They came shooting out in their underpants," and Seryozha laughed quietly.

"You think someone set it alight?" asked Volodya.

Seryozha was silent, his eyes shining in the darkness like a cat's.

"Well, it didn't catch fire of itself," he said, and again laughed quietly. "How are you planning to live?" he suddenly asked Volodya.

"And you?"

"As though you didn't know!"

"Well, the same applies to me," Volodya replied with relief in his voice. "I'm so glad to have you, you know, so glad I am..."

"And so am I," said Seryozha reluctantly. There was nothing he hated more than sentiment. "Are the Germans you've got savage?"

"They've been drinking all night. Roasted all the chickens. Forced their way into the room several times," said Volodya awkwardly though at the same time proud to show Seryozha that he had experienced what the Germans were. But he did not mention that the corporal had pestered his sister.

"Then that's not so bad, so far," said Seryozha calmly. "But SS men put up at the hospital, and there were about forty wounded left there. They took them all up on the Verkhneduvannaya grove and turned their tommy-guns on them. But when they began taking them off, the doctor, Fyodor Fyodorovich, couldn't contain himself and tried to stop them, so they shot him right there in the passage."

"Those devils!.. Eh-heh... such a fine fellow he was," said Volodya, frowning. "That's the hospital where I was."

"Yes, there's not so many like him," said Seryozha.

"And what's going to be the end of it all, dear Lord!" said Elizaveta Alexeyevna with a soft groan.

"I must run before it gets light," said Seryozha. "We'll keep in touch." He glanced at Lussia, made a flowery gesture and said daringly: "Auf Wiedersehen..." He knew that she had been dreaming of studying foreign languages.

His swift, nimble, alert figure slipped away into the darkness and in an instant was as invisible and inaudible as though he had melted into thin air.

They had gone to bed early, without putting on the light, but everybody was too excited to sleep. It was impossible to slip out unobserved, so he went

quite openly as though making for the outside lavatory, then slipped into the kitchen-garden. He dug up one of the holes where he had concealed the fire-bottles using his hands—a spade would have been too dangerous at night. He heard the house door creak, then his sister Nadya came out and called him softly several times:

"Seryozha... Seryozha..."

She waited for a little while, called again, then the door creaked once more—his sister had gone in.

He pushed a bottle into each of his trouser pockets, hid a third under his coat, then, making his way through the Shanhai district in order to avoid the centre, slipped through the warm darkness of the July night to the park.

In the park everything was empty and silent. But quietest of all was the school building, which he entered by the window smashed in during the day. The silence was so profound that every step seemed to resound not only through the whole building, but through the whole town. A dim light seeped in through the tall staircase windows, and when his shape was outlined against one of them, he felt as though somebody hidden in the darkness of the corner was just about to jump out on him. But he fought down his fears, and soon found himself at his observation post in the attic.

For some time he sat at the window, although nothing could now be seen through it, just to pull himself together. Then he felt about for the long nails which held the window frame, softly bent them back and removed it. Fresh air blew in upon him—it was still stuffy in the attic.

After the darkness of the school and particularly of the attic, he could already distinguish what was happening in the street before him. He could hear cars rushing about the town and see the moving points of their dimmed lights. The continuous movement of units towards Verkhneduvannaya continued during the nights too. The lamps could be seen along the whole of the road. Some machines had them full on, and the light would shoot suddenly upward from the far side of the hill like a searchlight, cutting far into the night sky, or bringing out into sharp relief some wall or the gleaming undersides of leaves from a tree in a thicket.

At the entrance to the Trust, wartime nocturnal life was seething. Cars, motorcycles kept rushing up. Officers and soldiers came and went continually, rifles and spurs clattered, and there was constant sound of sharp, foreign speech. But all the windows were darkened.

Seryozha was so wound up, all his thoughts and senses were so fiercely concentrated on the one object, that this unforeseen circumstance—the fact that the windows were blacked out—made no difference to his determination. For two hours at least he sat there beside the little window. In the town, all noise had died down. Passing traffic had also stopped, but inside the building people were still stirring—Seryozha could tell that by the bands of light showing at the edges of the blackout curtains. Then the light went out in two second-floor windows, somebody inside opened one window, then another was flung wide. Some invisible person was standing before it in the darkness—Seryozha could feel it. Then the lights went out in some ground-floor rooms, and those windows too opened.

"Wer ist da?" came a commanding voice from a first-floor window, and Seryozha could distinguish a vague figure leaning out of the window. "Who's there?" the voice asked a second time.

"Lieutenant Mayer, Herr Colonel," replied a youthful voice from below.

"I would not advise you to open windows on the ground-floor," came the voice from above.

"It's horribly stuffy, Herr Colonel. Of course, if you forbid it..."

"No, you needn't turn into a roast joint," replied the authoritative voice from above, with a laugh.

Seryozha, understanding nothing, listened with beating heart to this talk in German.

Lights continued to be extinguished, blinds were raised, and windows opened one after the other. Sometimes snatches of conversation floated out, somebody began to whistle a tune. Sometimes a match would flare up, and for an instant a face, hands and a cigarette would leap out of the darkness, and then for a long time there would be a fiery point in the darkness of the room.

"What a huge country, there's no end to it!" said somebody at the window,

evidently addressing a friend further back in the room.

Gradually the Germans went to bed. Silence fell in building and town, and it was only from the Verkhneduvannaya side that cars still moved, their light stabbing the night sky.

Seryozha could hear the beating of his own heart—it seemed to resound through the whole attic. It was still very stuffy there. Seryozha was wet with perspiration.

The Trust building, wrapped in darkness and slumber, rose dimly before him. He could see the gaping window openings on both floors. Yes, now was the time for it... He made several tentative arm movements to see how he should swing, and gauge the distance at least approximately.

The bottles, which he had removed from coat and pockets immediately upon entering, stood by his side. He felt for one of them, gripped it firmly by the neck, aimed and hurled it through one of the open lower windows.

The ring of breaking glass, a slight explosion like a bursting electric lamp and a blinding flare illuminated the rectangle of the window and even part of the street separating the Trust and the school. Flames burst from the window. In the same instant Seryozha flung the second bottle into the same window, where it exploded loudly in the fire. Inside the room there was already a raging furnace, licking the window frame and sending long tongues up to the outside wall, almost to the first floor. Inside, somebody was howling and screaming desperately, and shouts echoed over the whole building. Seryozha seized the third bottle and hurled it through a first-floor window opposite. He heard it burst, and saw a spurt of flame that lighted up the whole attic, but in that instant Seryozha was already far from the window and at the entrance to the back stairs.

He raced down, and feeling that he had no time to look for the class room with the broken window, flew into the nearest room—the teachers' room, he thought—swiftly flung the window open, sprang out into the park, stooped low and sped away into its depths.

From the moment when he threw the third bottle until he realized that he was running through the park, everything he had done had been instinctive, and he could hardly recall how it had all happened. But now he realized that he had to fling himself down, lie still for some moments and listen.

He could hear a mouse rustling somewhere not far away in the grass. He could see nothing of the fire from where he was lying, but shouts and the sound of running feet came to him from the street. He jumped up and ran out, right to the edge of the park, to the top of a worked-out pit. This he did in case the park should be surrounded—he could get away from here under any conditions.

Now he saw a huge glow spreading over the sky, casting its crimson light even over the tip and the tops of the trees, which were a good distance from the fire. Seryozha felt his heart ready to leap from his bosom. He trembled all over, and could hardly restrain himself from laughing at the top of his voice.

"There's a present for you! Setzen Sie sich! Sprechen Sie Deutsch? Haben Sie etwas?.." he muttered, rattling off triumphantly the first phrases from his German grammar that happened to enter his head.

The glow spread, staining the sky over the park; even there the excited movement in the central part of the town could be heard. It was time to go. Seryozha felt an irresistible desire to make his way once more to the little garden where he had seen that girl, Valya Borts, the previous day—yes, now he knew her name.

Slipping silently through the darkness, he made his way to the back of the Derevyannaya Street, climbed a fence into the garden and was just preparing to pass through the gate, when he heard people talking in low voices just beside it. Taking advantage of the fact that the Germans had not yet occupied the street, the inhabitants had come out to look at the fire. Seryozha circled the house, silently climbed the fence on its far side and walked up to the gate.

A group of men and women were standing there, their faces lighted with the glow of the fire. Among them he saw Valya.

"What's that burning?" he asked, to let her know he was there.

"It's somewhere the other side of Sadovaya... Or maybe the school," replied an excited woman's voice.

"That's the Trust burning," said Valya sharply, and even somewhat challengingly. "Mum, I'm going to bed," she added, pretending to yawn, and went in by the gate.

Seryozha would have liked to follow her, but he heard her heels rap on the steps and the door shut firmly behind her.

... As Elena Nikolayevna went for water along the street parallel with Sadovaya, she suddenly saw a familiar cart drawn by a dun horse, and walking beside it—her son, Oleg.

Elena Nikolayevna looked about her helplessly, dropped the buckets and yoke, and flinging her arms wide, rushed to him.

"Olezhka... my boy!.." she kept repeating burying her face in his shoulder, then stroking his ruddy hair, which had taken on a new gold from the sun, running her fingers over his chest, shoulders, back and hips.

He was a head taller than she was; during those past days he had become deeply tanned by the sun, his face was thinner but older, more manly. But under this manliness, she could see in her son the familiar features, preserved for ever in her memory, from the time when he had stammered his first words and taken his first stumbling steps on chubby sunburned legs that flung him from side to side as though a strong wind were swaying him.

He was really only a big child. He embraced his mother with his strong arms, and his eyes shone on her with the same light they had held for sixteen years and a half, as he kept repeating:

"Mummy... Mummy... Mummy..."

For some seconds nothing and nobody else existed for them, neither the two German soldiers watching them from a neighbouring yard with an expression which seemed to ask—was there not something here disruptive of Ordnung,—nor yet their own people standing beside the droshky watching the meeting between mother and son with varying feelings—Uncle Kolya, phlegmatic and sad; Aunt Marina, with tears in her beautiful, exhausted black eyes; the three-year-old boy, surprised and cross because his Auntie Lena was not kissing him first; and the grandfather who had been driving, with the expression of an old man who has seen much in his time and thinks: "Well, all sorts of things can happen in this life." But kindly people, watching from behind their window curtains this meeting of the tall youth with bare, sunkissed head, and the still youthful woman with the coronet of fluffy plaits, both so like one another, might have thought of a meeting between brother and sister had they not known that Oleg Koshevoy had returned to his mother, just like so many hundreds and thousands of Krasnodon people who had not been able to escape the disaster and were now returning to their town, to their homes already occupied by Germans.

At difficult moments in the lives of peoples and states, the ordinary person's thoughts of his own fate are always closely linked with those about the whole nation. But Oulya had no strength to think either about the fate of her native land, nor yet about her own. All that she had lived through since that moment when she had seen the swaying pile driver at the First-bis pit, the parting with her dear friend and her mother, the journey across the sun-scorched, trampled steppe, and finally the crossing, where that blood-stained upper half of a woman's body with the red shawl on its head, and the boy with his eyes starting out of their sockets, seemed a personification of the whole—all this kept coming back to her again, sometimes with stabbing sharpness, sometimes weighing on her like lead. She walked silently and apparently calmly beside the cart for the whole distance, and only the expression of gloomy strength which showed in her eyes, nostrils and lips betrayed the storm raging within her.

Zhora Arutyunyants, on the other hand, was perfectly clear in his mind how he was going to live under the Germans. And he expressed himself aloud with the greatest certainty:

"Cannibals! Can our people ever come to terms with them? No. Our people will most certainly take up arms, as they have done in the other places the Germans have occupied. My father's a quiet sort of person, but I've not the slightest doubt that he will take to arms. And my mother as well, with her character. And if our old people do it,

then what should we do, we young people! We young folks here ought to make a list—investigate, and then make a list," Zhora corrected himself, "of all the young people who haven't gone, and get in touch immediately with the underground organization. I know that Volodya Osmukhin and Tolya Orlov, at least, are still in Krasnodon—and they aren't likely to sit there with folded arms. And Lussia, Volodya's sister, that's a splendid girl," said Zhora with feeling. "She at least won't stand by doing nothing, that's certain."

Choosing his moment, when nobody except Klava could hear them, Vanya Zemnukhov said to Zhora:

"Listen, Abrek [1]. We all agree with you, honest. But... keep your tongue between your teeth. First of all, it's a thing for everybody to decide according to his own conscience. And secondly, you can't answer for everybody. Well, if somebody chances to let his tongue wag, then I don't need to tell you what'll happen both to you and to all of us."

"Why do you call me abrek?" asked Zhora, his eyes blazing with pride and inspiration.

"Because you're black and act like a wild horseman."

"You know, Vanya, when I go underground, I'll take Abrek as my nickname," said Zhora Arutyunyants, lowering his voice.

Vanya shared the thoughts and feelings that occupied Zhora. But whatever filled his mind at that time, he was always conscious of happiness at Klava's presence and pride when he remembered how he had borne himself at the crossing; he heard again Kovalyov's words: "Vanya, save them," and felt himself the saviour of Klava and her mother. This feeling of happiness was accentuated by the fact that Klava shared it fully. Had it not been for anxiety about her father, and her mother's plaintive lamentations, Klava Kovalyova would have been simply and openly happy with her sweetheart, here on the sun-drenched Donets steppe, despite the turrets of German tanks, the barrels of A.A. guns, and the helmets, German helmets racing through the golden wheat with a roar of engine and a cloud of dust, now here, now there.

[1] A man from the Caucasus who had fought as a partisan against tsarist soldiers.

But among all these people, with such varying thoughts and feelings about themselves and the whole of their land, there were two, differing widely in age and character, but amazingly alike in their glowing enthusiasm and thirst for action. One of them was Valko, the other Oleg.

Valko was a man of few words, and nobody ever knew what was going on under his Gipsy exterior. One would have thought that his whole life had changed for the worse. And yet, nobody merrier or more lively could be found. All the way he had gone on foot, taking care of everything, always ready to talk to the children and young folks, first one, then another, as though testing them, and usually joking.

Oleg too found it impossible to sit still in the droshky. He kept wondering impatiently how long it would be before he saw his mother and grandmother again. He would rub his hands in satisfaction as he listened to Zhora Arutyunyants, and then suddenly start chaffing Vanya and Klava, or comfort Oulya with his shy stammer, or nurse his three-year-old cousin, or make declarations of love to Aunt Marina, or start long political discussions with his grandfather. But sometimes he would stride silently beside the droshky, with long lines etched deeply on his forehead, an obstinate set to his still childish mouth which always looked as though touched with a smile, and a stern yet tender expression in the eyes straining thoughtfully into the distance.

It was night when they approached Krasnodon, and following the advice of Valko, who guessed that night traffic might be forbidden in the town, they camped for the night in the gulley. The moon was shining brightly. Everybody was excited, unable to sleep.

Valko went off to investigate where the gulley led. Suddenly he heard footsteps behind him. He turned, stopped, and in the bright light of the moon which gleamed on the dew, he recognized Oleg.

"Comrade Valko, I need very badly to talk to you. Very badly," said Oleg quietly, with a slight stammer.

"Very well," said Valko. "But we'll have to stand, it's wet everywhere," and he smiled.

"Help me to find somebody from our underground workers in the town,"

said Oleg, looking straight into his companion's deep-set eyes shadowed by their bushy brows.

Valko raised his head sharply and studied Oleg's face for some moments.

He saw standing before him one of the new, youngest, generation. The face held what might seem to be the most contradictory characteristics—dreaminess and activity, fantasy and practical common sense, love and kindliness and ruthlessness, breadth of feeling and sober calculation, a passionate love for the joys of life and self-restraint. And these apparently contradictory traits gave a unique picture of this generation.

Actually, Valko did not know him at all well. But nevertheless he trusted him.

"Well, you've already found something in the nature of an underground worker," said Valko gaily. "As for what we're to do further, we'll have to talk about that."

Oleg waited in silence.

"I can see that this isn't a decision of today," said Valko.

He was right. As soon as Voroshilovgrad had come under immediate threat, Oleg, carefully concealing his intention from his mother, had gone to the Youth district committee and asked to be used for underground work. And he had been very offended and hurt when, without any ground given, he had been told:

"Now look here, lad, get your traps together and get out of here the quickest way you can."

He did not know that the Youth district committee was not forming its own underground group, and the members placed at the disposal of the underground organization had been picked long before. The reply which he had received had not only conveyed no slight, but had actually been prompted by care for a comrade.

So there was nothing for him to do but to go.

But at the very instant when the first events happened at the crossing and Oleg saw clearly that they had not been able to get away, the thought flashed through his mind: "Now my dream will be realized." All the depression caused by the flight, the parting with his mother and his uncertainty about her fate seemed to fall from him, and all his moral strength, his passion and dream, his hopes, all the ardour and resolution of youth fused into an iron will.

"That's why you've been able to pull yourself together, because you'd made up your mind," Valko continued. "I'm the same myself. Yesterday I couldn't get the whole thing out of my mind—how we'd blown up the pits, and the army retreating, and the refugees suffering so much, and the children. It was all weighing me down," he went on with unusual frankness. "I ought to have been glad to be seeing my family again, I haven't set eyes on them since the beginning of the war, and all the time it kept knocking at my heart: 'Yes... if you're in time. But will you be in time?' And then I'd tell myself: 'Well, I'll be in time all right, but what then?' That's how it was yesterday. But today? Our army's the other side of the Don. The Germans had caught us. I'd not seen my family after all. Maybe I'll never see them again. But all the same, I feel better. And why? Because now I've one road to take. I know just where I stand and what I have to do like a carter. And that's the main thing for people like us."

Oleg felt that here in the gulley near Krasnodon, with the moonlight gleaming on the dew, that sternly restrained man with the bushy, Gipsy-like eyebrows was talking to him more frankly, perhaps, than he had ever spoken to anybody else.

"Now look here, don't you lose touch with these young folks, they're the right stuff," said Valko. "Don't give yourself away, but keep in touch with them and find out some more that'll be useful for what we want, boys and girls with grit in them. Only see that you don't start anything until you hear from me. You'd make a mess of it. I'll tell you what you're to do, and when..."

"Do you know who's been left in town?" asked Oleg.

"No, I don't know," said Valko frankly. "But I'll find out."

"And how am I to find you?"

"You don't need to find me. Even if I had a place to live, I wouldn't invite you, but to tell the truth, so far I've got none."

Hard as it was to be the one to bring the news of the death of father and husband, nevertheless Valko decided to

conceal himself for the present with the Shevtsov family, where he was known and liked. With the assistance of such daring girls as Lyubka, he hoped to link up with other people and find himself a home in some more secluded spot.

"You had better give me your address, I'll find you."

Valko repeated Oleg's street and house number several times until he was sure of remembering them.

"Don't you worry, I'll find you," said Valko softly. "And if you don't hear of me for some time, keep your hair on and wait... And now you go," and with his broad hand he gave Oleg's shoulder a slight push.

"Thank you," said Oleg, barely audibly.

He returned to the camp with an excitement he could not have put into words, that seemed to lend wings to his feet. Everybody was asleep, only the horses were crunching the grass. The only exception was Vanya Zemnukhov, who was sitting by the heads of the sleeping Klava and her mother, his cap pushed on the back of his head, his knees clasped in his arms.

"Vanya, dear friend," thought Oleg, with that feeling of tenderness which he now had for all the people. He went up to his comrade and sank down beside him, deeply moved, on the damp grass.

Vanya turned and looked at him, his face pale in the moonlight.

"Well, how about it? What did he say to you?" he asked animatedly.

"What are you talking about?" said Oleg, surprised and taken aback.

"What did Valko say? Does he know anything?"

Oleg looked at him in indecision.

"Oh, don't you play hide and seek with me," said Vanya with some annoyance. "We're not children."

"H-how did you know?" whispered Oleg, in still greater surprise, looking at his friend wide-eyed.

"Doesn't take much cleverness to know your underground connections, they're about the same as mine," said Vanya, laughing at him. "Has it really never entered your head that I was thinking of the same thing?"

"Vanya..." with his large hand Oleg seized Zemnukhov's narrow one and gave it a hard grip, which was immediately returned. "That means together, then?"

"Of course, together."

"Always?"

"Always," said Vanya very quietly and seriously. "As long as the blood flows in my veins."

They looked into each other's faces, eyes shining.

"You know, he knows nothing yet. But he said he'd find me. And he will," said Oleg proudly. "You see you don't stop long at Nizhnyaya Alexandrovka..."

"Don't worry, I won't," said Vanya, shaking his head decidedly. Then slightly confused: "I'll just get them fixed up."

"Are you in love with her?" Oleg whispered, stooping till his face was quite close to that of Vanya.

"Is that the sort of thing one talks about?"

"Oh, don't be shy about it. Because it's splendid, it's real-ly splendid... She's awfully fine, and you... I haven't words for you," Oleg concluded with a naively happy face and voice.

"Yes, how much we have to stand, we and all the other people, but all the same life's grand," said the short-sighted Vanya.

"That's t-true, it's t-true," said Oleg stammering badly and tears came into his eyes.

Only a little over a week had passed since fate had brought all these various people together, children and adults. Now the sun rising over the steppe was shining on them in company for the last time, but one might have thought that they had passed a whole lifetime together, such a warmth, such sadness and agitation filled their hearts when the moment came to part.

"Well, lads and lasses..." Valko began standing alone in the middle of the ravine in breeches and slippers, then he gestured with a stout arm and said nothing more.

The young folks exchanged addresses, promised to keep in touch with each other, and said good-bye. And for a long time they could still see each other after they took their ways in different directions over the steppe. Here or there, a figure would wave a hand or a handkerchief. But then first one, then another disappeared over a hill or into a gulley. And it was as though nothing

of this journey taken together had ever been, in that great and terrible year, beneath the scorching sun.

And Oleg Koshevoy crossed the threshold of his home, occupied by the Germans.

Marina and her little son settled down in the room beside the kitchen, together with Granny Vera and Elena Nikolayevna. Nikolai Nikolayevich and Oleg made themselves two pallets from boards and fixed themselves up somehow in the woodshed in the yard.

At times when neither the general nor his adjutant were at home, Oleg and Nikolai Nikolayevich would venture into their own house. Their noses would be assailed by a compound of perfume, foreign tobacco and that specific bachelor smell which neither perfume nor tobacco could smother, and which is always to be found to a greater or lesser degree where generals and soldiers are living separated from their families.

In one of those quiet hours, Oleg came into the house to visit his mother. The German soldier-cook and Granny Vera were silently cooking at the stove—each one their own. In the room which served as dining-room, the batman had flung himself down in his boots and cap on the divan, where he lay smoking, and evidently extremely bored. It was the same divan where Oleg had been used to sleep.

"Halt!" said the batman. "You're getting a bit above yourself, it seems to me—yes, yes, I can see it more and more every day!" he added, and sat up, dropping his huge feet in their thick-soled boots to the floor. "Thumbs to your trousers' seams and heels together, you're talking to somebody older than yourself!" He was trying to work himself into a rage or at least to feel some strong irritation, but the heat and stuffiness made him too languid for it. "Do as you're told! You hear me? You!.." shouted the batman.

Oleg, who had understood perfectly what the German said, and had been looking at his flaming freckles, suddenly put on a scared expression, swiftly crouched down, struck his knees and cried:

"The general's coming!"

In an instant the batman was on his feet. As he moved he tore the cigarette from his mouth and crushed it in his hand. In an instant the lazy expression had given place to a mingling of eagerness and stupidity. He clicked his heels together and froze, thumbs to his trousers' seams.

"That's the way, that's the way, you scum! Lounging on the divan while your master's away... Now you just stand there," said Oleg, without raising his voice, thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to say it to the batman without any danger and knowing that the latter would not understand him; then he turned and went into his mother's room. She was standing at the door, pale, her head raised, holding some sewing. She had heard everything.

"How can you, son..." she began. But at the same instant the batman burst in upon them with a roar.

"Get back! This way!" he bawled, beside himself. His face flushed crimson, even the freckles had disappeared.

"Don't take any n-notice of that i-idiot, Mum," said Oleg, his voice trembling very faintly, ignoring the batman as though he did not exist.

"Come here!.. Swine!.." howled the batman.

Suddenly he flung himself upon Oleg, seized him by the coat lapels with both hands and began shaking him savagely, glaring at him with eyes which gleamed white in his purple face.

"Don't... don't! Olezhek, don't resist, why must you..." said Elena Nikolayevna trying to tear the batman's huge hands from her son's chest with her little ones.

Oleg, equally red in the face, seized the batman by the belt below his tunic with both hands, and his flashing eyes glared at the German with such hatred that for an instant the latter faltered.

"L-let go... You hear?" said Oleg in a terrible whisper, crushing the man to him with all his strength, his fury increasing as he saw in his enemy's face a flash of something—not fear, perhaps, but certainly a doubt whether he was coming so well out of this.

The batman let him go, and the two stood facing each other breathing heavily.

"Go, son, go..." Elena Nikolayevna kept repeating.

"Savage... Worse than a savage,"

said the batman in a low voice which he tried to fill with scorn. "You will need training with the whip, like dogs!"

"It's you that are worse than savages, because you're a flunkey among savages, all you can do is to steal chickens, break open the women's suitcases and drag boots off people going along the street!" said Oleg with loathing, looking the man straight in the eyes.

The batman spoke German and Oleg Russian, but everything they said was so clearly expressed in voice and face that they understood each other perfectly. At Oleg's last words, the batman struck him in the face with his open palm so heavily that Oleg nearly fell.

Never in his sixteen and a half years had a hand been laid upon him either in anger or punishment. The very air which he breathed from childhood, both at home and at school, was the pure air of friendly rivalry, where any rough physical compulsion was as impossible as theft, murder or treachery. The wild blood rushed to Oleg's head. He flung himself upon the German. The batman fell back to the door, while the mother seized her son by the shoulders.

"Oleg! Pull yourself together! He'll kill you!" she said, her dry eyes glittering, holding her son in a tightening clasp.

Granny Vera, Nikolai Nikolayevich and the German chef in his tall cap and a white overall over his uniform came running at the noise. The batman was braying like a donkey. But Granny Vera, spreading out her arms with their wide, flapping sleeves, ran about and clucked in front of him like a broody hen, driving him back into the dining-room.

"Olezhek, boy, I implore you!.. The window's open, run, run!" whispered Elena Nikolayevna urgently in her son's ear.

"Through the window? I'm not going out through the window of my own home!" said Oleg, his nostrils and lips trembling proudly. But he had already recovered himself. "Don't worry, Mum, let me go... I'll go away, anyway... I'll go to Lena," he added suddenly.

He marched through the dining-room with a resolute step. All made way for him.

"And it's you that's the swine!" said Oleg, turning to the batman. "Beat people when you know that they can't hit you back..." And with unhurried step he left the house.

His cheek was burning. But he felt that he had gained a moral victory. Not only had he not given way before the German, but the latter had been afraid of him. But of the results, he did not care to think. Never mind! Granny was right—take any notice of their New Order? To the devil with it! He would do as he thought fit. Time would show who would win!

He went out onto the street, which ran parallel with Sadovaya. And almost beside the house he collided with Styopa Safonov.

"Where are you off to? I was coming to see you," said small flaxen-headed Styopa animatedly, shaking Oleg's huge hand in both of his delightedly.

Oleg was taken aback.

"Oh!.. somewhere not far off..."

He wanted to add: "On family business," but couldn't bring his tongue round to it.

"What's that red mark on your cheek?" asked Styopa in surprise, dropping Oleg's hand. He could not have found a more tactless question.

"Had a fight with a German," said Oleg and smiled.

"You don't say! Fine!" And Styopa looked with respect at Oleg's crimson cheek. "All the better. I was on the way to you, to tell the truth, and it was about somewhat the same sort of business."

"What business do you mean?" laughed Oleg.

"Come on, I'll walk part of the way with you. If we stand still we'll have some of the Jerries after us..." And Styopa Safonov took Oleg's arm.

"B-better let me come your way," said Oleg, stammering.

"Maybe you can put off your business altogether for a little while and come with me?"

"Where?"

"To Valya Borts."

"To Valya?" Oleg felt his conscience pricking him as he remembered that up to now he had not visited Valya. "Are there Germans there?"

"No. That's just it, there are none there. Actually, it was Valya who sent me to you."

What a joy it was to find oneself suddenly in a house where there were no

Germans! To enter the familiar shady garden and find it just the same, with its round, bushy-bordered flower-bed looking like the hat of the old Moscow tsars, the acacia with its many branches and the light lacework of its leaves, motionless as though they were painted on the blue steppe sky.

To Maria Andreyevna, headmistress of the school and Valya Borts' mother, her old pupils never grew up. For a long time she patted and kissed Oleg.

"Forgotten your old friends?" she cried. "Came back ages ago and you've never appeared—forgotten! And where have you any better friends? Who was it used to sit here with us for hours, frowning, listening to the piano? Whose library was it you used to use like your own?.. Forgotten, forgotten! Oh, Oleg, Oleg! But as for us..." she clutched her head. "What do you think—he's hiding!" broke from her in a whisper like a burst of steam from a locomotive and surely audible along the whole street. Her eyes were wide, impressive. "Yes, yes, I shan't tell even you where it is... What a thing, what a terrible thing to have to hide in one's own house! And it looks as though he'll have to go to some other town. It isn't so obvious that he's a Jew, do you think so? Here someone'll just betray him. But in Stalino I've got some good friends, relatives of mine, Russians... Yes, he'll have to go," said Maria Andreyevna and a sad, hurt look spread over her face, but owing to her normally excellent health and spirits it could not find any accustomed lines there, and despite her real sincerity it looked as though she were pretending.

Oleg freed himself from her embrace.

"It really is horrible of you, though," said Valya with a proud lift to her full upper lip. "Came back ages ago and never looked in!"

"And you c-could have come too, for that m-matter!" said Oleg with a confused smile.

"If you're expecting girls to come running after you, you'll have a lonely old age!" said Maria Andreyevna loudly.

Oleg gave her a comical look, and they both burst out laughing.

"You know, he's h d a fight with the Jerries already—look at that red mark on his cheek!" said Styopa Safonov with immense satisfaction.

"Really, you've had a fight?" And Valya looked at Oleg with some curiosity. "Mummie," turning to her mother suddenly, "I think there's somebody waiting for you at home..."

"Heavens, here's conspirators for you!" cried Maria Andreyevna loudly, raising her plump hands. "I'm going, it's all right, I'm going..."

"With an officer? Or a soldier?" Valya asked Oleg.

Besides Valya and Styopa Safonov there was a young fellow in the garden whom Oleg did not know, a thin barefoot lad with crisp fair curls parted on one side and slightly pouting lips. He was sitting silently on a forked acacia and from the moment of Oleg's entry, he had been watching him with firm, appraising eyes. His glance, and his whole manner, held something which inspired respect, and Oleg also kept involuntarily looking his way.

"Oleg!" said Valya with resolution in face and voice, as her mother went into the house. "Help us to establish contact with the underground organization... No, wait," she said, seeing that his face had become blank and expressionless, although he was still smiling pleasantly. "You must surely know how to do it! There were always so many Party people at your house, and I know you always made friends with grown-ups more than with children."

"N-no, unfortunately my contacts are lost," Oleg replied with a smile.

"You tell that to somebody else. It's all your own friends here. Yes—maybe you're worrying about him? That's Seryozha Tyulenin!" cried Valya, swiftly glancing at the young fellow sitting on the fallen trunk.

Valya said nothing about who Seryozha Tyulenin was, but his name was amply sufficient.

"I'm telling you the truth," said Oleg now turning to Seryozha Tyulenin, and quite certain that it was he who had inspired the conversation. "I know that an underground organization exists. I've no doubt that the burning of the Trust building and the baths was its work," Oleg continued, not noticing a gleam in Valya's eyes and a faint smile touching her full bright lips at these words. "And I have information that very soon we Young Communists will receive instruction what we are to do."

"Time's passing. Our fingers are itching!" said Seryozha.

They began discussing the lads and girls who might still be in town. Styopa Safonov, who was a friendly fellow and knew all of them, gave them one such a bold, daring characteristics that Valya, Oleg and Seryozha, forgetting all about the Germans and the reason for the discussion, burst out laughing.

Oleg and Seryozha left together.

"Valya has told me a lot about you, Oleg, and for that matter I took a liking to you as soon as I saw you," said Seryozha, after one or two swift, rather shy glances at his companion. "I'm just telling you so that you should know, and then I shan't say any more about it. But the thing is this: it wasn't any underground organization that burned the Trust building and the bath, it was I who did it..."

"W-what, alone?" And Oleg looked at Seryozha with glowing eyes.

"Yes, I did, alone."

For a little while they walked along in silence.

"That's b-bad, that it was just you alone... It was fine, it was a bold thing, but... b-bad, that it was you only," said Oleg, his face kindly but at the same time worried.

"But there is an underground organization, that I know," Seryozha continued, ignoring Oleg's remark. "I got on the track of it, but..."—with a disgusted gesture—"I didn't catch on."

He told Oleg of his visit to Ignat Fomin and of all that happened there.

"Have you told Valya about it too?" Oleg asked suddenly.

"No, I didn't tell Valya that," Seryozha replied calmly.

"G-good... very g-good!" Oleg seized Seryozha's hand. "But if you had such a talk with that man, you can go to him again?" he continued with some excitement.

"That's just the trouble, I can't," said Seryozha, and hard lines lay around his pouting lips. "That man was betrayed to the Germans by his host, Ignat Fomin. He didn't do it at once, but five or six days after the Germans came. They say in Shanhai that Fomin wanted to get at the whole organization through him, but he was too careful. So Fomin waited and waited, and then betrayed him, and himself went and joined the police."

"What police?" cried Oleg in surprise. All this had been going on in town while he had been sitting there in the woodshed!

"You know that barrack down below, beyond the District Executive Committee where our militia used to be?.. The German field gendarmes have it now, and they're getting their own police force together, made up of Russians. People say that they've found some bastard for a police chief—some Solikovsky or other. Used to be a section chief at some little mine somewhere in the district. And now he's helping them to get a police force of their own together from every kind of scum."

"Where have they taken him? Have they killed him?" asked Oleg.

"If they're fools, they'll have killed him already," said Seryozha. "But I think they're still holding him. They'll want to find out everything from him, and he's not the kind that talks. They're probably holding him there in the barrack, and ripping the guts out of him. There's others there, too, that they've arrested, only I can't find out who they are..."

Oleg suddenly felt a sick pain in his heart as a terrible thought struck him: while he had been waiting for news from Valko maybe that great-hearted man with the Gipsy eyes might already be in the barrack on the edge of the town, in a dark, cramped cell, where they would be ripping the guts out of him, as Seryozha had said.

"Thanks... Thanks for telling me everything," said Oleg in a strangled voice.

Then, guided only by expediency, not hesitating in the least to break his promise to Valko, he told Seryozha about his conversation with Valko and later with Vanya Zemnukhov.

They walked slowly along Derevyannaya Street—bare-foot Seryozha swinging along, while Oleg stepped easily and firmly through the dust in his boots, well-cleaned as usual. Oleg unfolded his plan of action to his comrade: to investigate all the young people, and make a note of the most reliable, the firmest, the best for the work in hand. To find out who had been arrested in the town and district, where they were held, and find means to help them. And always, all the time, to find out all they could among the German soldiers about the military and civil measures of the authorities.

Seryozha livened up immediately, and suggested organizing the collection of

weapons. After the fighting and the retreat there must be plenty lying about all over the district, even on the steppe.

Both of them fully realized how much of all this must be done at once, but it was all within the realms of possibility—and both had a very sober feeling for reality.

"Everything that we have told each other, everything that we know and are doing, must not be known to anybody else besides us two, never mind how close friends they are!" said Oleg, looking straight ahead with wide-open, shining eyes. "Friendship's all right in its place, but... This place stinks of b-blood," he concluded energetically. "You, Vanya, myself—and that's all. When we make connection, we'll be told what to do..."

Seryozha fell silent. He did not care for a lot of promises and assurances.

"What's in the park now?" asked Oleg.

"A German motor park. And AA guns all round. They've dug the whole place up, the swine!"

"Our poor park!.. Have you any Germans at your place?"

"From time to time; they don't care for our sort of house," laughed Seryozha. "We can't meet at my place, though," he continued, guessing Oleg's thought. "Too many people about."

"Then we'll keep in touch through Valya."

"That's right," said Seryozha in satisfaction.

They walked as far as the crossing, and then exchanged a firm handshake. They were almost of the same age and they felt that during that short conversation they had come to know one another. Both were in a courageous, exalted mood.

During the first war winter, after his father's death, Volodya Osmukhin had worked as a mechanic in the Krasnodon-Coal Trust, instead of studying in the last class, the tenth, at school. He entered the shop because all the pupils in the upper classes went on defence work at the beginning of the war. But later on it seemed better not to drop that work, owing to the family's financial position. Thus, he continued there until the day when he was taken to hospital with appendicitis.

After the Germans' arrival, Volodya, naturally, had no intention of returning to the shop. But after the German commandant's order that all workmen must return and the commencement of repressions, coupled with rumours that anybyod refusing would be sent to Germany, Volodya discussed the situation with his friend, Tolya Orlov, and decided to go back to work.

The shop foreman was old Lyutikov, an old, experienced workman who had been promoted to that position. He had been left in Krasnodon for underground work. This, of course, Volodya did not know, but Lyutikov was an old friend of the Rybalovs, his mother's family, and knew him well. When Volodya started work at the shop again, it was Lyutikov whom he told about wanting to give all his energies to underground work against the Germans.

Lyutikov was an old man, but not an old Party member. By nature he was a good sort of man, but not one for active public life. He had joined the Party because, as the years passed, he came to feel awkward, he, an old Russian skilled workman, outside of his own Party. He had never been a leader in underground work previously, although he had had occasion to assist Bolsheviks who were engaged in it. And at the moment when Volodya appealed to him Lyutikov was feeling thoroughly lost.

When the general evacuation was being carried out, the Party District Committee had not taken the printing press type, but had had it buried in the park. Now there was a danger of its being found by German AA-gunners or soldiers in the car park. The first thing to be done, therefore, was to discover by some means or other whether the type was still intact, and if possible, to get it to some other place.

Zhora Arutyunyants, after returning from his unsuccessful attempt at evacuation, immediately found himself on frank and friendly terms with Volodya and Tolya Orlov. With Lussia, however, relations remained formal, and rather strained. There was a constant stream of German troops passing through the district where the Osmukhins lived, whereas Zhora lived in a cottage in the outskirts, a place not to the taste of the Germans. Thus it naturally came about that the friends usually met at his house.

The day when Lyutikov gave Volodya the assignment to investigate the situation about the type, the three friends met in Zhora Arutyunyants' tiny room, which just held a bed and a writing table. Nevertheless, it was a separated room. Here

Vanya Zeminukhov found them, returning from Nizhnyaya Alexandrovka. He was thinner than ever, his clothes were worn and he was covered with dust—he had not yet been home. But he was in such high spirits and so full of energy, that from the moment he arrived it was he who was the moving spirit in planning their future life.

Vanya immediately sent "Rolling Thunder" to find out if there were any Germans at Koshevoys' house, and whether it was possible to see him.

As he approached the Koshevoys' home where a German sentry was standing on guard from the Sadovaya side, "Rolling Thunder" saw a pretty, barefoot woman with fluffy black hair and a worn frock run out of the house in tears, and disappear into a woodshed, from whence he heard the sound of her weeping and a man's voice soothing her. A thin, sunburned old woman dashed out of the porch with a bucket in her gnarled hand, scooped up some water from the butt and went swiftly back again into the house. Inside, a great commotion was going on, there was a young authoritative German voice and a woman's which seemed to be apologizing.

Tolya could not hang about any longer, for fear of drawing attention to himself, so making a wide circle round the whole block, following the line of the park, he approached the cottage from the other side—the street running parallel with Sadovaya. From here, however, there was nothing to be seen or heard. Taking advantage of the fact that the neighbouring yard had gates on both streets, just like the Koshevoys', Tolya passed through its kitchen-garden and a moment later was standing at the back of the shed.

There were three women's voices and one masculine bass audible from inside. A young woman's voice was sobbing:

"I won't go back to the house, no, not if they kill me!"

"That's all very fine," said the man's voice gloomily. "But what about Oleg? And the child?.."

Marina was sitting in the shed, her face buried in her hands and a cloud of fluffy black hair falling about her shoulders, surrounded by her family.

In the general's absence, the long-legged adjutant had taken a fancy for a cold rub-down to freshen himself up, and ordered Marina to bring a bowl and a bucket of water into the room. When Marina, carrying bowl and bucket, opened the dining-room door, the adjutant was standing there before her completely naked. He was long and white "like a worm," as Marina said through her tears. He was standing in the far corner beside the divan, and at first Marina did not notice him. Suddenly he appeared beside her, looking at her with insolent curiosity and contempt. Such was her sudden fright and revulsion that she dropped the bowl and bucket, which overturned spilling all the water out onto the floor. Marina ran out into the shed.

Now everybody was waiting to see what would result from her incautious action.

"Well, what are you crying about?" said Oleg roughly. "Do you think he was wanting to do anything to you? If he were the boss here, he wouldn't have spared you. He'd have called the batman in too, to help him. But actually all he really wanted was to have a wash. He met you naked because it simply never even entered his head that it would wound your modesty! Can't you realize that for these cattle we're less than savages? You can thank your stars that they don't relieve themselves in front of us, as their soldiers and officers do at a halt. They relieve themselves in front of our people and consider it quite in the natural order of things. Oh, to get my teeth into that swaggering, dirty breed—no, they're not animals, they're worse, they're degenerates!" he said bitterly. "And you crying, and us all crowding together here as though something important had happened—it's just offensive and degrading! We must despise these degenerates, if we can't kill and destroy them for the present, yes, despise them, and not lower ourselves with tears and women's chatter! They'll get what's coming to them!" said Oleg.

He went out of the shed in irritation. It was revolting to him to see again and again those bare palings as though the whole street was naked from the park to the crossing, and German soldiers in it!

The large summer steppe moon hung low to the south. Nikolai Nikolayevich

and Oleg did not go to bed, but sat in silence by the open door of the shed, looking at the sky.

Oleg gazed wide-eyed at that full moon hanging in the dark blue evening sky, surrounded with a bright halo, its rays silvering the house roofs, the German sentry by the porch and the cabbage and pumpkin leaves in the kitchen-garden. He looked at it, and it seemed as though he were seeing it for the first time. He was accustomed to the ordinary run of life in the little steppe town, where everything that happened on the earth or in the heavens was such a familiar, open book. He had taken it all for granted, had never noticed how the thin new moon rose, how it grew in majesty until a full orb sailed across the velvety blue firmament. And who could tell if that happy time of full and supreme fusion with everything simple, good and lovely in the world would ever return?

General Baron von Wenzel and his adjutant silently entered the house, their accoutrements creaking. Round about, everybody was sleeping. Only the sentry marched up and down before the house. After sitting there for a little while, Nikolai Nikolayevich also lay down, but Oleg still sat there by the open door, bathed in the moonlight, gazing before him with the wide eyes of a child.

Suddenly he heard a sound from behind him, the other side of the shed wall.

"Oleg... Are you asleep? Wake up," came a whisper from somebody pressed close to a crack.

In a second Oleg was beside the wall.

"Who's there?" he whispered.

"It's me... Vanya... Is the door open?"

"I'm not alone. And there's a sentry."

"I'm not alone either. Can you come out to us?"

"Yes, I can manage it."

Oleg waited until the sentry's beat took him to the Saplins' gate, then pressing himself to the wall, he slipped round the outside of the shed. On the side facing onto the neighbouring garden, among some wormwood in the shadow of the shed, three figures lay fanwise on their stomachs—Vanya Zemnukhov, Zhora Arutyunyants and a third like them, a lanky fellow in a cap whose peak threw its shadow over his face.

"It's been the very devil getting to you, it was so light!" said Zhora, his eyes and teeth shining. "This is Volodya Osmukhin, from the Voroshilov school. You can be as sure of him as of me," added Zhora, giving what he felt to be the highest testimonial that he could give a comrade.

Oleg lay down between him and Vanya.

"I must admit I never expected you at this forbidden hour," Oleg whispered to Vanya with a broad grin.

"Oh, if we kept all their rules we'd die of boredom," Vanya replied laughingly.

"Well, my pretty boy," laughed Koshevoy, throwing his long arm round Vanya's shoulders. "Did you fix them up all right?" he whispered right in his friend's ear.

"Can I stop in your shed till it's light?" asked the latter. "I haven't been home yet, I rather fancy there are Germans at our place."

"I told you you could spend the night with us!" said Zhora indignantly.

"But it's a long way to your place... For you and Volodya it's a bright night, but I'll disappear forever in some damp hole!"

Oleg guessed that Vanya wanted to talk to him alone.

"It's all right until daybreak," he said, squeezing Vanya's shoulder.

"We've got some wonderful news," whispered Vanya barely audibly. "Volodya has made connections with an underground worker and already has an assignment... Go on, you tell him about it yourself."

There was nothing which could so have stimulated Oleg's active character as this unexpected nocturnal appearance of his friends, and particularly what Volodya Osmukhin had to tell him. For the first moment, he thought that it could only have been Valko who had given Volodya Osmukhin that assignment, and lying with his face almost against Volodya's, staring into his dark, narrow eyes, he began to question him:

"How did you find him? Who is he?"

"I have no right to mention his name," Volodya replied rather embarrassed, but firmly. "Zhora and I want to reconnoitre now, but it's difficult for the two of us.

Tolya Orlov offered, but he coughs too much," he added with a laugh.

Oleg stared past him for some time.

"I shouldn't advise doing it tonight," he said at last. "Anybody approaching the park is plainly visible, but you can see nothing of what is going on inside. It would be simpler to do it during the day, without any smart business."

The park was completely surrounded by a fence, with roads leading to it from four directions. With his characteristic sagacity, Oleg suggested sending one person along each of them next day, at different times, to make a note of the situation of the nearest AA guns dugouts and motor vehicles.

The thirst for action with which the other lads had come to Oleg was rather damped, but nobody could find fault with his simple and logical reasoning.

Has it ever happened to you, reader, that you lost your way at night in a dense forest or had to meet danger alone or fell into such trouble that even your nearest turned from you, or had to seek new, unknown people and live long, unacknowledged by all, understood by none? If you have ever known one of these sorrows or difficulties, you will understand the feeling of shining, welling courage and happiness, the inexpressible and heartfelt thankfulness, the surge of strength that floods a man when he meets a friend whose word, whose faithfulness, courage and devotion remain unchanged! No longer are you alone in the world, there is a human heart beating beside you!.. It was just this glowing feeling that welled up within Oleg till he thought it would burst his heart, when he found himself alone with Vanya in the light of the swinging steppe moon, and saw the calm, humorous, inspired face of his friend with those short-sighted eyes shining with kindness and strength.

"Vanya!" Oleg seized him in his big arms and hugged him, laughing with quiet happiness. "Here you are at last! Why have you stopped away so long? I've been like a broody hen without you! Oh, you d-devil, you!" stammered Oleg, and embraced him again.

"Let me go, you're breaking my ribs: I'm not a girl you're hugging," laughed Vanya quietly, freeing himself.

"I didn't think she'd tie you to her apron strings," said Oleg shyly.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" said Vanya in some confusion. "How on earth could I drop them after everything that had happened, without seeing them settled in and finding out whether they were in any danger or not? And then, you know, that's not an ordinary sort of girl. She's so clear and straight, and has such a wonderful mind!" Vanya concluded enthusiastically.

Certainly, in the few days which Vanya had spent in Nizhnyaya Alexandrovka, he had managed to expound to Klava all that he had thought, felt and written down in verse in the nineteen years of his life. And Klava, a very kind and good-natured girl, deeply in love with Vanya, had listened to it all silently and patiently. Whenever he asked her anything, she nodded agreement eagerly. It was no wonder that the more time Vanya spent with Klava, the more respect he had for her mind.

"I see, I see, you're c-captured!" stammered Oleg, turning laughing eyes on his friend. "Don't be angry with me," he continued more seriously, seeing that Vanya did not care for his tone. "I may chaff you, but really, I'm delighted about your happiness. Yes, delighted," repeated Oleg with feeling; the long lines appeared on his brow and for some moments he looked past Vanya.

"Tell me frankly, it wasn't Valko who gave Osmukhin that assignment?" he asked after a little while.

"I think not."

"I'm afraid for him," said Oleg. "Let's get back into the shed, anyway..."

They closed the door after them, lay down on the narrow pallet without undressing, and for a long time continued whispering in the darkness. One would have thought that there were no Germans surrounding them, no German sentry nearby. Time after time they would tell each other: "Well, that's enough, we've got to get a few winks of sleep..." But once more the whispered conversation would start again.

Oleg came to himself only when Uncle Kolya wakened him. Zemnukhov was already gone.

"Why are you sleeping in your

clothes?" asked Uncle Kolya with a barely perceptible laugh in eyes and mouth.

"Sleep overcame the knight..." Oleg joked, stretching.

"H'm... a knight, eh! I heard your meeting in the weeds behind the shed. And all your rattle with Zemnukhov..."

"Y-you heard?" Oleg sat down on the pallet, his discomposure written large on his sleep-flushed face, "Then why didn't you let us know you weren't asleep?"

"So as not to disturb you."

"I didn't know you'd do a thing like that!"

"There's a lot you don't know about me," said Nikolai Nikolayevich in his lazy tones. "Do you know, for instance, that I've got a wireless set, right underneath the Germans, beneath the floor boards?"

Oleg was so taken aback that his mouth hung open stupidly.

"W-what? You didn't hand it in when you should have done?"

"No, I didn't."

"That is to say, you concealed it from the Soviet authorities?"

"Exactly."

"Well, K-kolya, really... I d-didn't know you were such a fox," said Oleg, not knowing whether to laugh or be offended.

"In the first place, that set had been given me as a premium for good work," said Uncle Kolya. "Secondly, it's imported, a specially good one..."

"But they promised to return them!"

"Yes, they did. And now the Germans would have had it, but as it is, it's under our floor boards. And when I was listening to you all during the night, I realized that it could be very useful to us. So you see, I was right all round," concluded Uncle Kolya unsmilingly.

"You're great, Uncle Kolya! Come on, let's get washed and have a game of chess before breakfast. We're under the Germans here, there's nobody for us to work for, anyway!" said Oleg in the highest of spirits.

At that moment they both heard a girl's ringing voice asking loudly, so that it rang through the whole place:

"Listen, blockhead, does Oleg Koshevoy live in this house?"

"Was sagst du? Ich verstehe nicht," replied the sentry by the porch.

"See what a blockhead he is, Nina. Not a word of Russian can he understand. Then let us in, or else call some real Russian," said the ringing girlish voice.

Uncle Kolya and Oleg exchanged glances, then thrust their heads out of the shed.

Two girls were standing right by the porch, opposite the German sentry, who actually seemed somewhat at a loss. The one who had spoken was such a vivid creature that Oleg and Nikolai Nikolayevich found their attention attracted to her first of all. The impression of colour came from her conspicuous, brightly patterned frock—a sky-blue crêpe-de-chine sprinkled with red cherries, green peas and some kind of yellow and lilac pattern. The morning sunshine burnished her hair which rose in a golden billow in front, and descended over her neck and shoulders in fine curls which had most certainly demanded a great deal of time and trouble between two mirrors. This brilliant frock lay so gently about her body, and floated so airily around her shapely legs in their fine, flesh-coloured stockings descending into light-coloured, high-heeled shoes, that the whole effect was that of something unusually natural, mobile, light and airy.

At the moment when Oleg and Uncle Kolya looked out of the shed, the girl was trying to enter the porch, and the sentry, standing with his side to it, his tommy-gun in one hand, was barring her way with the other.

Not in the least at a loss, the girl raised her small hand and brusquely slapped down the sentry's dirty one, quickly entered the porch and turned to her friend, saying:

"Come along, Nina, come along..."

The friend hesitated. The sentry sprang onto the porch, and spreading out his arms, barred the girls' way. The tommy-gun was hanging by its strap from his thick neck. His unshaven face wore a stupidly smug, yet ingratiating smile, self-satisfaction at doing his duty mingled with the feeling that the girl would never dare to treat him in such a high-handed way unless she had some right to do so.

"I'm Koshevoy, come over here,"

said Oleg, coming out of the shed.

The girl turned her head sharply, looked at him for a moment, her blue eyes narrowing, then almost in the same instant ran off the porch, her cream-coloured heels tapping.

Oleg awaited her, tall, broad-shouldered, his arms hanging loosely, looking at her with a naively interrogative expression, as though saying: "Well, here I am, Oleg Koshevoy... But tell me why you want me. If it's for something good, then I'm at your service, but if for something bad, then why have you chosen me?.." The girl went up to him and examined him as though comparing him with a photograph. The other girl, to whom Oleg had not yet paid any attention, followed her friend and stopped a little to one side.

"That's right: Oleg..." the first girl said in satisfaction as though speaking to herself. "We want to speak to you alone," and one blue eye showed the shadow of a wink.

Agitated and confused, Oleg let both girls into the shed. The one in the bright frock examined Uncle Kolya with narrowed eyes, then turned them upon Oleg with a compound of surprise and interrogation.

"You can tell him everything you tell me," said Oleg.

"No, we've come to talk about love, isn't that right, Nina?" she said turning to her friend with light mockery.

Oleg and Uncle Kolya also turned their attention to the other girl. Her large-featured face was sunburned to a deep tan, her arms, bare to the elbow, extremely dark, were round and shapely. Her very thick dark hair lay in heavy sculptured waves that fell onto her firm shoulders. Her round face with its full lips, gently curved chin and soft lines of the nose had a look of great simplicity, combined with strength, challenge, passion and exaltation in the curve of the forehead, the winged brows, the wide brown eyes and the direct, daring gaze.

Involuntarily Oleg's eyes remained rivetted on this girl, he was conscious of her presence as they continued talking and began to stammer.

After waiting until the sound of Uncle Kolya's steps had disappeared in the yard, the blue-eyed girl brought her face close to that of Oleg and said:

"I'm from Uncle Andrei..."

"You've got pluck... That G-German!" smiled Oleg after a moment's silence.

"That's nothing. A German likes to be beaten!" she laughed.

"And who are y-you?"

"Lyubka," replied the girl in bright, perfumed crêpe-de-chine.

Lyubka Shevtsova was one of a Youth group which had been placed at the disposal of the partisan staff at the very beginning of the war for work in the enemy rear. She had completed a course in field medicine and was preparing to leave for the front when she was sent to a radio course in Voroshilovgrad.

It was both strange and funny that Seryozha Levashov, a Krasnodon Young Communist, that same Seryozha whom she had doctored as a child and who had treated her so disdainfully, should be in the same radio course. Now history reversed itself for he immediately fell in love with her, and she of course did not reciprocate, although he had a beautiful mouth and well-shaped ears, and in general was a capable fellow. He had no idea how to make himself pleasant to a girl whom he wanted to impress, he would sit in front of her, broad-shouldered and silent, gazing at her submissively, letting her torment and laugh at him as much as she pleased.

During the study course, it happened several times that first one, then another of the students ceased to attend. Everybody knew what that meant—they had been discharged ahead of time and dropped in the German rear.

It was a warm, close evening in May. The park was wilting in the heavy air; the moonlight flooded the flowering acacias whose perfume made one dizzy. Lyubka, who always liked to have plenty of people about her, kept worrying Seryozha to go to the cinema or to take a stroll along the Leninskaya. But he demurred.

"Look how lovely it is here," he said. "Do you mean to say you don't like it?" And his eyes glowed strangely in the dusk of the walk.

They walked around the garden again, and then again, until Lyubka felt

thoroughly bored with Seryozha's silence and annoyed that he would not do as she wanted.

It was then that a crowd of boys and girls burst into the park, filling it with shouts and laughter. Among them was a student at the course, Borka Dubinsky from Voroshilovgrad, who was also far from indifferent to Lyubka and always amused her with his chatter.

"Borka!" she cried.

He recognized her voice immediately, ran up to her and Seryozha and started chattering.

"Who are those you're with?" asked Lyubka.

"Our boys and girls from the printing press. Would you like to meet them?"

"Of course!" said Lyubka.

Introductions did not take long, and Lyubka dragged them all off down the Leninskaya. Seryozha, however, said that he could not go with them. Lyubka realized that he was offended and hurt, and just to put him in his place a bit, she purposely slipped her arm into that of Borka Dubinsky and they ran out of the park together, their four legs forming impossible monograms until only her light frock could be seen flickering among the trees.

In the morning she did not see Seryozha in the hostel at lunch time, he was not at class, he did not come for dinner, or for supper, there was no point in asking where he had gone.

Of course, she did not waste a thought on the events of the previous evening in the park—"tempest in a teapot to be sure!" But that evening she had a sudden attack of homesickness: she kept thinking about her father and mother, and felt as though she would never see them again. She lay there quietly on her bed in the dormitory, which held five of her friends. Everybody except herself was asleep, the blackout had been taken down and the moonlight surged in from the nearest open window.

By the next day she had forgotten Seryozha Levashov as completely as though he had never existed.

On the sixth of July, Lyubka was summoned to partisan headquarters and told that things were going badly at the front, the course was to be evacuated, and she, Lyubka, was to remain at headquarters' disposal. She was to return home, to Krasnodon, and wait until she was summoned. If the Germans came, she was to avoid exciting suspicion. She was given an address at Kamennyi Brod which she was to visit before leaving, in order to meet the woman living there.

Lyubka carried out this instruction, then she packed her suitcase, took up her post at the nearest crossing, and the first lorry going to Krasnodon picked up the daring fair-headed girl.

After leaving his companions, Valko spent the whole day lying on the steppe; it was only after dark that he followed he gulley to the further outskirts of Shanhai, and made his way through round-about streets to the region of the First-bis pit. He had grown up in the town, and knew it thoroughly.

Fearing that there might be Germans in the Shevtsovs' home, he slipped into the yard over the back fence and hid himself among sheds and outhouses, hoping that somebody would come out.

After remaining there for a long time, he began to lose patience. At last the door banged, and a woman carrying a bucket came quietly past Valko. He recognized Shevtsov's wife, Yevfrossinya Mironovna, slipped out and went to meet her.

"Who's that, dear Lord above!" she said softly.

Valko brought his dark face, already covered with black stubble, close to hers and she recognized him.

"Its you?.. But where..." she began. The darkness, hardly lightened by the moon struggling through a grey mist, concealed the sudden pallor that overspread her face.

"Wait a bit... And forget my name. Call me Uncle Andrei. Are there any Germans in the house? No... Let's go in, then," said Valko hoarsely, the thought of what he had to tell her lying heavy upon him.

Lyubka—not that Lyubka in a light frock and high-heeled shoes whom he had been accustomed to seeing on the club stage, but a simple, domestic Lyubka barefoot, in a short skirt and cheap blouse, rose to meet him from the bed where she had been sitting, sewing. Her golden hair fell loosely about her neck and shoulders. Her nar-

rowed eyes, darker in the lamplight, rested on Valko without surprise.

He found it impossible to meet her gaze, and looked vaguely about the room, which bore traces of the owners' prosperity. His eyes came to rest on a postcard hanging on the wall by the head of the bed. It was a portrait of Hitler.

"Don't think anything bad, Comrade Valko," said Lyubka's mother.

"Uncle Andrei," Valko corrected her.

"I mean... Uncle Andrei," she amended without a smile.

Lyubka turned calmly to the portrait of Hitler and shrugged her shoulders disdainfully.

"It was a German officer who hung it up," Yevfrossinya Mironovna explained. "There have been two German officers here all the time, it was only yesterday they went away to Novocherkassk. As soon as they came in, they kept after her. 'Russian girl, pretty, pretty, blonde,' and kept laughing and giving her chocolate and biscuits. The little devil would take them all, then she'd turn up her nose—I saw it all—and laugh, and then start being rude again, you never saw such tricks!" said the mother, in kindly reproof of her daughter and complete trust and confidence that Valko would take it all the right way. "I kept telling her: 'Don't play with fire!' But she said to me: 'It's the proper thing to do.' The proper thing for her—you never saw such tricks!" repeated Yevfrossinya Mironovna. "And can you believe, Comrade Valko..."

"Uncle Andrei," Valko corrected her again.

"Uncle Andrei... She told me not to say that I was her mother, she made me out to be her housekeeper, and herself an actress. 'My father was an industrialist,' says she, 'my parents had mines, and the Soviets sent them both to Siberia.' See what she thought up?"

"Yes, she'd thought it all up," said Valko calmly, looking attentively at Lyubka, who was standing opposite him holding her sewing and looking with an enigmatic smile into Uncle Andrei's face.

"The officer who slept in that bed—it's her bed, but we slept together in that room—well, he began rummaging about in his suitcase, wanting some clean clothes or something, he was," Yevfrossinya Mironovna continued. "And he got out that portrait and pinned it up on the wall. But she—just think of it, Comrade Valko—she went straight up to it and r-r-r-rip!— the portrait was down! 'That's my bed,' says she, 'not yours, and I don't want Hitler hanging over my bed.' I thought he'd kill her on the spot, but he grabbed her arm, turned her round, took the portrait and put it up again on the wall. And the other officer was there. They were laughing fit to split their sides. 'Ach,' says he, 'Russian girl schlecht!..' I looked at her, and she was mad all right, crimson in the face she was. Then she dashed into our room like she was possessed, and what do you think: came flying out like a bullet—with a portrait of Stalin in her hand! Flew to the other wall and pinned it up there! And then she stood there in front of it with her fists clenched—I near died of fright. But I don't know what it was, maybe they'd really taken a fancy to her, or maybe they were just real dunderheads, but they just stood there laughing and shouting: 'Stalin—bad!' And she kept stamping her heels and crying: 'No, Stalin's a fine man!.. It's your Hitler's a monster, a bloodsucker, he ought to be dropped down the privy!' And she kept on with that sort of talk till I really thought he'd pull out his revolver and shoot her... And she didn't let him take it down, either! I took it down myself afterwards and hid it well away. But when they went, she didn't let me take down Hitler. 'Let it be,' she said, 'that's the way it's got to be...'"

Lyubka's mother was not yet old, but like many middle-aged women who lacked access to modern hygienic knowledge in their youth, and consequently suffered more than necessarily in childbirth, her waist had spread, and her ankles were permanently swollen. She related all that happened in her quiet voice, at the same time looking at Valko in shy interrogation, almost imploringly, while he continually avoided her eyes. She went on talking, talking, as though trying to postpone the moment when he would tell her that which she feared to hear. But now she had told him everything, and fixed her eye on him in expectation, embarrassment and fear.

"Maybe, Yevfrossinya Mironovna, you have some of your husband's clothes left here, something very plain and simple," said Valko hoarsely. "A bit awkward for me to be walking about in these things—jacket, breeches and slippers. You can see at once I've held a responsible job," he smiled.

There was something in his voice that drained the colour from Yevfrossinya's face, while Lyubka's hands and the sewing dropped into her lap.

"What's happened to him?" the mother asked in a barely audible voice.

"Yevfrossinya Mironovna, and you, Lyubka!" said Valko quietly but firmly, "I never thought that fate would bring me to you with such news, but I don't want to deceive you, and there is nothing to comfort you with. Your husband, and your father, Lyubka, and my friend, the best I had, Grigori Ilyich, has been killed, killed by a bomb which these damned swine dropped on peaceful civilians... He will live in the heart of our people!.."

Without a sound, the mother raised a corner of her shawl to her eyes and began crying quietly. But Lyubka's face was white, marble-like. She stood there for a little while, then suddenly, as though some supporting rod had been withdrawn from her body, she collapsed limply on the floor, unconscious.

Lyubka kept whispering to her mother secretly and affectionately:

"Don't cry, Mum, darling, I've got a trade now. We'll drive out the Germans, the war will end, and then I'll go and work at the broadcasting station, I'll become a famous wireless operator and they'll make me manager of a station. I know you like quiet, so I'll take you to live with me at the station—it's always quiet there, so quiet, every thing's padded, there's not a sound can get in, and there aren't so many people, either. It'll be a nice clean little apartment, and we'll live nice and cosily there together. I'll plant grass in the little garden by the station, and when we get prosperous I'll get a chicken run, you'll breed leghorns and cochin-chinas," she went on whispering, her arm round her mother's neck, hugging her, her little white hand gesticulating, invisible in the darkness.

At that moment a very soft tapping sounded on the window. Mother and daughter heard it simultaneously, loosed their embrace, stopped crying and listened intently.

"Not Germans?" whispered the mother, shrinking.

But Lyubka knew that Germans would not knock like that. Her bare feet slapping the floor, she ran to the window and raised a corner of the blanket covering it. The moon had already sunk, but looking out of the dark room she could distinguish three figures by the fence, a man's form right by the window, and two women further away.

"What do you want?" she asked loudly through the window.

The man pressed his face to the glass. Lyubka recognized it, and a warm wave seemed to rise in her throat. He had come, now, here, at this moment, the worst moment of her life!..

She never could remember how she ran across the room, it was as though the wind had swept her out onto the porch, and in the fullness of her thankful, unhappy heart she flung her strong, supple arms round the youth's neck, and pressed herself to him just as she was, tear-stained, half-clothed, warm from her mother's embrace.

"Quick... quick..." said Lyubka, tearing herself from his arms, and seizing his hand, drew him up onto the porch. Then she remembered his companions. "Who's that with you?" she asked, looking at the girls. "Olya! Nina!.. You dear things!.." And seizing upon them both with her strong young hands, she pressed her face to theirs and covered them with kisses one after the other. "Come here, here... quick..." she continued in a feverish whisper.

They stood there by the door, not daring to enter because of their dusty, dirty condition—Seryozha Levashov, unshaven, in a suit something between that of a car driver and an electrician, and the two girls, Olya and Nina, both sturdily built, Nina slightly the taller, both dark-haired and sunburned, powdered with grey dust, both in similar dark dresses, with knapsacks on their backs.

These were the Ivantsov cousins, who were always confused with the Ivanikhin sisters, Lilia and Tonya, from Pervomaika, because of the res-

semblance to name. People used to say: "If you see a fair one among the Ivantsovs, then it's the Ivanikhins" (Lilia Ivanikhina, who had gone to the front in the medical corps at the beginning of the war and was missing, had been fair).

Olya and Nina Ivantsovs had lived not far from the Shevtsovs, and their father had worked at the same pit as Grigori Ilyich.

"My dear people! Where on earth have you come from?" asked Lyubka, throwing up her little white hands. She guessed that the Ivantsovs had come back from Novocherkassk, where Olya, the elder, had been studying at an industrial institute. But she could not imagine how Seryozha Levashov had come to be there.

"We've been and come back," said Olya with restraint, her cracked lips twisting in a faint smile and her whole face, with its dusty brows and lashes, seemed to move asymetrically. "Do you know if there are Germans at our house?" she asked, swiftly glancing round the room, moving only her eyes, a habit she had acquired in these days of wandering.

"They have been, and here too; they went only this morning," said Lyubka.

Olya's face contorted into a grimace of something between mockery and scorn—she had seen the postcard of Hitler on the wall.

"Playing safe?"

"Let it hang there," said Lyubka. "Wait a bit: don't you want something to eat?"

"No, if our place is clear, we're going home."

"And if it isn't, what do you need to be afraid of? There's plenty coming home now whom the Germans turned back from the Don or the Donets... All you've got to say is—you were stopping in Novocherkassk, and now you've come home again," said Lyubka quickly.

"Oh, we're not afraid. That's what we'll tell them," Olya replied coldly.

While they were talking, Nina, the younger girl, had been looking wide-eyed, somewhat challengingly, now at Lyubka, now at Olya, and Seryozha, after throwing down his sun-bleached knapsack, had stood there leaning against the stove, his hands behind his back, watching Lyubka with a barely perceptible smile in his eyes.

"No, they haven't been in Novocherkassk," thought Lyubka.

The Ivantsov sisters left. Lyubka took down the black-out curtains and put out the night lamp. Everything in the room took on a greyish hue—the window, the furniture and the faces.

"Would you like a wash?"

"Do you know if the Germans are at our place?" asked Seryozha as she flew out of the room into the porch and back again, bringing a bucket, bowl, jug and soap.

"I don't know. They come and go. Oh, take off your tunic, don't be so bashful!"

He was so dirty that the water from his face and hands was quite black. But Lyubka found it pleasant to look at the broad, strong back and his energetic masculine movements as he washed. His neck was sunburned, his ears large and shapely, his mouth well-cut, with firm lines, and his brows were stronger and thicker at the inner ends, a few hairs even joining, while the thinner outer ends turned up slightly, to meet deep lines on his forehead. Lyubka liked watching him wash his face with his large, strong hands, occasionally looking up at her with a smile.

"Where did you find the Ivantsovs?" she asked.

He spluttered, splashed water in his face, but did not answer.

"You've come to me, that means you trust me. Why are you hanging back now? After all, we're both chips off the same block," she said quietly, insinuatingly.

"Give me a towel. Thank you," he said.

Lyubka felt silent, and asked him nothing more. Her blue eyes were cold. But she continued to look after Seryozha, lighted the paraffin stove, put the kettle on, laid the table for the visitor and poured some vodka out of the little tantalus.

"It's some months since I've tasted that," he said, smiling at her.

He drank it off and began eating voraciously.

It was already light. Beyond the grey curtain of mist in the east, a rosy glow was spreading and beginning to turn gold.

"I never expected to find you here. I just came on chance, and then... this is how it turned out..." he said, slowly, thinking aloud.

His words seemed to hold a question as to how it came about that Lyubka, who had been studying with him at the radio-operators' course, was now at home. But she left the tacit question unanswered. It hurt her amazingly to think that Seryozha, who had known her before, might think that she was just a flighty, capricious girl. It hurt her very much.

"You're not alone here? Where are your father and mother?" he asked.

"What does it matter to you?" she replied coldly.

"Has anything happened?"

"Go on, have something more to eat," she said.

He looked at her for some moments, then poured himself out another glass, drank it and silently continued his meal.

"Thank you," he said at last, when he had finished, and wiped his mouth with his sleeve. She could see that he had become rougher, more uncouth during his wanderings, but it was not this that offended her,—it was his lack of confidence.

"I suppose you've nothing to smoke?" he asked.

"I can find something..." She went out into the kitchen and brought him some leaves of last year's home-grown tobacco. Her father had planted it every year, taken up several harvests, dried it, and cut it into shreds for his pipe as he needed it.

They sat silently at the table, Seryozha half hidden in a cloud of smoke, and Lyubka. Everything was silent in the other room; Lyubka knew, however, that her mother was not asleep, but lying there crying.

"I see you're in trouble here. I can see it in your face. You've never been like this before," said Seryozha slowly. There was a depth of warmth and tenderness in his eyes which seemed strange in his handsome but rather coarsely-featured face.

"Everybody's in trouble just now," said Lyubka.

"If you knew how much blood I've seen these days!" said Seryozha, and there was deep sorrow in the voice emerging from the clouds of smoke. "We were dropped in Stalino region. Baled out from planes. We tried place after place, but all our contacts were gone. And it wasn't because somebody denounced them, but because they, the Germans, had been over the places with such a fine tooth comb that they'd got thousands, whether they'd done anything or not—it only needed a shadow of suspicion and they were raked in... The shafts are choked with corpses!" said Seryozha, thoroughly worked up. "We worked separately, but kept in touch, but then the chain broke. They smashed my mate's arms and cut out his tongue, and I'd have been for it too, if I hadn't happened to meet Nina in the street in Stalino. At the time when the Stalino regional committee was here in Krasnodon, she and Olga had been picked for liaison, and that was their second time in Stalino. That was when I had learned that the Germans were on the Don. Of course, the girls understood that the people who had sent them weren't in Krasnodon any longer, and nobody answered my call signal either. I handed the transmitter over to the underground regional committee, to their own operator, we decided to come back home, and here we are... I've been nearly crazy about you!" burst from him suddenly, right from his very heart. "I kept thinking, what if you'd been dropped in the enemy rear, as we were, and were left there alone? Or maybe got caught, and the Germans giving you hell in their prisons," he said in a choked voice, keeping a grip on himself, while his eyes had lost their warmth and tenderness, scorched her with their passion.

"Seryozha!" she cried. "Seryozha!" And her golden head sank onto her hands. With his big hand, with its swollen veins, he gently stroked her hand and hair.

"I was left here—I don't need to tell you why... I was told to wait for instructions, and it'll soon be a month now. And nothing and nobody," said Lyubka softly, without raising her head. "The German officers hang around like flies round the honey-pot. It's the first time in my life I've ever made myself out to be something I'm not, the devil knows how I've been pretending and twisting, it was sickening, I felt horrible... And yesterday people who came back

after trying to get away told me that the Germans had killed my father at the Donets, when they dropped bombs," and Lyubka bit her bright red lips.

The sun was rising over the steppe, its blinding rays reflected in the roofs, wet with dew. Lyubka threw her head back, shaking her curls off her face.

"Time for you to go. What do you think of doing?"

"The same as you. You said yourself that we're chips off the same block," said Seryozha, smiling.

After seeing Seryozha off the back way, through the yard, Lyubka tidied herself quickly, and put on her plainest dress. She was going to Golubyatniki, to old Ivan Gnatenko.

"C-can I see Uncle Andrei himself?" Oleg asked, trying not to show his excitement.

"No, you can't see him," said Lyubka with a mysterious smile. "After all, this is a love affair... Nina, come along and be introduced to this young man!"

Oleg and Nina shook hands awkwardly, both of them struck dumb with shyness.

"It's all right, you'll soon get used to it," said Lyubka. "I'll leave you now, and you go for a walk arm in arm somewhere and talk it all out, how you're going to live... Hope you have a good time!" she said, her eyes twinkling mischievously, and ran out of the shed, her bright flock flickering.

They remained standing there, Oleg confused and taken aback, Nina with a challenging expression on her face.

"We can't stop here," she said with an effort, but calmly. "Better go somewhere... And it's true, it would be better if you took my arm..."

An expression of intense astonishment appeared on the imperturbable face of Uncle Kolya, strolling about in the yard, when he saw his nephew leave arm in arm with this unknown girl.

Both Oleg and Nina were so young and inexperienced that it took a long time for them to lose that feeling of awkwardness. Every physical contact seemed to deprive them of the power of speech. Their linked arms seemed to glow like red-hot iron.

According to his previous night's agreement with the other lads, Oleg was to investigate the side of the park approached by Sadovaya street, so he led Nina that way. There were Germans in nearly all the houses on Sadovaya and along the park, but they had barely passed through the gate when Nina began talking business—quietly, as though she were engaged in intimate conversation.

"You can't see Uncle Andrei, you'll keep in touch with me... You mustn't be offended at that, I've never once seen him either... Uncle Andrei wants me to find out if everything's all right with you, and if you know any young fellows who could find out which of our people the Germans have arrested..."

"There's one lad, a live wire, who's already taken that on," said Oleg quickly.

"Uncle Andrei wants you to tell me everything you know... both about our people and about the Germans."

Oleg told her everything that he had heard from Tyulenin about the underground worker whom Ignat Fomin had betrayed to the Germans, and what Volodya Osmukhin had told him during the night.

"While we've been t-talking," said Oleg smiling, "I've c-counted three A.A. guns to the right of the school, three, further back, and a d-dugout beside it, but I can't see any cars..."

"And the four-barrelled machine-gun and the two Germans on the school roof?" she asked suddenly.

"I didn't notice them," said Oleg, surprised.

"But they can see the whole park from the roof up there," she said, with something of reproof in her voice.

"So you've been investigating everything too? Were you told to do that too, then?" Oleg asked, his eyes shining.

"No, I just did it myself. Habit," she said, then catching herself up, glanced quickly, challengingly at him from under her heavy, winged brows—had she said too much?

But he was still simple-minded enough not to suspect her of anything.

"Aha—there are the machines, no end of them! The bonnets are dug in, you can only see the tops of the bodies, and there's a field-kitchen smoking beside them! See it? Only don't look in that direction," said Oleg eagerly.

"No need to look. As long as they've

got that observation post on top of the school, we can't dig up the type all the same," she said calmly.

"That's t-true..." He looked at her with pleasure and laughed.

"Won't you tell me how to find Osmukhin in case Uncle Andrei asks?"

Oleg gave her Zhora Arutyunyants' address.

The result of this conversation was that Valko got in touch with Lyutikov through Volodya Osmukhin, and by putting together everything he knew, learned the circumstances of Shulga's arrest. But Oleg and Nina had no idea at that moment how important their conversation was. They already felt that they knew one another, and walked along leisurely, Nina's plump womanly arm resting on that of Oleg. They had already left the park. Along the street to their right, beside the housing scheme, there were German lorries and cars of all marks, portable radio-transmitters, Red Cross buses, and everywhere German soldiers. To their left was the vacant ground; there, some distance away, a German officer in blue epaulettes with a white edge was drilling a group of Russians, all elderly, in civilian clothes and holding German rifles. They fell in, fell out, crawled, and practised fighting at close quarters. They wore armbands with the swastika.

"Jerry's gendarmes... They're teaching the Russian policemen how to kill our folks," said Nina, her eyes flashing.

"How do you know?" he asked, remembering what Tyulenin had told him.

"I've seen them before."

"The swine!" said Oleg with loathing. "Such filth should just be trampled on."

"It would be a good thing," said Nina.

"You want to be a partisan?" he asked unexpectedly.

"Yes."

"Do you realize what a partisan is? A partisan's work isn't showy, but what a fine job it is! He kills one German, a second, kills a hundred of them, and the hundred and first may kill him. He carries out one assignment, two, ten, and on the eleventh he can go down. That demands self-sacrifice. The partisan never grudges his own life. He never places his life before the country's happiness. And if it has to be given to do his duty to his country, or to save many others, he doesn't hesitate. And he never betrays or lets down a comrade. I want to be a partisan!" said Oleg with such naive, sincere enthusiasm that Nina raised her eyes to him, with something very simple and trusting in them.

"Listen, are we to meet only on business?" said Oleg suddenly.

"No, why should we? We can meet any time when we're free," said Nina, rather shyly.

"Where do you live?"

"Are you busy now?.. Maybe you'll come home with me? I would like you to meet my older sister, Olya," she said, not quite sure that that really was what she wanted.

Oleg returned home, happy at having made these new friends, at the way his affairs were moving, and very hungry. But evidently he was not fated to eat that day. Uncle Kolya met him as he approached.

"I've been on the watch for you a long time. Freckles" (that was what they called the batman) "has been looking for you all the time."

"To the d-devil with him!" said Oleg carelessly.

"All the same, better keep out of his way."

Translated by Eve Manning

SOVIET OFFICERS WHO ESCAPED FROM GERMAN HANDS DESCRIBE THEIR STAY IN SWITZERLAND

A group of Soviet prisoners of war escaped from German hands to Switzerland and later returned to the Soviet Union via Egypt. We reproduce here the account given by one of them, Senior Lieutenant D. I. Markelov, captured in August 1941 at Nikopol, who describes the way Soviet prisoners were treated in "neutral" Switzerland.

On a dark March night in 1943, two of us—Red Army man Ivan Khokhlov and myself—broke away from our camp, which was located near a factory in Diedenhofen (Lorraine).

We tramped for a long time through France. That fair country had been reduced to one huge concentration camp. The gallant French had to work on their own land under the surveillance of German soldiers. We saw whole villages and towns that had been wrecked. Near Belfort we saw an old peasant himself harnessed to his plough, with his old woman helping him. We heard of young girls who had been raped, of families torn apart, of French people deported to German servitude. Those were terrible tales to hear. The French helped us, treating us like brothers.

But which way should we go? Where should we look for an opportunity to return home?

We decided on Switzerland. We knew that from Switzerland escaped prisoners had been sent back to Germany and handed over to the Gestapo. But we had to take the risk.

At last we reached the border, crossed it with every precaution near Delle and pushed on towards Porantruy.

In the morning we ran into a party of peasants, and an hour later a police car had already arrived to take us away.

The police officer assured us that we would not be sent back. And it is true we were not—but we were confined to prison, and there spent twenty-one days. After interrogations, questionnaires and finally a hunger-strike, we were removed to a camp at Berne where there already were some seventy prisoners of various nationalities.

A few days later three of us—the officers—were transferred to separate quarters, and a little later, they sent us to a village called Hafers, in the Fribourg Canton.

In the meantime, things were happening. We heard of the existence of a special camp for Soviet prisoners at Andelfingen, and demanded to be transferred there. Thereupon we were visited by an individual named Gisson, officially an officer of the International Red Cross, but actually a very dubious character. He tried to dissuade us from going to the camp—the Red Army rank-and-filers there did not want us, he said. While to the Red Army men in the camp he declared that we, officers, had refused to join them.

Not until February 1944 did I succeed in securing my transfer to a new camp for Red Army prisoners, at Le Chalouet, near Moutier.

By March 1942, Switzerland contained over twenty thousand refugees and interned soldiers of various armies, among them a Polish division, twelve thousands strong, which had operated with the French army and had made its way to Switzerland with all its arms when France was occupied.

Until quite recently practically all Russians escaping from the hands of the Germans were sent back from Switzerland and turned over to the Gestapo. As an example I might mention a Russian war prisoner named Michael Derevyanko. He had been put to work on a farm near Singen, had crossed into Switzerland not far from Schaffhausen. The very next day he was taken back to the frontier and handed over to the

Germans. He had a bad time of it in the Gestapo clutches. But three months later he escaped to Switzerland again. And there were hundreds of such cases.

Under pressure of public opinion, particularly that of the workers in Zurich and Basle, the Swiss government issued an ordinance concerning interned Russians. Russian war prisoners escaping from fascist bondage had been put in the terrible Beljasse prison, where political prisoners and criminal offenders were confined. After six and a half months, there were twenty eight Russians in this prison. Their dreadful condition is hard even to describe. Scanty food, threadbare prison clothing, humiliation and chicanery at every turn. And this went on for over half a year.

In the later stages, the inmates were sent to work on the farms, mostly belonging to the richer and pro-fascist farmers. There they were practically starved and worked eighteen hours a day for a daily wage of a franc or a franc and a half.

In December 1942 the first camp for Russian internees was organized. This was the camp at Andelfingen, in the Aargau Canton. Besides the Russians from Beljasse, there were here some hundred and fifty Yougoslavs. The chief of this camp, Pfeiffer by name, was an out-and-out fascist and Germanophile.

The only difference between this camp and Beljasse was that in the prison the inmates had been kept in cells, while here they were quartered in barracks. For the rest, the regime was just the same. In fact, in June 1943 things became very much worse than they had ever been. But by this time there were already over one hundred Russians in the camp, and they replied to the ill-treatment, underfeeding and chicanery with organized protests, refusal to work and hunger-strikes.

On the third day of one of these hunger-strikes, the camp was visited by Otto Zaub, the head of the Internees Board. To his question as to their requirements, the Russians replied with the following demands:

1. Russian internees to be given the same status as internees of other nationalities.

2. To be allowed to celebrate their holidays unhindered.

3. The chief of the camp and his interpreter to be removed.

4. Better food.

But these negotiations yielded nothing. We were told: "You had a worse time of it in Germany, and you survived. You won't peg out here either." True, we were promised that the chief and the interpreter would be removed, but instead, a police squad arrived late at night and threw a cordon around the camp. They ringed us in for twenty days.

After a while we were moved to another camp. Different men were in charge, but there was no difference in the regime.

In August 1943 the police descended suddenly on this new camp to arrest two Russians (Rossokhay and Sitko) for insubordination, of which, it was claimed, they had been guilty in the old camp. The rest of us would not hand them over, however. Three days later, a platoon of armed gendarmes arrived, but with no better results.

On August 27th, at four in the morning, our hundred unarmed Russians were surrounded by a full regiment of troops and gendarmerie with machine-guns and tommy-guns. Several field guns were mounted at the edge of the wood, hundred and fifty yards off. Each of the soldiers was provided with a length of rope and in the road ten cars were lined up.

People were seized, trussed, bundled into the cars. Thirty-one of them were taken away, and scattered through the various prisons. After six weeks, they were transferred to a penalty camp at Vauvillermoos, and charged with having attempted to introduce Soviet ways in the camp. Large numbers of other Russians were locked up in prison for varying periods at various other times—over three hundred of them, according to the lowest estimate.

A ghastly tragedy took place in the Vauvillermoos camp on Red Army Day in 1944 for which Captain Begen, the camp commandant, was responsible. He had served in the German army and had at one time been in charge of a war prisoners' camp in North Africa.

The prisoners were gathered in their barracks that evening, talking, recalling old times, singing Soviet songs.

About ten o'clock, the door was flung open and an enormous dog rushed in. It attacked and bit a prisoner called Kondrashov. The rest gave it a sound

beating, drove it out, and locked the door. A few minutes later, a volley was fired through the wooden barrack wall, and Kondrashov got a bullet clean through the neck. A second volley hit two other prisoners—Senchenko and Makhalin—and Kondrashov was wounded again, this time in the leg. A prisoner named Ivanov opened the door and cried:

"What are you up to? Why are you shooting?"

In reply, he was hit by a rifle-butt on the arm and head. The first blow smashed his left elbow while the second knocked him senseless. Half a dozen dogs fell upon him, biting savagely. Another prisoner, Frolov, tried to get out of the barrack, but the dogs attacked him too.

The drunken soldier who had knocked Ivanov down now burst in and fired point-blank at the dying Kondrashov. He hit his right collar-bone, a fraction of which was found on the floor the following day.

It was not until after one in the morning that a surgeon arrived. Before he came, the other prisoners had torn up their shirts for dressings and had bandaged the wounded men.

The three with the gravest injuries were taken to hospital, and there Kondrashov died at half past five the following morning. Senchenko's leg had to be amputated. Altogether there were eight casualties.

In describing this affair the Swiss papers and radio explained that the Russian prisoners had attacked their guards.

This was not the only time the Swiss fascists were guilty of such foul crimes with the authorities conniving. In one of the other camps, for example, a prisoner called Kisselyov was killed on January 17th, 1944. Asked for the reason, the camp commandant, Oberleutnant Sooder, an out-and-out fascist, replied: "A soldier is given arms to use them and as for the Russians, there are plenty of them."

A Soviet officer, Lieutenant Dobrolyubov, was put in the punishment cell for refusing to go wood-chopping when he was ill. Men confined in the punishment cell were supposed to come out for exercise. When Dobrolyubov, in protest, declined to do so, dogs were set upon him and all but tore him to pieces.

Two of the men badly hurt in the Vauvillermoos affair—Ivanov and Makhalin—were after partial recovery put back in this penalty camp. The life there was unbearable, and the friends made up their minds to escape to France and join the franc-tireurs. Their attempt was not successful. They were seized and thrown in the Vitzwill prison, which was no better than the Beljasse. Under the law, internees attempting to escape were liable to twenty days' imprisonment and three months in a penalty camp. Ivanov and Makhalin were not released from prison after the twenty days, however, and they declared a hunger-strike in protest. On the third day, the prison authorities ordered torture for them, "to give a fillip to their appetites," as they put it.

Ivanov was taken to a small cell, which was then hermetically sealed and flooded with water. A pump had been fitted up, connected with bicycle pedals fixed on a chain in the cell, and he had to pedal away continually to keep down the level. As soon as he stopped or slackened the pace, the water rose and threatened to engulf him.

Makhalin was taken to another cell, also specially adapted for the purpose. One wall was studded with nails, while opposite it was a moving shield squeezing the prisoner against the nails, which bit into his back. To avoid it, he had to pound hard on the shield all the time. When he stopped from exhaustion, the board pressed him against the sharp nails.

It was mostly for attempted flight that punishments like these were inflicted.

Russian girls escaping to Switzerland from Germany were also very badly treated.

Natasha Oleshko, for example, was sent to work for one Walter Flueckiger, at 19 Hagentalerstrasse, in a suburb of Basle. The conditions were frightful. The poor girl was kept working from half past six in the morning till ten at night. She couldn't spare a minute to wash out her own clothes. On the tenth day Natasha protested, but her master replied:

"You want to quit, eh? You just shut up. I'm boss here, not you. I'll

make you work day and night if I choose. I'm your master, and you have no rights at all."

Next Natasha was put to work for a Dr. Fischly, at 137 Millerstrasse, Basle. Here she was a slave pure and simple, and no wonder, considering that this doctor had been in German employ and had only arrived in Switzerland from Rumania in March 1944.

There was also a women's camp in Basle. A German woman named Stanzer was superintendent. She was vicious in her treatment of both the eight Russian girls and the thirty Italian; but the Italians did get leave and earned five francs in ten days, while the Russians were never allowed out and their ten days' wage was two francs.

The left press in Switzerland commented extensively on the treatment of Russians in Switzerland. Many of the papers demanded equal status for the Russians. But the pro-fascist government remained deaf to the voice of the people and the press.

Volksrecht of May 21st, 1943, carried an article headed "Equal Rights for Russian Internees"; and the *Nation* of March 5th, 1943, printed another—"Russian Internees in Switzerland." Both articles described the ill-treatment of the Russians. *Berner Tagwacht* and *Volksrecht* revealed the cases when dogs were let loose upon Soviet citizens; the heading of one of these articles was "Scandalous."

On October 26th, 1943, *Volksrecht* again denounced the persecution to which Russian internees were subjected in an article entitled "Concern for Internees." On June 26th, 1944, the paper urged anew that Russians must be given equal status with internees of other nationalities. This article was called "Discrimination in the Treatment of Interned Soldiers."

An article by myself—"Notes on the Life of the Russians"—which was printed by several papers appearing in German and French, proved that the Swiss government encouraged anti-Soviet fascist organizations. To all these protests no attention was paid.

There were instances, however, when the Swiss government lent a more attentive ear to voices in the press. This was the case when the *Courrier de Genève* on September 4th, 1943, brought against the Russian internees the slanderous accusation of establishing an international brigade, of contact with underground Communist bodies, and so on. A similar attack was made in the *Gazette de Lausanne*. This paper actually claimed that there were "Moscow agents" at work in Switzerland.

And when these articles appeared, there was a regular wave of searches, interrogations and so forth.

In May 1944 a certain German visited the Schwarzenburg camp and urged the interned Soviet officers to join the German army. Outraged by this infamous proposal, they drove him out and at once informed Lieutenant Collye, the camp commandant, demanding that he should be detained and brought to trial. Theirs remained a voice crying in the wilderness, however.

MY LAST DAYS

The letter we publish below was discovered by Polish soldiers in one of the "6th Field" barracks of the fascist death camp at Majdanek.

Michael Bezprozvanny had hidden his letter in the crack of a window-frame and there it had stayed for about ten months. The paper had rotted along the edges and in the creases, but most of the text is still legible, though written in ordinary lead-pencil.

Michael Bezprozvanny's family has now been traced. He himself was a turner by trade and worked as foreman before the war at a munitions factory in Kiev.

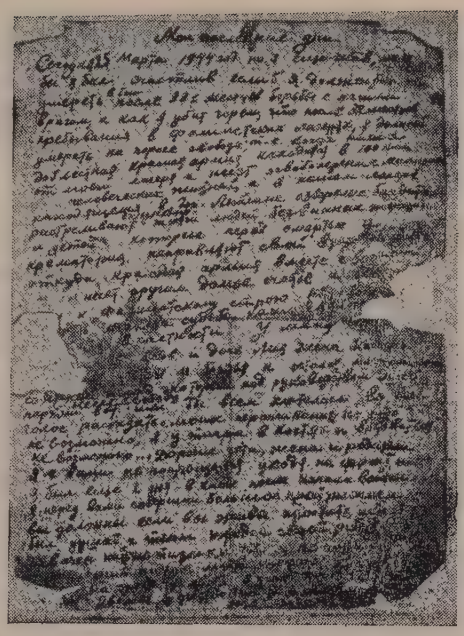
Today is March 25th, 1944, but I am still alive. How happy I would be to be dying in battle after 33 months of fighting our enemy—and how terribly it hurts that after 32 months in the fascist camps, I have to die on the threshold of freedom, when our gallant Red Army is 100 kilometres from my camp and is bringing deliverance to millions of human beings; yet in our camp, in the town of

Lublin, the savage bandits are every day shooting thousands of people—innocent women and children, who before they die look from the crematorium to the east from which the Red Army, together with the rise of... is bringing long happiness for others and everlasting... for the fascist order. But... to die. That is our fate... in particular.

I have... a son, Jakob, a daughter, Leah, my wife Pauline... brothers and sisters, and there remain the millions of Soviet people, who, under my Party's leadership, are bringing liberty. Now I wish I could tell them all at the top of my voice about what I have gone through, but that is impossible ; the tiger has me in his clutches, and it's impossible to break away. Dear children, wife and parents! I never said good-bye to you when I was leaving for the front—and I was still two days in Kiev after the war began. I am guilty of a great offence against you, but if you are alive, you must forgive me, for I was devoted to my work body and soul and inspired by patriotism, which I have not lost... the fruits of my life.

On June 23rd I... for the front. On July 6th I fought my first action, and between then and July 26th I was in action many times against the eastward marching invader. On July 26th, wounded in the head and arm, I remained on the battlefield, surrounded by the enemy, and was taken prisoner in the village of Vyssokoye, Tetievsky district, Kiev region. I was at a camp in Kholm for 3 months. Was taken out twice during this time to be shot. On October 20th I was moved to a branch of the concentration camp at Lublin to work, and there I laboured at my trade until November 3rd, 1943. I went through a lot in this time, made two unsuccessful attempts to escape. On November 3rd, twenty thousand of us Jews were marched off to K.A. to be shot. For some reason three hundred were picked out and left, the rest were shot and burnt before my eyes.

And so I am still alive today. Of the three hundred, fifty have survived, and I am one of them. But the camp and Lublin are being evacuated in a hurry.



Kovel has been captured and the drive is heading for Lublin, and we are counting the minutes before they take us to... But I look death proudly in the face... our country is clear of the German invader, and once again there will be the life that I fought for, the kind of life I worked and studied for... To my son, if he is alive, I should like to speak these last words: let him take the road his father has followed ever since 1932, let him be faithful to his country, to the Party and Comrade Stalin.

I can't write any more, my nerves are in tatters.

I ask those who find this letter to see to it that my family and friends hear about my life and death. That is my last request. Addresses as in 1941:

Moscow, Krestovozdvizhensky St. 2, Apt. 38, L. S. Khandoga.

Pomoshnaya Stn., School 19, L. Prokopenko.

Kiev, Andreyevskaya St. 1/13, Bezprozvanny.

Kiev, Voroshilov St. 29, Apt. 24, Litvak—from Misha.

Good-bye.

Bezprozvanny Michael Grigorievich

FOR CHILDREN ABOUT BY

LYDIA BATH

THE CHILDHOOD OF ALISHER NEVAYI

Ed. note: This is an excerpt from *The Garden of Life*, a book by Lydia Bath on Alisher Nevayi (1441—1501), the Central-Asian poet who was the founder of Uzbek literature and a notable figure in the public life of his day.

After the death in 1404 of Tamerlane, who united the Central-Asian lands, his vast kingdom was divided up amongst his descendants, who carried on uninterrmittent internecine strife which impoverished their subjects and at times forced one or other follower of the sultans to leave their country. Herat, the capital of Khorassan, one of the Timurid princedoms, was the birthplace of Nevayi, but his family was obliged to flee from it during the wars of the princes.

The fragment published here describes an episode in the life of the poet as a child.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE BIRDS

The wind from the desert brought sand and an indefinable sadness. The voice of the camels was often heard. The women were weary of nursing and lulling their children. The men hid their fatigue, but the sand whipped their faces, filtered into their beards, grated under their teeth, servants and masters alike suffered.

Towards evening, the travellers halted at a large khanaka [1] near the town of Teft. Dervishes dwelt here, and among those who had renounced the world and put on the garments of the saints, was the scholar, Sharafu'd-Din Ali Iazdi, the famous historian. He had come to this isolated place so that none might hinder him from completing his great work on the history of the unconquerable, the cruel, and vainglorious Tamerlane.

The dervishes received the travellers with goodwill. A separate shelter was found for the women and children. It was plain to Sharafu'd-Din that these were people accustomed to luxury, that they had been obliged by some untoward circumstances to undertake a journey full of hardships, and he understood that they were going into exile.

He was not mistaken: it was a noble family, driven from Khorassan during a war that broke out after the death of Sultan Shah-Rukh, a son of Tamerlane, and they were on their way to distant Irak.

At nightfall the wind died down and the weary travellers sank into deep slumber. When the stars had faded in the paling sky, several boys went out into the court yard and hurried to the door of the dervishes' room. They peeped in shyly, but recoiled with a start when a voice called out to them. Shod in soft dusty boots, their feet carried them swiftly away from the dwelling that fascinated yet frightened them. Only one boy stood his ground when the door was opened by Sharafu'd-Din himself.

"What are you called, my boy—blessed be your name?"

"Alisher, son of Ghiyathu'd-Din Kichkine. My father is the ruler of Sabezevar in Khorassan."

"Whoever answers as distinctly as you will have success in acquiring learning. Do you go to school?"

The boy's eyes, bright and closely-set, glowed with pleasure as he answered in the affirmative. The corner of a book showed from the breast of his gown.

"Show me the book you have hidden in your breast, Alisher."

Involuntarily the boy's hand went to his book, and he pressed it to him as though afraid that it would be taken away from him.

"It's the best book I've ever read," he cried.

Sharafu'd-Din laughed.

"How much have you had time to read in your seven short years?"

[1] Khanaka—a room, usually at a mosque, for students, scholars and dervishes.

"I am eight years old, sir," the boy replied with dignity. "I know the *Gulistan* by heart, and this book has taught me a strange tongue." Plucking up courage, he held out the book to the old scholar.

"Oh, this is the *Language of the Birds*," the scholar said with delighted astonishment when he saw the poem of the Persian poet Faridu'd-Din Attar. "But can so young a boy understand anything of this?"

"I cannot explain it but I remember the whole of it. Ask me any part you like."

Opening the book at random, the scholar read out the line that headed the page. The boy took up the poem at this point and recited it. He strung the words like pearls into lines, pronouncing each sound with care. The childish voice rose and fell, in some places it sounded like the rustle of leaves and the sifting sands, sometimes it was reminiscent of the twittering of birds and the call of the thunder.

"Ah, so there you are! At your crazy games again! You aren't even ashamed before the learned man, you're twittering like a bird instead of pronouncing the holy words of the prayers properly."

A tall man with a black beard towered over Alisher, and the boy broke off in the middle of a word. Sharafu'd-Din raised his eyes and as he handed back the book, he said to the father:

"By Allah, sir, your son has a marvellous memory."

"This memory of his, most noble of men, will drive him to madness. He wants to read nothing but this incomprehensible book. Give it to me!" he shouted at the boy, and his eyes flashed with anger.

Alisher turned pale as a star when day breaks. For a moment more he clasped the book to his breast, then with a low obeisance, gave it to his father. Carried away by his passion, the man tore the pages lengthwise, then crosswise, again and again, and flung them on the ground. Then, as though suddenly ashamed of his passion, he bowed to Sharafu'd-Din and went away.

Alisher gulped back his tears, knelt down and gathered up the fragments of his book. He raised the torn leaves, perfumed with musk and amber, to his face, and breathed in their aroma. But to read anything was no longer possible. The book was ruined. He covered his face with his hands and recited to himself pages from the beginning and the end. A smile played about his lips once more, he was speaking the language of the birds. The book survived in him, it had not perished. The book would live, as long as his memory lived.

Pleased and thrilled, he rose from his knees. The old scholar, who had been observing him meanwhile, placed his hand on the boy's head and said:

"Increase your knowledge, embellish yourself with knowledge, for knowledge is the guide of men."

THE HOUSE AT HERAT

Ghiyathu'd-Din Kichkine was not a bad man, he loved his son dearly. But the boy's fate caused him anxiety: his abilities were developed beyond his years. At first Ghiyathu'd-Din had been proud of this. He recalled the happy days in Herat where guests often assembled in his spacious hospitable house. Poets, scholars and soldiers came, many of them had seen foreign lands. Their tales were listened to until far into the night. Merchants arrived from India and China, bringing rich merchandise—silk blue as the sky and soft as an unborn lamb's skin, ivory and precious stones. The older generation of soldiers could still remember Tamerlane's campaigns. Their tales had the far off beauty of legends in that rich and peaceful home.

There was music on evenings like these. But the city ruler was proudest of all of the scholars and poets who came. Poems were read in Arabic, Persian and Turki. It had been the custom to consider Arabian verse the most eloquent, Persian the wittiest, and Turki the most truthful. They were in the language spoken by the mass of the people. Though everyday language would rarely be used to express the sublime.

One winter evening in particular came back to the man's mind. Many guests were seated on the cushions around the charcoal brazier and the talk flowed languidly. Graceful boys brought in little tables laden with dainties—halvá that melted in the mouth, fragrant sherbet, and dried apricots. A fresh impetus was given to the conversation when the host said:

"This evening I am going to show my guests a remarkable work of art."

With these words he drew out from a niche a manuscript over which it was apparent that artist, calligrapher and bookbinder had toiled long. The pearly paper of silken texture bore a golden headpiece done with a very fine brush. The broad blue margins were rich with a design in gold and silver of a spreading tree with a fabulous bird in the branches. In one of the miniatures a brilliant sun was rising behind a range of mountains, and whoever looked at this picture fancied that the sun was shining straight in his eyes. The visitors gasped with delight, and bit their fingers in wonder.

The manuscript was passed from hand to hand and examined and meanwhile soft strains of music came from somewhere either overhead or from behind the carved doors. It drew nearer and died down. The musician who entered the room playing the flute drew the melody after him and in response to it, another musician drew his bow across the strings of the gijak. The guests sat silent listening to the plaintive melody.

"Music has true consolation both for the thinker and the soldier," said an old grey-haired man, a bek of an ancient family, who had fought in the Sultan Shah Rukh's service and won victories.

"He who has heard all his life long the clash of steel knows how to value the sweetness of peace. Is not this true?" a young poet, Maksud, said respectfully.

This was the first time he had been the guest of Ghiyathu'd-Din and he was trying to remember all that was said here.

"Tell us, noble bek, about the bloody battles fought for Seistan, Bagdad, and Shiraz," he pleaded.

"The lion in the desert is not so greedy for meat as the soul of the poet for impressions," said one of the poet's fellow travellers, noted for his caustic wit.

Observing that the conversation had taken an awkward turn, the host brought out the chessboard: the bek was known to be fond of this game.

"This game reminds me of the battlefield," he often said.

"Look," said Ghiyathu'd-Din, "these chess-pieces were brought me from India. They are of ivory and of a very beautiful shape: neither too big nor too small, each piece is a pleasure to the eye."

The bek was setting out the pieces on the board. Opposite to him sat an old poet. He hummed: "Oh, morning zephyr, ask the dew if my love is not beautiful," and moved the first pawn. The game opened, war was begun.

"But he who once having put his hand to a task leaves it unfulfilled will suffer humiliation and death no matter how great he is," said the triumphant bek taking the piece.

At that moment the carved doors opened. A small boy in a bright scarlet coat came in quickly. On seeing so large a concourse of people, he paused. His rounded cheeks flushed as with downcast eyes he went slowly up to his father. They all turned to look at him.

"Alisher, peace be to your name," the poet called out, "come here and tell me whether I should move my knight or not?"

Going up to the poet, Alisher stood looking thoughtfully at the chessboard. The old man sat crosslegged on a high velvet cushion. The boy leant against his shoulder.

"Things must be going hard with you if you have to turn to a child for counsel," the bek said with a sneer.

"A child's words are fair and true."

Alisher was calculating something with great concentration.

"Yes, move the knight," he said at last.

There was general laughter.

"Come over here, Alisher," someone called from a far corner, "sing us something!"

"Dance for us, Alisher!"

"Alisher, let's teach you to play the flute!"

The boy went from one to another, and was fondled and caressed. When he was tired of all this, he went back to his father and buried his head in his knees.

The talk now was of the heavenly luminaries. Among the guests there was a learned astronomer, who spoke with emotion of Tamerlane's famous grandson, Ulug-bek, the astronomer.

"He read the skies like his own soul. He opened the way to the study of the laws by which the luminaries move. The sky has been brought nearer us. And this has been done by the Sultan Ulug-bek."

Alisher raised his head and stood listening. His eyes reflected the candlelight. The conversation flowed on with a smooth and measured rhythm. The chess-game ended in a draw and the players joined the larger circle. The poet

read some new verses. When he had finished, a lively discussion followed as to which of the verses were best, and his work was compared with that of the classical poets. Someone mentioned the great Persian poet, Kasim-i-Anwar. Then Alisher suddenly raised his hand and recited in his childish treble:

"We are dervishes, we are in love, the blessings of this mortal life are vanity.

"We mourn for thee alone, thoughts of the universe are vanity."

This was so unexpected that the elders did not laugh at the little boy but only sighed.

It was late when they dispersed. The door of the inner appartments had opened several times and a woman's voice had called "Alisher!" But the father had made the speaker a sign to leave the child with him. As the evening was drawing to a close, his eyelids drooped, but he strove to keep awake and behave like his elders. When they took leave of their host, each blessed the child with unusual feeling and sincerity, and the father, hearing their predictions, found it hard to disguise his pleasure and pride:

"The boy will be a soldier."
"The boy will be a scholar."
"The boy will be a poet."

These were the things that Ghiyathu'd-Din was thinking over as his wrath cooled. His spirits were very low because he was going into exile. He did not know what awaited his family in the future, but he feared that his son's abilities would fade in a strange country. The boy was too much aloof from everyday life, he thought, and would never be able to stand up for himself. Even the children at school had noticed this. He did not join in their games, and avoided them. Once some boys came to Ghiyathu'd-Din and told him that Alisher kept reading Attar's *Language of the Birds* and would not be parted from the book. Ghiyathu'd-Din had tried more than once to read it, but it had seemed incomprehensible to him. How could an eight-year-old boy understand it all? He was afraid Alisher would overtax his powers. "He seems like one possessed while he is reading it," he repeated, recalling the words of his son's schoolmate.

ALISHER IN THE DESERT

When the Sultan Mirza Abu'l-Gasim Babur began to reign in Khorassan and order was restored, the exiles were able to return home.

The caravan was the second day on its way. The route from Irak to Khorassan was the same, but the mood of the travellers was different now: they were going home.

It cost them much labour and sweat to root up the bushes and trees in the heat of the day, but they knew that it would be pleasant to warm themselves at night. The nights were so chilly that even their blankets and wadded quilts were insufficient, but in the daytime they suffered from thirst. Wells were few and far between: when they were found, there was a great bustle; camels and horses livened up, children cried with impatience. The large water-skins were filled: the horses splashed the precious water as they drank greedily. The route of all caravans was marked with wells and the ashes of campfires, by these each new caravan knew that some had gone before, and left a greeting, now cold and dead, to those who followed on the hard road.

A halt was made at night, but they were up betimes, for Ghiyathu'd-Din had warned them to be ready to start while the morning was cool.

In Irak Alisher had learned to ride and his father had given him a sturdy little horse. Alisher broke him in, though it took him some time to accustom himself to the animal's stubborn character, but at last he made him obey. They became firm friends. Hardly a day passed that Alisher did not go for a ride on his horse, sometimes accompanied by old Hashim, the servant, who loved the boy better than anyone else. But usually he went alone.

Hashim was an ugly man of almost fabulous physical strength; he squinted, he had a harelip, and he was clumsily made. He was terrible in wrath, he was tender in love. Ghiyathu'd-Din had once saved him from an unjust sentence passed upon him and since then the man had been his devoted servant. On the way home he was put in charge of the caravan. Robber raids were not infrequent on all the main caravan routes. Cross-eyed Hashim had excellent

sight and his hearing was so keen that he could catch the rustle of the sands behind the sandhills. Alisher asked him once if he could hear the grass growing.

Hashim's gnarled, sinewy hands were deft with the curved sabre.

He used to ride ahead to reconnoitre and was the first to discover a well, a convenient place for the night's camp, and saxaul bushes for fuel.

Now Alisher rarely saw his beloved Hashim, except when the old servant used to wake him in the morning, or during the heat of the day bring him a drink of water he had saved specially for the child, or lead up his horse.

So it was on this particular morning: Alisher had spent a rather bad night, for he was cold and the flames of the campfire warmed one side only. The sand under and around him was cold and it was hard to imagine that it would be redhot in a few hours' time. But he did not want to go and sleep in the tent where his mother slept. She complained to his father, but he only said: "He is nearly nine years old, he must grow hardy: my son must be a man, not a milksop. His fate will be war and travel. Let his booklearning be balanced by a strong and hardy body."

Hashim led up the boy's horse, and Alisher, still sleepy and sniffing a little with the cold, mounted him. The caravan set out slowly on its way.

Everything was bathed in the golden-rose of dawn and the sky was a pale yellow. Gradually the colours changed, merged into blue and it was hard to look at the sky through the film of wreathing sand.

They crossed a sandhill and Alisher overtook a huge majestic camel carrying the big bales on which the boy's mother was perched very comfortably. He flung back his head and called out in a ringing voice:

"Peace be to you!"

The mother moved aside the veil that covered the lower part of her face and he saw to his surprise how worn and anxious she looked.

"Alisher, my heart's eternal care, have you had anything to eat today?"

"Yes, mother, Hashim fed me and gave me a drink. I feel very well and my horse is in good condition too. See how bravely he steps out."

Alisher was hiding the truth: he had not seen a decent well since the previous day. The only one they had come upon was found to yield rather bitter brackish water. None but the camels drank from it. People and horses were suffering from thirst, their resources of water were very carefully divided up amongst them. Following his father's example, Alisher refused his and said:

"Leave it for the women and children."

With difficulty Hashim persuaded him to take a mouthful: but it only increased his thirst.

The caravan stretched in an endless line; Hashim was far ahead. Alisher was at the tail-end. The swaying camels stalked in front of him, and it seemed to him that the string stretched endlessly. The heat grew intense, a smoky-yellow sand blinded him. He closed his eyes, then forced himself to open them, but he could not shake off the spell of sleep that lulled him. The reins rested loosely on the neck of the animal and he let him go whither he would.

"Back and forth, to and fro," he repeated as he watched the riders swaying on the bales in front of him on the humps of the camels. His throat was parched. He saw a mirage of a cool, blue pond such as there had been in the home at Herat. Ah, if he could only set his thirsting lips to it! His body drooped on the horse's neck; his slack fingers still clung to the mane. Feeling uncomfortable the horse shook himself and quickened his pace. Alisher gradually slid out of the saddle without noticing it. He slept—a sound, hot slumber.

Hashim was far ahead, he had gone in search of water. He knew these parts well, but he lost his way among new sandhills that had shifted this year in the desert. The wind raised a thin spiral of sand from their tops. "Is there going to be a storm?" he wondered in vexation. Almost directly the storm was upon him and the air was dense with flying sand. Daylight was blotted out, the huge sun dwindled to a small brass moon. He had seen storms like this many a time and he knew that it would not last long. All that could be done was to wrap himself in his burnous and keep still. It was harder to soothe his horse: he covered the animal's eyes with the tail of his long coat, but could not stop him trembling.

Then the storm swept on its way and raged somewhere in the distance.

Hashim had left the caravan far behind, but soon after the storm had passed he came upon a well. First he allowed his horse to drink, then he drank. The water was unusually sweet and clear, and the simoom had not yet had time to muddy it. He filled two large skins, looked around attentively to impress the exact location on his mind, then turned back to his caravan.

The horse, after quenching his thirst, went at a brisk pace and soon the caravan came in sight. When he reached it, Hashim found it in terrible confusion: Alisher's riderless horse had overtaken them an hour before. He had been caught but the boy had not yet been found. Hashim turned white to the lips.

"I have but one eye but its sight is still keen, sir; give me a man with me and I swear by Allah, that Alisher shall be found before sunset."

Ting-ting-ting... Persistent and vexing as mosquitoes, the sounds filled his ears. Then the sharp, piercing importunate humming ceased suddenly and strains of music came from a distance. The melting flavour of sherbet was in his mouth. His body plunged into cool waters, but they grew hotter, bubbled and burnt his hands.

Alisher opened his eyes. He was alone, lying on the scorching desert sands, where there was no shelter from the sun's rays. The caravan was nowhere in sight, his horse had galloped away. Thirst returned with consciousness. He suddenly felt himself a little boy again. For the first time he remembered Hashim. Hashim would have saved him. Then with shame came the thought of his mother.

"Great Allah, I will never desert her if only thou wilt restore me to her," he prayed. He hugged his shoulders and swayed slightly, trying not to cry. He resolved not to think of himself. And as always at difficult moments he found it helped him to remember his favourite book, *The Language of the Birds*.

One of the stories told by the birds reminded him of what had happened to him today. The birds had to fly across a barren waterless wilderness. The prospect of the long journey alarmed them but the oriole, the hardiest and most sensible of all, said that the desert was but the antechamber to the palace of divine beauty. Then he told the birds an instructive story of the courageous traveller Bayazid Bistami who wandered by night in the desert and still did not lose heart.

"And that was at night-time, and this is in broad daylight," Alisher consoled himself.

He got up, his feet sinking in the burning sand, and trudged ahead. He thought he was on the caravan track. The greatest torment was his thirst. He gulped his saliva, but it was sticky and full of sand. His lips were cracked and burning, his nostrils full of sand. His eyes closed involuntarily from the dazzling sunlight, but through his lashes he suddenly saw a little way off to the right, a blue oasis, fringed with palms. He turned his footsteps thitherwards and hurried. So he went on and on, now and again sitting down from weariness, then struggling up. But the oasis came no nearer, its green palms and blue waters enticed him ever onwards. He groaned with weariness and broke into a run. The hot air struck him in the face like a blow. His weary limbs refused to bear him and he fell. A few moments later he was on his feet again, but when he opened his eyes he could see no oasis. He turned this way and that, raised his hand to shade his eyes, but the mirage had vanished. Exhausted and despairing, he groaned aloud:

"I want a drink, I'm dying of thirst!"

Then, pulling himself together, he stood a moment with closed eyes. When he opened them, he saw a large, black object before them. "Perhaps it's my horse that's fallen in the desert," he wondered. "No, it looks more like a rock. But where could rocks come from here? It may be a tree with spreading roots."

It aroused his curiosity to such a degree that he forgot his thirst. He went towards it, keeping his eyes fixed upon it, for fear it would vanish like the oasis. But it did not. It only dwindled as he got nearer, but this is a common phenomenon in the desert. He reached it much sooner than he expected, and, unable to believe his eyes, stood stock still: it was a water-skin, one of those the caravan took with it. He threw his arms around it and felt that it was full.

"This is our waterskin, I must be on the track of the caravan. I've found the right road."

With some difficulty he undid the thongs of hide and opened it. Then he plunged his hand into the water, sucked his dripping fingers and passed them over his face. Taking off his skullcap, he filled it to the brim, and drank the warmish water greedily. It tasted like the waters of paradise. When he had drunk the first capful, he took a second, and was about to dip for the third time, when he paused. He had quenched his thirst somewhat and he thought to himself: "I shall need that water yet. My father always says that no good can come of greed."

When he had drunk his fill, he felt stronger and he wanted to run on in pursuit of the caravan. But he was reluctant to leave the waterskin behind. He tried to raise it, but it was far too heavy and he realized that he would not be able to carry it even a few steps. Besides, he felt that he was losing his bearings again. He looked eagerly around him, stiff with terror.

The sun was still high but its rays were no longer as ardent. Two riders appeared in the distance, raising a cloud of dust. They drew rein about two hundred yards from Alisher and began to look about them. One was Hashim. He was the first to see the waterskin and the childish figure beside it.

"Now Allah and Mahommed his prophet be thanked!" he shouted wildly, as he urged on his horse.

"Hashim, Hashim!"

Alisher was running out to meet the riders. He felt Hashim's kind strong hands lift him from the burning sands. He clung to the old man and only when he was in the saddle did he remember and ask:

"But where's my horse?"

"Whole and sound, Light of my eyes. Soon we shall overtake them all."

"And we are going to a wonderful palace, aren't we?" Alisher asked cheerfully.

Translated by Anthony Wixley

AT THE ROUND TABLE UNDER THE CUCKOO CLOCK

Gathered at the Round Table under the Cuckoo Clock, "Our Guests" recently held their eighteenth and nineteenth broadcasts, the latter devoted to the Mayday holidays.

The main feature of the eighteenth broadcast was a musical programme performed by the pupils of a Moscow music school in a district named after Mikhail Frunze, a famous Soviet army leader of the Civil War. The school is attended chiefly by children of servicemen. Here music is intended in the first place to foster the general mental development of the children. All general secondary-school subjects are taught here with particular attention paid to music. The curriculum includes the theory and history of music, the works of Russian and Western composers as well as lessons in piano, violin or violoncello. Each pupil appears twice a year at school concerts to which the public is invited. Much attention is devoted to poise and stage manners. The children who took part in the programme before the guests of the Round Table and the radio audience displayed good taste and marked musical ability.

The guest of honour on this occasion was the well-known opera singer, Maxim Mikhailov, who told the children about his favourite role of Ivan Sussanin, the Russian patriot and peasant, in the opera of that name by the famous Russian composer Glinka, scoring great success at the Bolshoy Theatre in Moscow. He also spoke of his work on the screen and then sang several songs among which a new folk song about Stalin's pipe, which, to judge from the deluge of letters that has poured in since, was particularly successful with the youngsters.

Mikhailov was followed by actors and musicians of the Moscow Music Hall who had just returned from the front. Their leader, Miron Raskatov, told some thrilling episodes about their trips to the forward positions. The musicians played several numbers on the xylophone, accordion and Hawaiian guitar. The selections were chosen from among the works of Shostakovich, Khachaturyan and other prominent Soviet composers. Rina Zelyonaya, famed for her vocal impersonations of children (she, too, had just returned from the front where she was awarded the Order of

the Red Star for her splendid work), gave a skilful imitation of a young Round Table guest and recited humorous verses, to the delight of young and old alike.

The nineteenth gathering was held on Mayday amidst the festival of spring and the great victories of the Red Army and our allies. The opening speech was made by Hero of the Soviet Union, Corporal Nikolai Ogurechnikov, who had just arrived from the front in Germany. After conveying holiday greetings the corporal, who had covered the glorious road of the Soviet offensive from Moscow to Königsberg, related episodes from the life of sapper troops and described the feats of his comrades-in-arms.

The next to speak was the famous Danish writer and antifascist Martin Andersen Nexö, then in Moscow.

The floor was then taken by the youngest of our guests—children, ranging from five to seven years of age, from the kindergarten of the Higher Technical School in Moscow, who recited Mayday poetry by Mayakovsky and sang a song about Stalin. The performers who are studying English also sang several English and American songs which greatly appealed to the audience, as was shown by the telephone calls right after the performance. On this Mayday, when the united forces of freedom-loving mankind are giving proof of their might, this programme of American and British songs given by the children was particularly timely and joyous.

Our young guests got a special treat when Lieutenant-General Eugene Fyodorov came to the microphone. Fyodorov was one of the four men who had been to the North Pole, and spent a year on a drifting ice floe] with Ivan Papanin. Eugene Fyodorov, who was a meteorologist at the North Pole station, is today the chief of the Meteorological Service of the Red Army. He is also chairman of the Soviet Youth Antifascist Committee. General Fyodorov spoke about the activities of young antifascists in the U.S.S.R. and other freedom-loving countries and related many interesting episodes from the life of meteorologists in the army.

A highlight of the holiday programme was the performances of the Kozolupovs, a musical family known throughout the Soviet country. Three generations of this family took part in the programme. Professor Kozolupov, Merited Art Worker, played a composition by Haydn on the violoncello. He was accompanied on the piano by his wife, Nadezhda Kozolupova, Assistant Professor at the Moscow Academy of Music. Marina Kozolupova, their daughter, a violinist who won prizes at All-Union and International Contests, played a Kreisler opus. Her sister, Galina, who teaches at the Academy of Music, accompanied her on the piano. Galina also accompanied Irina Kozolupova, the violoncellist, Assistant Professor at the Academy of Music, who played Glazunov's "Serenade."

In conclusion, Professor Kozolupov's talented grandsons Goga, seven, and Igor, eleven, played the piano and the violoncello, respectively.

Larissa Alexandrovskaya, the well-known Byelorussian singer, who brought us greetings from her part of the country which is being rejuvenated, sang several popular Byelorussian songs.

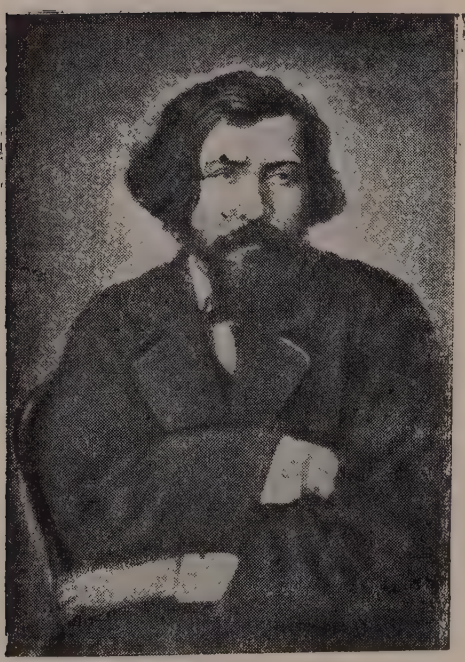
Next came a novel feature in connection with the approaching fiftieth anniversary of the discovery of radio by the great Russian scientist, Alexander Popov. Hooked up with a microphone stationed on a highway on the outskirts of Berlin, the radio brought the Round Table guests and the audience the roar of the motors, the conversation between soldiers and girl traffic-regulators, and a Russian army song. An exhibition of the work of sound experts followed bringing the warbling of birds in the forest, dogs barking, a cock crowing, cavalry trotting past, a train in motion, the roar of the sea and a thunder-storm, all of which was reproduced by means of special apparatus. When the "storm" has abated, we tuned in to a hall in Moscow where a concert of the popular Leonid Outyossov and his jazz band was in progress. Outyossov sang a new, satiric antifascist song called "Canine Waltz," and the applause of the concert audience fused with that of the guests at the Round Table.

Wishing the listeners a merry Mayday holiday, we signed off till our next gathering at the Round Table under the Cuckoo Clock.

LEV KASSIL,
Chairman of the Round Table

BOOKS AND WRITERS

NIKOLAI CHERNYSHEVSKY



In the splendid gallery of Russia's thinkers and political figures Nikolai Chernyshevsky occupies a prominent place. Philosopher, economist, publicist, critic, historian and novelist—his writings show remarkable versatility. Both his friends and his enemies regarded him as a man who shaped the ideas of Russian revolutionary democracy.

Chernyshevsky came to the fore in the sixties of the last century. The Crimean war brought into glaring relief the deep crisis convulsing the feudal, serf-owning system of society prevailing in Russia. The peasant reforms of 1861 abolished serfdom but left the Russian peasantry economically dependent on the land-owning nobility. These were the years of acute class struggle and of a maturing revolutionary situation which, however, did not develop into a revolution; they were years during which the former intelligentsia of aristocratic origin was replaced by a more democratic group of professional men drawn from the middle classes, from the tradesmen, peasants, lesser officials and the clergy. Chernychevsky stood at the head of this young generation and by his writings helped mould their outlook which was irreconcilably hostile to the traditional ideology of the nobility.

While still a student Chernyshevsky envisaged his own future and mapped out the path he was to travel. In 1848 he wrote in his diary: "In a few years I shall be a journalist and either a leader or one of the prominent figures of the extreme left." Later he explains that by the "extreme left" he has in mind the party which aims at the abolition of "all material need."

He showed amazing penetration in defining his future, but before we go on to recount it, let us make a brief survey of his origin, childhood and youth.

Chernyshevsky was born at Saratov in 1828. His father was a priest. The family was intensely religious and the paternal word was absolute law. The son was brought up in this spirit in the hopes that he would follow in the footsteps of his forbears and take holy orders. Disappointment lay in store.

From early childhood Chernyshevsky's curiosity, his thirst for knowledge, was phenomenal: for him "bookworm" was an adequate term. At the seminary for the sons of the priesthood to which he was sent he astonished his fellow scholars and masters alike by his cleverness and great variety of knowledge. The seminary could by no means satisfy him and he determined to go to a university.

In 1846 he entered the Philological Faculty of St. Petersburg University. His student years made an important contribution to his mental and political development. He was not only diligent in attending lectures and working in the library but he also made a close study of political events, especially after the revolutionary uprisings that occurred in a number of West-European countries in 1848. His sympathies were all on the side of the people in revolt.

During his student years Chernyshevsky first came into contact with the Utopian socialism of the West, Fourier's works making an especially deep impression on him.

The books he read and his observation of events all helped form the views that he was later to propagate in his own writings. Towards the end of his university career he became a consistent revolutionary and a convinced socialist. Chernyshevsky's diary shows us how he steadily shed the views his family had striven to foster in him.

While still at the University he became convinced that it was necessary to "destroy the social order under which nine tenths were the mob, the slaves, the proletariat," and to ensure that "one class does not suck the blood of another." That could easily be done if state power passed into the hands "of the poorest and most numerous class—the peasantry, farm labourers and working men."

Realizing that "peaceful, smooth development is impossible," and that "no single step forward in history was ever made without upheaval," Chernyshevsky saw in revolution the only way to remove social evil. He began to prepare to play his part in it when it would begin. He wrote: "I do not in the least grudge my life for the triumph of my convictions, for the triumph of liberty, equality, fraternity and plenty, for the destruction of poverty and vice." He made the ideological preparation of Russian society for the coming revolution his one mission in life. He was convinced of its inevitability since the patience of the peasantry, goaded by the bondage, was at an end. On whatever subject he wrote, whatever questions he raised, the interests of the coming Russian revolution were always well to the fore. To that end he endeavoured to fan his readers' interest in social questions and to draw their attention to the sufferings and needs of the people. In order to prepare the youth for the coming struggle the traditional world-outlook inculcated upon society and upon the individual, which Chernyshevsky rightly regarded as the strongest prop of tsarist absolutism, had to be undermined. He assailed it with all the force of his criticism from all sides; his aim was to destroy it, root and branch.

Chernyshevsky had to fight hard against the tsarist censorship which paid him the compliment of its closest attention. Despite its exacting control he was able to express his thoughts in a way that evaded the censor but left his readers perfectly aware of what he, the young spokesman of Russian democracy, wanted to convey.

Almost all Chernyshevsky's writings appeared in the magazine *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary) published by the poet Nikolai Nekrasov in whom Chernyshevsky found a warm sympathizer. Nekrasov was the peasants' eager champion and saw what an immense asset Chernyshevsky's pen would be to the popular cause. Chernyshevsky's democracy, particularly on matters of culture, was, however, alien and repugnant to the liberals on the staff of the *Sovremennik*.

This antipathy towards him deepened when he published his famous essay on *The Aesthetic Relationship of Art to Reality* (1855), in which he counterposed the Hegelian aesthetics then current amongst the aristocratic intelligentsia to that new system of easthetics based on the ideas of philosophical materialism of which he was the proponent. The Hegelians held that the purpose of art was to take man out of the actual world so full of shortcomings into the world of the "absolute idea"; Chernyshevsky, on the contrary, strove to "rehabilitate" reality. He saw the faults of the world to the same degree as his opponents but, unlike them, he called on his readers to tackle the seamy side of the world and remould it nearer to their heart's desire and not shrink from the real world and withdraw to a land of phantasy and dreams. "Beauty is life," wrote Chernyshevsky and summoned his readers to fight for a bright, joyful, happy life for all men.

Chernyshevsky considered that art must satisfy different needs of man, that the artist could not possibly stand aloof from the struggle of the people or remain indifferent to their fate. He was convinced that the true artist, on learning to understand the real interests of society, would surely take sides with the people and devote his talent to their service. He did not, therefore, "lower" the significance of art as his critics averred but urged that art and beauty become an operative factor in the life of man.

Judging Russian literature by his aesthetic principles, Chernyshevsky gave it an exceedingly high estimation. "If we can be proud of anything," he wrote, "it is unquestionably of our literature: it constitutes the finer side of our life." In his opinion Russian writers had done their country an immense service. They had been a powerful influence for the enlightenment and aesthetic education of their people. Service to the homeland had ever been the aim, to which they were devoted. The great Russian writers, said Chernyshevsky, were patriots in the way Peter the Great envisaged them—workers in the great task of enlightening the Russian land.

Supported by Nekrasov and aided by the critic and publicist Nikolai Dobrolyubov, in whom Chernyshevsky found a faithful comrade, the author of this fiery dissertation set to work to make the *Sovremennik* an organ defending the interests of the peasantry and preparing Russian society for the revolution. His and Dobrolyubov's articles won the magazine great popularity.

As we pointed out earlier, Chernyshevsky was writing during the years when the peasant question was the centre of public concern. Articles flowed from his pen upholding the aspirations and desires of the peasantry. He maintained that it was essential to abolish the land-holdings of the nobility and to put all the land into the hands of those who actually tilled it—the peasantry.

Against the prevailing economic theory of the times Chernyshevsky put forward his own views which he arranged in a system that he called the "political economy of the toilers." This new economic science stood four-square on the interests of the producers and, as Chernyshevsky maintained, must not only bring out the blacker aspects of the capitalist system but determine the foundations of the future, more just system of society that would abolish class inequality and the exploitation of man by man.

Chernyshevsky's militant articles roused against him all sections of society supporting the order of despotism and inequality. His enemies knew what a strong and relentless opponent they had in the editor of the *Sovremennik*. Although his works lacked the beauty and polish of Herzen's writings, their effect on the thoughts and feelings of their readers was immense. Chernyshevsky endeavoured to play both on the feelings and the intellect of his readers, to bring out with the utmost clarity and force the solution of the problem as he saw it himself. He held that the greatest assets of the writer were clarity, precision, simplicity and the ability to make himself understood by the widest circles: his own works were object lessons in all four qualities.

Nevertheless, when it was essential, Chernyshevsky could fire his works with passion and emotion, could express contempt for the enemy and indignation at his actions.

Despite the immense influence of the *Sovremennik* on Russian society Chernyshevsky was never fully satisfied with his literary activities, cramped as they were by the censorship. His were the strength and passion of the fighter for freedom, and he was for ever seeking an opportunity to enter the fray. He waited with impatience for the time when he could become an active revolutionary. His habit of carefully weighing the chances of success before embarking on an enterprise, however, restrained him from premature and rash actions. To ensure success he held it essential to patiently await the favourable moment, which would arrive when the tolerance of the peasants was at an end. Such a moment came, in Chernyshevsky's opinion, in 1861, when the peasant reforms were published. He was not at all satisfied with them as, to a great degree, they preserved, if not de jure then at least de facto, the dependence of the peasant on the landlord and doomed the tiller of the soil to inevitable impoverishment.

In a leaflet written for the peasants Chernyshevsky, with his typical clarity and power of conviction showed how far removed was the reform from what the people had hoped and desired.

Chernyshevsky was obliged to keep his revolutionary activities deep underground; this prevents us from discovering all he did in this direction. We do know, however, that he was closely linked up with the "Land and Freedom" secret society, the biggest revolutionary organization of the sixties, and was concerned in all the most revolutionary enterprises of the time.

The dream of his student days that he would become a journalist and a leader of the "extreme left wing" of the Russian people had been realized to the letter.

The government divined Chernyshevsky's adherence to the revolutionary underground, the more so since his enemies went beyond baiting him in the press and wrote reports about him to the police. The tsarist gendarmes kept him under strict surveillance, watched how he spent his time and who his acquaintances and visitors were. Letters addressed to him were opened and read at the post office. This surveillance did not bring the desired results: no proof of Chernyshevsky's contact with the revolutionary underground was forthcoming. The government was well aware that the growth of the revolutionary feeling among the intelligentsia in 1861—1862, expressed in student unrest at practically all the universities, the appearance of the first revolutionary leaflets in Russia, and in the formation of numerous revolutionary circles in the capital and provinces, was in a great measure due to the powerful crusade led by Chernyshevsky who was able to put through ideas of freedom despite the censorship of the press.

"The leaflets are in essence the conclusions drawn from Chernyshevsky's articles and his articles are a comprehensive commentary on them," said one police document on Chernyshevsky.

The government resolved to put a stop to his writing at all costs and in June 7th, 1862, arrested and imprisoned him in the fortress of Peter and Paul. As there were no "proofs" of Chernyshevsky's guilt, he could not be tried.

The tsarist government remained true to type: fearing the indignation of enlightened Russian society, it preferred to embark on illegal means rather than release him and thereby openly admit that a great writer had been arbitrarily arrested.

A certain Kostomarov, a traitor, came to the aid of the police: this was the man through whom Chernyshevsky had sent his leaflet to the underground printshop. He not only gave evidence convicting Chernyshevsky but forged two notes in Chernyshevsky's hand confirming that he had written the leaflet.

On seeing the notes Chernyshevsky categorically declared them to be forgeries. The Senate which tried him, however, found him guilty on the basis of these documents. He was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude and exile to Siberia for life.

Although boxed up in the gloomy cells of the fortress of Peter and Paul and cut off from his friends, Chernyshevsky went on writing as far as was possible in confinement. Of all he wrote while awaiting trial only one work got through to the press, his famous novel, *What Is to Be Done?* published in the *Sovremennik* in 1863.

In this book Chernyshevsky described the life of those members of the Russian intelligentsia who, in the sixties, entered the lists against the feudal government and tried to serve the people. He depicted the "new people," the fighters for truth and freedom, with whom word and deed were one and for whom labour was an organic necessity, people who strove to rebuild the world so as to put a happy and worthy life within reach of all. Rakhmetov, the chief character in the novel, was a Russian humanitarian devoted heart and soul to the revolution, who for the sake of it sacrificed not only his social position and estate but all his personal interests which in his opinion "interfered with the highest service to the idea."

With amazing feeling and insight *What Is to Be Done?* reflects the atmosphere of moral purity, of self-sacrifice and the will to do which is so typical of the democratic intelligentsia of the sixties and seventies.

The novel breathes optimism, courage and faith in a bright future for mankind. The appearance of the book shows that its author, although a prisoner of his enemies, had maintained his faith in the possibility and imminence of victory.

It is difficult to convey what a great impresssion *What Is to Be Done?* made on the society of the time. Discussions and disputes evoked by the book took place on every hand. The reactionaries were envenomed: as usual the author was accused of propagating "immorality" and desiring to "shake the props" of society. The supporters of moderation and the lovers of "little by little," scared by the sharp and direct way Chernyshevsky had posed the main social problems, declared that

What Is to Be Done? was "the work of a pure publicist" and outside the pale of imaginative literature. On the other hand the democratic intelligentsia hailed it with enthusiasm. "We sought our guide to action in the novel," says one contemporary. "We read the novel with something amounting to worship, with a veneration that prohibits the slightest smile, such as that with which devotional books are read. The influence of the book on our society was colossal. It played a great part in Russian life, it put all the progressive intelligentsia on the road to socialism."

Chernyshevsky's novel was the "guide to life" for several generations of revolutionary youth. Indeed it was a worthy climax to Chernyshevsky's ten years of struggle prior to his arrest.

He did not lay down the pen while serving his term of penal servitude and while in exile in Siberia but nothing that he wrote ever reached the reader; much of his work Chernyshevsky himself destroyed to prevent its falling into the hands of the gendarmes.

Chernyshevsky lived in exile for twenty years. By 1883, when at last he was allowed to return, his health was undermined, his strength shattered. The unhealthy climate of Astrakhan, where he was ordered to live after returning from Siberia, was fatal to him, ill as he already was. It was not until 1889 that he was allowed to return to his native Saratov; it was too late, however, and in the autumn of the same year he died.

Penal servitude tore Chernyshevsky away from literature and life. More than that, even mention of his name in the press was forbidden. Nothing, however, could strip his works of their popularity. For a number of decades the most sensitive and responsive amongst the youth turned eagerly to his works. They help the young people form their views and find their mission in life.

For Chernyshevsky the interests of his own land were indivisibly bound up with the welfare of all mankind. In that Chernyshevsky saw the essence of true patriotism.

While still in his teens he wrote: "To help build up the glory, not the transient but the everlasting glory of your country for the good of humanity, what could be loftier or nobler than that! Let us pray to God that such may be our lot."

The author of *What Is to Be Done?* had deep faith in the strength of the Russian people and in their future. "We are so strong," he wrote, "that neither from the West, Soutn nor East can a horde capable of crushing us invade Russia..." "... for many centuries to come we are secure in the happy lot of becoming better ourselves and making our lives better and better."

For Chernyshevsky the good of the country was indivisibly bound up with the good of the people. For that good he gave all the power of his brilliant mind, all the fire of the born fighter, all his life. He could look back on his past with pride. That is why he bore both penal servitude and exile with such unwavering courage, unfalteringly true to his convictions.

The image of the great Russian humanist will never be effaced from the memory of freedom-loving people.

BORIS KOZMIN

"SOVIET ART"

In the pages of *Soviet Art* we find reflected every aspect, every branch of our country's art, life. Turning over the pages of the ten yearly volumes of the periodical we get a stately picture of the development of Soviet art within that period.

But if we pursue aims more modest we can confine ourselves to a perusal of the numbers of the last few months, when, having separated itself from the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (the temporary fusion having been occasioned by wartime difficulties), the paper has been able to concentrate more fully than formerly on art questions.

The first most striking feature is the wide range of the paper's interests. Almost every corner within the boundaries of our vast land has been penetrated by the all-seeing eye of our newspaper correspondent. The columns headed *Through the Homeland* and *From the Ends of the Country* teem with interesting events and in three short lines are able to convey eloquent evidence of the intensive cultural growth of the inhabitants of our remote outskirts. We learn, for example, of a symphony orchestra being formed at the Saratov Philharmonic; of a cinema-festival conducted in the Novosibirsk Region; of a Music School opened in the small town of Tyumen: of the artists of Khabarovsk preparing for the All-Union Exhibition of 1945. We are told that in the far-distant northern town of Kirov a meeting was arranged between the workers and actors of the local theatre to discuss a new performance of *The Great Emperor*, a historical play by Vladimir Solovyov picturing the reign of Ivan IV.

Prominence is given to items recounting the impressions of special correspondents, Soviet actors, musicians, producers and playwrights travelling through the different countries of Europe now freed from fascist occupation. The revival of art in liberated Poland makes interesting reading. A speech was delivered at Warsaw by Jacob Zak, the famous player of Chopin's music. The Polish musicians had asked him whether the silver mask of Chopin which he had received for the best rendering of one of the mazurkas of the great Polish composer was still in his possession. They were greatly perturbed over this question because the original mask had been lost in the Chopin museum destroyed by the Germans, and the silver mask which was in the possession of the Soviet pianist was now a unique specimen. "The silver Chopin mask," explained Jacob Zak, "is in Moscow, in my study, carefully preserved by me as a relic."

In a series of sketches entitled *Sofia—Belgrade*, Vladimir Gaposhkin writes of the

life and works of artists and of the museums belonging to several of the Balkan countries. *Bulgarian Spring* is the title of an item from the pen of Nikolai Tikhonov describing Bulgarian painting, ancient and modern. Olga Lepeshinskaya, one of our most talented young ballerinas, is the author of another series of sketches dealing with the Balkans.

The journal naturally devotes considerable attention to the theatres touring the front, to front line teams, and so on. In an article entitled *Performances at the Front* we read of a play acted in the open, in the centre of a great ravine, the slopes of which served as seats for the audience. Despite the enormous number of spectators,—some two and a half thousand,—there was such a complete hush that you could speak in a whisper from that improvized stage. The play was Nikolai Pogodin's *The Man with a Gun* in which Lenin is the leading character. After the first act which shows the meeting between Lenin and the soldier Shadrin, a middle-aged colonel rose from his seat among the audience and turning to his listeners said: "Comrades soldiers and officers! Just as you have seen Lenin on the stage talking to Shadrin, so he—in life—talked with me, a simple private." And held in the grip of a vivid recollection the colonel related how one day at the beginning of the revolution he, then a young trainee at a military school, often stood sentry in the Kremlin, near Lenin's home. And however late the hour when Lenin returned from his meetings at the Council of People's Commissars, he would always stop on his way to talk to the young fellow, asking him about his family, his home, the places he had lived in, where he was born. . .

We read of theatrical performances given in blindages, on the platforms of armoured trains, in the forest. . .

On the Offensive is the title of a series of front line sketches by a cameraman; in a series of interesting notes, *Men at War*, a former director of a big dramatic theatre in Leningrad, now a major, describes how artists have been transformed into soldiers. We see how songs, plays and narratives are born against the background of war.

Sidelights are thrown on questions concerning the theatre, music, the cinema, the fine arts and architecture with the appropriate criticism and spirited discussion. One such discussion on matters theatrical developed and became wide-spread, drawing into the debate playwrights, critics and actors. It was in the main an argument regarding genres and methods of their presentation. Some speakers insisted on a realistic and psychological theatre, others made a stand for romance and the heroic mould. Eventually the majority wanted to obliterate all dividing lines between the different outlooks.

". . . No actor can hope to reveal the heroic soul of the modern man by the formal devices of the romantic genre. . . no producer can create the heroic image of our times by the means of conventional symbols," writes Grigori Boyadjiev, critic and dramatic expert. It is from this angle that he judges, for example, the treatment of the role of Othello by the great Georgian tragedian, Khorava. He is loud in Khorava's praise for "not allowing his Othello to indulge in any of the time-honoured heroic mannerisms, either sing-song intonation or picturesque pose."

"Not at all," replied Boyadjiev's opponents. "Realism and romanticism, simplicity and pathos may be used to advantage in the right places according to the aims they respectively pursue." "The theatre is the theatre," argues Nikolai Pogodin, the playwright, "and it demands its own means of expression peculiar to its own requirements."

"The Soviet theatre", says Isidor Shtok, the playwright, "does not face the dilemma: Tolstoy or Shakespeare. . . which? It is both Tolstoy and Shakespeare," he continues.

No genre can be excluded. According to another playwright—Kron, just now "the arsenal of dramaturgy," to use his own expression, "is being revised and renovated. Certain forms of scenic presentation are obsolete, others are being created anew." Fresh aspects of contemporary life are obviously not to be confined by the canons of genres formed in other epochs. Neither can any ready-made scheme be dictated to either playwright or producer. He further asks: "Can we demand of Pogodin, who has transferred to the stage the rhythm and tempo of our turbulent Five-Year Plans, to fetter his plays by the rigour of the three classic unities, or the traditional structure of the 19th century psychological drama? Pogodin makes free use of the episodic factor and of free dramatic narrative."

Vishnevsky considers that tragedy has the most forceful appeal. He inclines towards the conventional which implies other and different forms of presentation.

"There are and will always be playwrights who are pre-eminently psychologists—and playwrights who are amusing story tellers—playwrights who set up tribunes, others who are masters of the intimate intonation; those who convince by argument and those who possess the power of suggestion."

A series of articles by Valentine Asmus, literary scholar and philosopher, entitled *On Tradition and Innovation*, running in the last numbers of *Soviet Art*, appear as a well-timed and apposite supplement to these discussions.

A number of examples taken from contemporary art are cited. Asmus speaks of tradition and of new tendencies in the works of Prokofiev and Shostakovich. Particularly interesting is his analysis of the art of Mayakovsky. "It would be difficult," he says, "to name another great artist in whom the elements of tradition and of innovation were so harmoniously intermingled." Asmus says that the novelty of Mayakovsky's poetry lies in the unexpectedness for his contemporaries of the tradition he adhered to,—the author regarding as one of the numerous sources of this tradition the prosody of Nekrasov, that vivid representative of a great democratic poetry. "The element of novelty in Mayakovsky," says Asmus, "was born of his acute awareness of the necessity to alter the expressive modes of speech and imagery elaborated in Nekrasov's verse by adjusting it to new problems which could not even be

dreamt of in the philosophy of the poets of the previous century."

The reader eagerly anticipates further pronouncements about the questions touched on by Asmus. Various new aspects of art are to be discussed from this viewpoint.

Several articles of considerable interest written by music critics and composers are devoted to Soviet opera. They deal with questions of musical dramaturgy, the interrelations of theatre and composer, and so on.

It has been remarked that despite the undoubted achievements of Soviet music from song to symphony, Soviet opera has not yet attained its full power for coping with the tasks confronting it. Igor Boelza, music critic, notes the appearance in Soviet music of numerous works of the cantata-oratorio genre, such as Shaporin's *Legend of the Battle for the Land of Russia*, or Kabalevsky's *The People's Avengers*, or *Valeri Chkalov* by Koval, and others. "In the thematic groundwork of all these compositions," says Boelza, "may be divined the contours of yet unwritten operas." He considers this as being in a certain measure connected with the tendency of composers to evade scenic forms and the outward devices of naturalistic rendering.

Some critics, and particularly certain composers, put the backwardness of the opera down to an absence of creative communion between composers, writers of libretto, and the theatres. The composer, Gabriel Popov, recounts his experiences of work on his opera *Alexander Nevsky* the libretto of which he wrote in association with Peter Pavlenko. This close collaboration has made it possible for the authors to complete and perfect separate episodes in the process of evolving concrete musical images. They strive, says the composer, "to create an opera of great emotions and passions."

We have several comprehensive essays devoted to the music and performers of the different peoples of the U.S.S.R. Conspicuous among these items are: *Georgian Musicians* by Dmitri Shostakovich; *Music of the Peoples of the Transcaucasus* by Vladimir Surin; and an article entitled *The Path of Creative Art* by Moukhtar Ashrafi, the Uzbek composer. Deserving of special mention is an interesting sketch by V. Soukhov, dedicated to Kuzma Maykov, originator of the Soviet harp.

As it is known, the Soviet coloured film is yet in its infancy, and it is a point of interest in this connection to follow up the latest efforts of Soviet cinema-producers working in this department. Igor Savchenko, the author of the new coloured film *Ivan Nikulin—Russian Sailor*, recounts some notable phases of his work in an item headed *In Search of Colour*. He tells us, among other things, of one of the first scenarios of a coloured film which began as follows: "A man is suffering from a disease of the eyes. He wears coloured glasses. After being cured he removes his glasses and sees how beautiful is the world. . . Our hero's best girl is employed at a florist's. His friends, working in oils, show him the latest, most vivid colours. . . We see the hero and his beloved at the Bolshoy Theatre. Red velvet and gilding of the boxes and all the colours of the rainbow on the stage. They eat an orange, a tomato, a cucumber. . ." and so on, and so on.

"To all this trash," says Savchenko, "there was a certain raison d'être. The talkie became art when both cinema-people and audience ceased to wonder at the "great mute" beginning to speak. And in the same way will the coloured film become art only when the element of colour ceases to be the main attraction and our scenario-writers, artists, producers and cameramen have come to understand why there are no coloured themes or black-and-white themes."

It is this truism that Savchenko has tried to illustrate. In the mounting of *Ivan Nikulin* the chief personages are dressed in black jackets which "deprives the spectator of the opportunity of being carried away by vivid colours."

There are a goodly number of articles on architecture which is now acquiring such importance in connection with the rehabilitation of towns destroyed by the Hitler barbarians. It is not a question of mere reconstruction or of new building along improved lines. The main task now lies in the most efficient ordering of men's lives. Prominence is given on the pages of the newspaper to the First Conference on Architecture of U.S.S.R. and the ensuing discussion at the Moscow House of the Architect. There is a characteristic tendency to bring nature into the city, that makes itself felt in the speeches of the experts. Thus, for example, corresponding member of the Academy of Architecture, Nikolai Bylinkin writes in his notes that the "modern town, its technique, life, and density of population seem to tear man away from nature while the art of architecture turns this same technique to use with the aim of removing this contradiction by means of proper planning, by surrounding residential quarters with gardens, parks etc."

Soviet architects are following with interest the latest developments of architecture in foreign countries. *New Departures in American Architecture* is the title of an article by corresponding member of the Academy of Architecture, Kouznetsov, which acquaints the reader with the latest achievements in this domain. The author arrives at the conclusion that industrial house-building which has become wide-spread in America may and must become a general practice in the U.S.S.R.; for, to quote an editorial in one of the numbers of *Soviet Art*, "it is now an urgent task to help the inhabitants of town and countryside who are undertaking private building to erect comfortable and pleasing dwellings within the shortest space of time."

Attention is drawn to events in the art of foreign countries, particularly in the theatre and in the development of play-writing. In an article entitled *Novelties of the English Stage* Michael Morozov tells of the tendency to amateur theatricals and a growing tendency in progressive English actors towards the ensemble spirit. It is Morozov's opinion that this tendency is "one of the symptoms of a discarding of individualism, a trend so distasteful to and so vigorously fought against by Shakespeare, the greatest genius of the English theatre."

The interest in Shakespeare, by the way, in

the Soviet Union is indeed inexhaustible. Articles and critical reviews of the performances of his plays being hardly ever absent from the pages of *Soviet Art*.

An article dealing with the war-plays of John Priestley is the contribution of Isaak Zvavich, who gives a review of the author's last three plays: *Music at Night*, *Road in the Wilderness* and *They Come to Town*. Zvavich draws the conclusion that these plays may arouse varying opinion. "Priestley," he says, "has shown himself to better advantage in criticizing the past than in setting forth ideals of the future. Be that as it may, all three works touch on big problems, and each one of them bears evidence of the consummate artistic mastery of this talented English playwright."

An article dealing with new American and English writers of scenarios comes from the pen of the same author. "Reading these new scenarios," writes Zvavich, "we see what a distance separates them from our old friends, the American films of the twenties and thirties with their happy endings and their hackneyed plot in which the villain was invariably vanquished and the hero, just as invariably, emerged triumphant. The authors of the American and English scenarios that have reached us vie with one another in delineating intricate psychological patterns and evolving new themes."

On another page, Boris Yefimov, the celebrated Soviet cartoonist, gives a high estimation of the art of David Low. "Through Low's cartoons," he says , "may be traced and even studied the political and tragic history of post-Versailles Europe." Yefimov speaks of Low as a brilliant master of the art of drawing who has the faculty of creating lifelike images by expressive, laconic and precise strokes. Low's work during the war, he continues, shows how this artist has placed his outstanding talent at the service of the democratic peoples and the cause of the extermination of nazism.

It is a matter of regret that comparatively few essays are devoted to questions of Soviet fine arts, the periodical confining itself in this domain mainly to brief notices of exhibitions and single works.

We should be glad to see in the columns of the paper excerpts from new plays and scenarios and the texts of new songs and even the publishing of music which, we think, would greatly enliven and vary the content of this interesting newspaper.

ALEXANDRA LIDOVA

NEW BOOKS

"The track came from the river, went past the barn and the granaries, and crossed the threshing-floor." So begins the story by Vassili Smirnov, *The Sons*, just issued by the "Soviet Writer" Publishing House. Immediately, the reader is carried away by the freshness and artlessness of life depicted in this story.

Reading Smirnov's book, one seems to be reviewing the whole long and complicated way traversed by the Russian peasantry during the years of Soviet power. The story might justly be called a novel-chronicle. The action begins before the Revolution and is carried forward almost to 1939.

Truthfully, with a profound knowledge of the psychology and habits of the countryside, the author relates the story of a peasant family. From this example he traces the process of development of a typical Russian village with its former collection of poor individual households to a prosperous collective farm.

The heroine of the tale, Anna, radiates. The author depicts the various stages of her life step by step. The joyous first years of love and motherhood were cut short. The children died at an early age from illnesses and malnutrition. Her husband left for the war in 1914. He returned, in 1917, a new man and shortly afterwards set out to fight again, this time in his own cause, for Soviet power. He perished in the struggle. Soon after his second departure, Anna, then already forty years old, gave birth to twins, Alexei and Mikhail. The period of growth of these children coincided with the growth of the Soviet countryside.

The author gives a true and faithful description of the struggle which accompanied the great change-over to the collective farming. He shows how the fight was carried on not only against the direct enemies—the kulaks, but also against routine and established prejudices. He describes a number of vivid episodes of the fight for the new life, for the technical improvements in agriculture, and reveals this process through a series of cleverly chosen realistic details which illuminate the whole complicated path of development. Characteristic in this respect is the episode of the establishment of a flaxmill in a village where this crop was plentiful. On that occasion Anna exclaimed: "Dear me, I'll hurt my hands with this machine while I'd pull half a pood of flax in a jiffy, working in the old way." There was a moment when Anna, not believing in the method of the early sowing of flax, cried angrily: "You'll make beggars of us!" She shamefully recalled that incident later, the day when many collective farmers were being rewarded with premiums, and the president of the collective farm addressed her with the words: "I congratulate you, Anna, as our best worker."

The reader is stirred by the episodes dealing with the conference of the best producers of flax and hemp and the Government and Party leaders, at which Anna was also present. Strongly impressive is the conversation between Anna and Stalin, represented with great restraint.

The image of this woman is depicted with all its individual vagaries. To the reader, Anna becomes like an intimate friend. Together with her he reaches the moment when she suddenly discovers that old age is creeping

upon her. Together with her, he experiences the uneasy melancholy of loneliness, when being alone in the house on a summer evening Anna realizes that her sons are already grown up and that they would leave the house ever more often in the future. This episode is permeated with a fine lyricism. Troubled with her thoughts, Anna leaves the house, in search of her sons.

"At the head of a gang of lads and lasses walked her sons. Mikhail's accordion was fixed on a strap; he held it under his elbow and his free hand was around a girl's waist. A little behind came Alexei, his long arm covering a girl's shoulders. They were accompanied by other boys and girls, all in couples.

"And the mother did not dare call to her sons. Hiding behind the porch she followed them with jealous but proud eyes.

"'Scoundrels! I believe they are already kissing their wenches. The bridegrooms!' she thought, smiling to herself. And she was sorry she had not taken a good look at the faces of her sons' sweethearts."

In Smirnov's book throbs the life of the whole village; we sense its smells, watch its nature, share the worries of its inhabitants about the crops. Even the minor characters of the plot are painted in bright, virile colours, to say nothing of the representation of its chief heroes, Anna and her sons. Coevals of October, Anna's sons belong to the generation which was destined later, during the Great Patriotic War to rise in defence of their fatherland and which gloriously fulfilled its duty because they knew what they were defending. It is this feeling of love and pride for the Soviet fatherland that Smirnov's story so convincingly demonstrates.

The new story by Leonid Leonov, *The Taking of Velikoshumsk* (State Literary Publishing House) relates the heroic exploit of a tank crew. In the battle for the liberation of Velikoshumsk (the name of the town is fictitious) tank No. 203 was cut off from the rest of the brigade. When it fell into an anti-tank ditch the crew made superhuman efforts and hauled the tank out of the ice-cold water but by that time the battle had shifted far away. The crew of No. 203 decided to make the best of the new situation. The tank performed a daring "dagger-raid" into the enemy rear, created panic among an advancing enemy column and by so doing, substantially aided the troops attacking the town. During the fight against the superior forces of the enemy, the tank itself was put out of action and its commander and gunner killed.

Leonov has showed very well how this grand tactical operation was conceived and prepared. Avoiding technical military terms, he has succeeded in conveying the commander's aim in a clear and lucid manner. But this is not the chief merit of Leonov's book. Most important is his representation of the men by whose hands victory was attained. They are all ordinary Soviet men. Such is the tank commander, Lieutenant Sobolkov, who in the writer's words "gained the respect of his mates, a thing harder to obtain in war than comradeship and even love"; such is the gunner, Obryadin, a man of quite different mould, canny, practical, a great singer and conqueror of female hearts, who perished together with Sobolkov; such is the radio-operator Dybok, a reserved, precise, steady and talented person, a real master of his profession; such is the youngest member of the crew, driver Litovchenko; and finally, such is General Litovchenko, who bears the same surname as the young driver and was the organizer and inspirer of the operation of capturing Velikoshumsk.

These men are shown through all the vagaries of their fates, characters, tastes, and desires. They differ also in their local or national backgrounds. Sobolkov came from Altai region, Dybok—from Kuban, Obryadin grew up on the Volga, Litovchenko was an Ukrainian. Their national characteristics are expressively and finely described by Leonov but he is especially convincing in showing that all of them have in common the same Soviet soul. Soviet patriotism is displayed in the book not by means of formulas and commonplaces. It reveals itself in the men's behaviour and in their most intimate emotions.

Each of them has his own account to settle with the nazis. Dybok's sister, a student at an architectural institute, has been brutally murdered; young Litovchenko dreamed of avenging his mother, outraged by a German soldier. The desire for vengeance burned both in Sobolkov, whose family was safe in the far-off Altai, and in Obryadin who lived alone. They take revenge for their fatherland, for their compatriots, for all peoples subjugated under the yoke of Hitlerism. Leonov discloses these emotions with great skill and we readily understand why these men do not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for the sake of redeeming humanity from the fascist peril. Their exploit is a logical consequence of the whole train of their thoughts and feelings revealed by Leonov in conversations, in their songs and the fairy-tales they relate, in their thoughts about their dear ones. Characteristic in this respect are the words with which Sobolkov addressed the youngest of his companions and subordinates, Vassya Litovchenko:

"Believe that the place where you are now, Vassya, is the most important point in the whole world. . . And think, therefore, that Stalin considers *you* to be the most responsible person and that he has entrusted *you* with the course of the world's history. Because history, my dear Vassya, is nothing more than a tank. . . So keep your hands firm on the levels!"

So that four men, who live together in a tank as in their own home,—friends and companions in arms fighting for the same cause,—expand until they become representatives of the whole Soviet people.

It was not by accident that Leonov had chosen tankmen as the heroes of his tale. Soviet tanks have contributed enormously to the Red Army victories. The combination of high moral qualities, of the fighting spirit of the Soviet warriors with first-rate machinery secured the decisive superiority of the Soviet tank units over those of the enemy. With great knowledge of the subject, Leonov has shown how the Soviet tankmen mastered

their mighty weapon, how they learned to use all the possibilities it affords.

The work of Ilya Silberstein, *Repin and Gorky*, issued by the Moscow Art Publishing House, is an attempt to explore the connections between two great personalities of Russian art—Ilya Repin, the painter, and Maxim Gorky, the writer. Close personal friendship bound Repin and Gorky together for many years. Their correspondence, which reflects this aspect of their relations, has been preserved. But their personal relations were those between two artists and therefore were imbued with philosophical and artistic motives having great importance for Repin and Gorky as artists and for a general understanding of Russian art during this epoch. The author attaches much importance to the comparative study of literary and pictorial arts. Repin's enormous interest in literature and his manifold connections with Russian writers (he created a whole gallery of their portraits), make him an especially suitable subject for such a study. Gorky, on the other hand, displayed great interest in painting and had many artist friends.

In the author's opinion, Gorky's powerful intellect strongly influenced the spiritual boundaries and creative work of Repin, despite Gorky being his junior. Intercourse with Gorky strengthened and gave definite shape to Repin's realistic views. To his friendship with Gorky, Repin owes also his contact with the revolutionary atmosphere during the time of the 1905 Revolution.

In his work, Ilya Silberstein made use of much documentary evidence taken from the contemporary press, various memoirs and correspondence. Most of the material is published for the first time. The author also had recourse to many archives, including the private archives of Gorky and Repin. Reconstructing the picture of the relations between Gorky and Repin during the first decade of the 20th century, the author reveals many interesting and characteristic details of the Russian intellectual life of that time. The book contains valuable information concerning several representatives of Russian art, with whom both Repin and Gorky were connected, such as Vladimir Stassov, the critic and theorist of realistic art.

The book is illustrated with reproductions of Repin's paintings and contains interesting photographs of meetings between Repin and Gorky. The greater part of this material, the property of state museums and several private collectors, is published for the first time. The author devotes much attention to three portraits of Gorky by Repin. The author considers the one in which Gorky is portrayed reading his drama *Children of the Sun* to his friends (among whom were the writer Garin-Mikhailov and the critic Stassov), to be among the finest of Repin's pencil drawings.

In the preface, the author points out that his book forms part of a bigger work, to be entitled *Repin and Russian Writers*.

In the history of Russian philosophy, an outstanding part was played by the great Russian thinker, writer and revolutionary, Alexander Herzen. During the third quarter of last century, Herzen's name was widely known in advanced democratic countries of Europe as that of an outstanding politician, a brilliant journalist and a true representative of Russia and Russian people abroad.

Herzen as a philosopher is less known, but Lenin said of him: "In the Russia of serfdom, during the fourth decade of the 19th century he developed until he stood on the same level as the greatest thinkers of his time." In the epoch when idealistic philosophical concepts were prevalent in Western Europe, Herzen living in Russia, then a backward country, succeeded in formulating the ideas of advanced philosophical materialism.

In a separate edition the State Political Publishers have issued Herzen's main philosophic work, *Letters on the Study of Nature*. It was first published in 1845-1846, in the Russian magazine *Otechestvennyie Zapiski (Homeland Notes)* which at that time enjoyed wide circulation.

Of the eight letters in the volume, the most important and interesting is the first, in which Herzen, bitterly criticizing the separation of philosophy from life, theory from practice and thought from experience, proclaimed the material essence of the world and the dialectic-materialistic principle of the perception of life.

In 1912, giving his estimation of Herzen's philosophic views, Lenin wrote that "the first of the *Letters on the Study of Nature* entitled *Empiria and Idealism*, written in 1844, reveals a thinker who even now is a head taller than the whole host of contemporary naturalists-empiricists and the legion of today's philosophers, idealists and semi-idealists. Herzen came very close to dialectical materialism. . ." Many of his thoughts anticipate the ideas of the celebrated *Dialectics of Nature* by Friedrich Engels.

In subsequent letters, Herzen gives a vivid and general view on the historical development of Western-European philosophy. In his critical consideration of German idealistic systems he makes an ironical observation that "the German mind is always apt to go astray into the domains of cloudy fantasies." Herzen is full of admiration for the great Bacon's clarity of mind and for his traditions in world philosophy. Herzen visualizes the task of philosophy in providing a scientific foundation for the practical public activity of man. "Man is placed not only in the logical, but also in the social and historic world—a world morally free, positive and active."

Herzen perceives the main tendency of Russian philosophic thought as an aspiration to solve the practical problems of life. "A purely speculative trend of thought is quite contrary to the Russian mind," he writes in his celebrated reminiscences *My Past and Thoughts*.

In his treatment of philosophic problems, Herzen carried on the materialistic traditions of Russian thought, originating with the great Russian scientist of the 18th century, Lomonosov. At the same time Herzen's book great-

ly influenced the philosophic development of Russian natural science and of such geniuses as Sechenov and Timiryazev.

Many ideas first formulated by Herzen are now commonly used by scientific thought. Herzen's *Letters on the Study of Nature* are entering the second century of their existence.

The new edition of Herzen's work is prefaced with an article by V. I. Lenin, *To the Memory of Herzen*, quotations from which were cited above.

Almost simultaneously Moscow publishing houses have issued two books devoted to the remarkable Russian scientist and inventor of the 19th century, Pavel Yablochkov (1847—1894). One is by N. Kaptsov, entitled *Pavel Nikolayevich Yablochkov* (State Technical Publishing House), and the other, *P. N. Yablochkov. The Fiftieth Anniversary of His Death* (1894—1944). The latter book is edited by Professor L. D. Belkand (State Energetics Publishing House).

The inventions of Pavel Yablochkov laid the foundation of modern electrotechnics. The Yablochkov candle marked the beginning of the science of strong electric currents that had previously never existed. "Yablochkov led electrotechnics from its early beginnings to its more mature age, full of hope and vigour." "He transferred electric light from the physical laboratory out into the street."

"La lumière russe"—such was the name of electric lighting during the years of Yablochkov's triumphs. The Yablochkov candle illumined the squares and streets of Paris, London, St .Petersburg, Madrid, Naples, reaching as far as Persia. At that time, Yablochkov was one of the most popular figures in the world.

N. Kaptsov's book gives a short summary of the biography and the main achievements of Yablochkov. In a concise and business-like way the author relates the main facts of the inventor's life and activity.

The book edited by Professor L.Belkand is a collection of speeches delivered at the anniversary meeting held in commemoration of Yablochkov by the Scientific Society at the Moscow Molotov Energetic Institute. The manifold activity of Yablochkov is reflected by the reports on "Electrical Lighting by Means of Yablochkov Candles," "Yablochkov's Inventions in the Field of Voltaic Elements," and "Yablochkov's Electrical Machines."

An appendage to the volume consists of several documents including Yablochkov's letter to the editor of the magazine *Correspondence Scientifique*, dated 1878, in which he states the results obtained up-to-date by the electric candles.

The Foreign Languages Publishing House has recently issued a book (in English), *Heroic Leningrad*. Now, in these days, when the Red Army and the armies of our allies have finished off the fascist beast in its own lair, one is particularly stirred by this book, which recalls events so recent and yet already historical.

The English reader has become acquainted with various episodes of the heroic defence of Leningrad thanks to the book by the English journalist, Alexander Werth, *Leningrad*, issued a year ago. Werth, however, writes of Leningrad when the blockade had already been broken. This new book contains records and notes by direct witnesses and participants of the heroic defence of Leningrad. The book is divided into two parts: *Leningrad Besieged* and *Leningrad Relieved*. The stern and majestic days of the heroic struggle are engraved on the pages of simple, artless, truthful and impressive essays, written by professional writers, journalists and military men. The essays of *The Red Hill Continues Firing*, *To the Front Line by Tram*, *Defenders of Leningrad's Sky*, *On the Neva*, all picture the routine life of fighting Leningrad. The essay of *The Road of Life* deals with the construction of the road across the ice-bound Ladoga Lake, the road which served as the chief route of supply to the besieged city. Among the authors we find the well-known names of the writers Nikolai Tikhonov,

The Road of Life

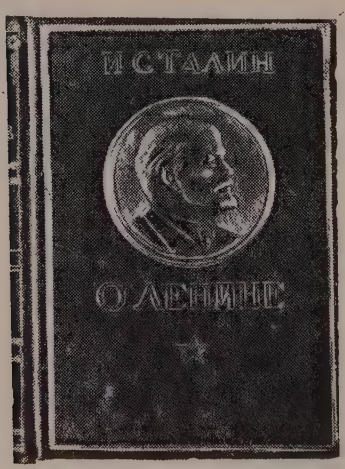
Alexander Fadeyev, Vsevolod Vishnevsky and others.

The book is illustrated with many photographs which eloquently reflect the grim days of bombing and shelling, of the hungry, cold winter. We see Leningrad citizens pulling sledges with their ghastly load—corpses of those starved to death. We see dead children—victims of artillery bombardment. The fascist beasts are now getting just retaliation for their bloody crimes.

The set-up of the book is not very pleasing, resembling in shape and cover something of a school text-book.

The State Political Publishers have brought out an art edition of a brief outline on the life and work of V. I. Lenin.

The set-up of this book has been achieved with great love and skill by the artist Nikolai Sedelnikov.



Cover of "About Lenin" by J. Stalin

The red binding with its gilt-work of suitable proportions, produces an excellent impression from the outset. The book is printed in clear type on stout paper and is provided with many illustrations. The reader's attention is attracted to the interesting initial letters of all thirteen chapters of the biography. These are wood-cuts by Peter Staronossov, one of the most talented representatives of the Moscow School of Blockprinting, whose untimely death was mourned some time ago. In addition to these little engravings the book contains numerous photographs reproduced on separate insets.

Especially valuable are the seventeen reproductions of Lenin which refer to various periods of Lenin's life, from his school-years onward. They are chiefly photographs taken from life, but also included are several reproductions from portraits and sculptures made by Soviet artists. The book contains many reproductions of paintings commemorating historically important and significant episodes from Lenin's activities as a political

leader and organizer. Although not all of them reach the same high standard in artistic conception and execution, yet taken as a whole, they unroll before the reader past events and scenes in which Lenin played the leading role.

No less talented is Sedelnikov's work on another book dealing with a related subject, and issued by the same Publishing House. It is a small volume of articles, speeches and talks by Marshal Joseph Stalin on Lenin. This volume, with the figure of Lenin on the cover, its various illustrations and happy choice of titles and type, is very attractive. Especially noteworthy is a set of life-like portraits of Lenin in different postures skilfully engraved on wood from the drawings by Nikolai Zhukov. These head the title pages of some of Stalin's speeches and artieles.

ARTS

LENINGRAD COMPOSERS IN THE DAYS OF THE BLOCKADE

It is with reminiscences of the never-to-be-forgotten days of autumn 1941 that I am going to start my story of the life and work of our composers through the long months of the blockade of our great city.

The German offensive was bearing down on Leningrad from the West, the South and the North. The whole country, the whole world was watching in tense apprehension the rapidly growing menace to the beautiful city. Warning of the menace was given in an appeal to the inhabitants of Leningrad signed by Voroshilov, Zhdanov and Popkov, and beginning with the words: "The enemy is at the gate."

Within the town itself, however, the menace produced no disturbance or disorganization. Leningrad people joined the Home Guards, which were engaged day and night in building defences in the suburbs, fitting up shelters, attending A.R.P. training classes and evacuating factories, institutions, theatres, schools, university colleges, museums and laboratories to the rear.

The autumn was a remarkably fine one. Flooded in sunlight, Leningrad was beautiful with the blue of the Neva and its canals, the verdure of its gardens and boulevards. The cleverest camouflage could not conceal the incomparable grace of its architectural lines.

In those days we (and when I say "we" I mean a small group of composers who had remained behind in a city that was countering the blow) were bidding farewell to comrades who were leaving with art organizations for Siberia, the Volga district and Middle Asia.

It was on September 8th that the first explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped on Leningrad. And from that day bombing became a part of the life of the city. At the wail of the air-alert siren street-traffic ceased, but men and women continued their work. Composers' conferences and the business meetings of our Association were held regularly and each went on with his own work. On that same day bombardments began; field guns of medium calibre fired both at the outskirts and the centre of the city (the roof of the Palace of Pioneers—the Anichkov Palace on the Nevsky Prospect was hit first). They were shooting at close range from the suburbs—Pushkin (Tsarskoye Selo), Duderhof, Ligovo, Strelna.

Life acquired a new style, which, far from crushing artistic endeavour, rendered it more intensive and added new interests. For instance, we started a sharp-shooting circle and learned to handle the rifle, hand-grenade and machine-gun. The first place for sharp-shooting was won by N. A. Timofeyev, the composer, and the late A. S. Rabinovich, the music critic. We worked in the docks, too, unloading wood pulp that was to go to the manufacture of powder, and I remember on one occasion having to remove my group from the territory of the port during a bout of firing.

The three who particularly distinguished themselves at building defences were the composers N. A. Timofeyev, N. A. Malakhovsky and L. A. Portov. The second and third are dead. Day in day out they worked at a place near Shushary until late in the autumn. Conditions here were extremely hard and dangerous. Weary and begrimed, they would return home, bringing with them mine and shell-splinters which they had picked up during the day. Later, when winter set in, they became enthusiastic A.R.P. warders, keeping watch in the attics and on the roof of the building of our Association. Malakhovsky perished at his post. During a long watch he died of exhaustion.

Many of our young people (especially in the composers' class of the Academy of Music) left Leningrad in the autumn of 1941, with the Home Guards. It is sad to think that most of them are now dead. Among those who perished were men of talent like B. Fleishman, a pupil of Shostakovich and author of the opera *Rothschild's Violin* (after Tchekhov's story of that name), the prominent music critic and able party-organizer N. Shastin. Servicemen included A. Zurmilen (missing), V. Ivanshin (killed), L. Entelis, I. Dobry and N. Blagodatov. The composers V. Frize, T. Oganessian, V. Tomilin and M. Gloukh entered a military school, graduated as sub-lieutenants and received their baptism of fire in the battles for Leningrad. The first three were killed; the fourth, who was wounded, was removed to the city where, though he remained in the army, he went back to his music.

Leningrad gathered her forces to meet her danger and the spirit of resistance found response in every man, in every woman. New sources of energy were discovered and inspired the people to constructive work, public activities and to aim at efficient military training.

The "Reviews" arranged by our Association went off with spirit. They were always animated, well attended and offered something new and different. A programme made up of new compositions by Boris Assafyev (*Count Noulin*, a ballet for television, composed on Pushkin's poem, *Variations for the pianoforte on the theme of the Preobrazhensky March*, a cycle of songs to the words of our great poet, Tyutchev), which formed the theme of an

interesting lecture on the composer's creative method, was followed by a performance of Gabriel Popov's opera entitled *Alexander Nevsky*. Weekly reviews of new songs of the Patriotic War published by the "Orchestroteka" Publishing House and the Leningrad Music Publishing House (in a collection bearing the name of *To Battle, Citizens of Leningrad*) were followed by discussions of major works such as L. Khodja-Einatov's *Concerto for Pianoforte and Orchestra*, A. Manevich's *Concerto for Voice and Orchestra*, Valeri Zhelobinsky's *Symphony* and others. While giving every encouragement to the authors of army songs and couplets, the Association also tried to encourage the composition of large works of every genre. The theme of patriotism took the place of honour in the music written in those memorable days.

The performance of new works evoked animated criticism. Zhelobinsky was induced to suppress an entire movement from his five-movement *Spring Symphony* in D-major; this greatly improved the piece. Savelyev made drastic alterations in his *Heroic Overture*.

We kept in mind the needs of the war, knowing that new songs—and not only songs—were expected of us by the military organizations, Young Communists and others.

By the end of November, however, our reunions threatened to cease. The premises of the Association were so cold and dark, that we had to wear our overcoats. The keyboard was so cold that playing was difficult. We suffered hunger and the diseases brought on by inanition. Our veterans had succumbed to sickness and often failed to put in an appearance at our reviews. J. A. Veiss, V. P. Kalafatti, N. P. Fomin, V. M. Korsunsky, Julia Weisberg, J. F. Lvova were among these.

Instead of our musical reunions we went very often on foot to military units, schools, A.R.P. staffs and hospitals and gave concerts. The composers D. A. Pritsker, O. A. Evlakhov, N. K. Gan, A. A. Zilber, A. S. Mityushin and S. J. Wolfenson took an active part in these.

Beginning with the spring of 1942, these concert tours were considerably extended and a special department of vocalists and instrumentalists organized by the Leningrad Association of Composers supplied performers.

But even during this period of the blockade which, as far as everyday conditions were concerned, was the worst, when for a lengthy space of time Leningrad was entirely without fuel, lighting, or water-supply; when the food situation was at its worst and the bombardments becoming more violent as the days went on, the creative energies of the Leningrad composers were not quenched. Evidence of this is the competition for the best song and the best band march, announced in honour of Red Army Day—February 23rd, 1942—by the Composers' Association and the Board for Art Affairs. The competition showed the efforts the composers were making. The jury was headed by Boris Assafyev, and a hundred and fifty songs and forty marches were entered. They included compositions by A. F. Pashenko, P. N. Roukin, A. S. Mityushin, J. V. Kochurov, V. G. Golts, N. P. Fomin, V. V. Zapolsky and others.

In the course of that winter and the early spring of 1942 we lost some of our comrades. They succumbed to the barbarous blockade and bombardments. The lives of some were saved because they were sent to hospital in time. Among these were V. M. Deshevov, A. J. Peysin, A. S. Rabinovich, E. V. Gippius, F. A. Roubtsov, S. J. Chicherin.

In that awful winter of the blockade N. P. Goryacheva and the late L. A. Karassova and S. P. Vassilyev and some other members of our Association staff worked in a way that can only be characterized as heroic. The conditions were intolerable; the regular meetings of our committee were held around a tiny stove that gave little warmth.

With the warm days of spring our Association took up its constructive activities once more. Contact with the All-Union Committee for Art Affairs and other bodies was resumed. But there were fewer of us now. Some had perished, many had been evacuated in the winter and spring months in planes or cars along the famous "Road of Life"—a tract of ice laid with untold effort across the Lake of Ladoga by Soviet people. The fewer there remained however, the greater the tasks confronting us. Music was published by the appropriate department of the "Iskusstvo" Publishing House, sponsored by the Leningrad Association of Soviet Composers. An active share in this work was taken by the young composer M. A. Matveyev. The author of several cycles of songs, he found time to edit, to copy music and do organizational work. We published only songs, litographing them in small circulation. But the editions were in clear type, neat and well set.

Our ties with the front were growing stronger. Composers visited the front. In addition to the group that worked for the navy, outstanding activity was displayed in these performances by J. V. Kochurov and N. N. Levi of Red Army House. A. S. Zhivotov spent two months on the Karelian front with the military command. O. A. Evlakhov, N. K. Gan etc. went on tour visiting military units; others—G. N. Nossov, for example, V. A. Maklakov, V. L. Barbe and A. A. Vladimirov,—who were on active service, were working in army ensembles.

Still more frequent were the occasions when messengers from the front came to the Composers' Association and brought verses written by servicemen poets, dedicated to particular divisions, squads, regiments, their heroes, and the events of everyday life at the front. This practice was the origin of a number of songs belonging to separate units, such as the *Song of the 235th Engineering Battalion* by O. A. Evlakhov, *Song of the 315th Infantry Division* by N. N. Levi, *Song of the 90th Red Banner Infantry Division*, J. V. Kochurov's *Song of the 94th Artillery Regiment* and others. Their nature, of course, necessitated their being sung only by the

units to which they were dedicated, but on active service they served their purpose.

We used to give quite a number of consultations to men who first became composers during the war. Those who turned to us for help and advice were Lieutenant Pozdnyakov, Lieutenant Maloletkov, Sergeant Pergamenshchikov and many others.

In 1942, we kept in constant touch with the young composers, members of our Association, and with Gurina, Letman, Klestov and Smolyevsky who were candidates for membership.

There was a wonderful atmosphere of friendly comradeship and helpfulness pervading that little circle of composers working in Leningrad in the years of 1942 and 1943. The conditions of everyday life and work continued extremely difficult. The city was still blockaded and practically cut off from the "Mainland," as it was called. If the air raids practically ceased in the spring of 1942, when they were rendered almost impossible by our increased anti-aircraft and fighter defence, bombardments were growing in frequency and violence. There was firing from all directions, both at close and at long range, with heavy guns of up to 405 mm calibre. It was a grim trial of tenacity and endurance, and this suffering drew us still closer together. We had a very definite and special feeling that we wanted to respond with constructive labour to the destruction going on all around us. We used to take journeys out together to "Berngardovka" station to our allotment. On the return journey we often had to get out at Kushelyovka, as the shooting prevented us reaching the Finland Railway Station. The little company of composers would discuss earnestly every new musical publication as it appeared.

Anyone turning over the leaves of the minutes of our reunions for that period may convince himself how well-attended they were and how much ground they covered. And there can be no doubt that the very considerable progress made by many of our Leningrad composers during the war and blockade was due to the influence of events seen at close range and to comradely criticism, which, though severe at times, was always friendly.

Unity and efficient organization made the Association a centre of musical life of the city in 1943. No branch of musical activity—from the general plan for musical broadcasts to classes for gifted children—was conducted without the guidance, advice and active participation of the Association.

Reviewing the works of the composers of blockaded Leningrad, we must note their great variety: operas, ballets, oratorios, cantatas, symphonies, symphonic poems, quartettes for string and wind instruments, instrumental concertos and sonatas, pianoforte pieces, songs.

At the head of the list stands the famous *Seventh Symphony* by Dmitri Shostakovich, the first big work both in importance and in chronological order conceived and partly written in Leningrad. Shostakovich and his family were evacuated from Leningrad early in October 1941. He took with him the score of the first two movements and part of the third of his symphony, which he had played only a few days before his departure to an intimate circle of friends. It made a great impression. This symphony and its significance embodied our impressions and emotions. We were witnesses at the birth of a work of art which at no distant period was to be a human document of great influence. We accepted it as a challenge to work on compositions of large form and broad conception.

Another composer who was writing a symphony then was Boris Assafyev. He and his family had taken refuge in the artists' room of the Pushkin (formerly the Alexandrinsky) theatre. Here was set up a peculiar "artistic sanctuary" where, within the strong, bastion-like walls of the theatre the pianists Vladimir Sofronitsky and A. D. Kamensky, opera singers N. Z. Andreyev and V. P. Bolotin, dramatic artists V. A. Gorin-Goryainov, E. P. Studentsov and others worked. It was in this small room, which served as bedroom and kitchen, study and reception room, and where there was not even a piano, that Assafyev wrote his *Our Country* Symphony (the Fourth), a four-movement *Symphoniette of Greeting* dedicated to the heroic Red Army, and his *Suvorov* Suite for a brass band.

In the grim months of the first winter of the blockade A. F. Pashchenko wrote his *Requiem to the Memory of Heroes Who Laid Down Their Lives in the Great Patriotic War*; the verses were written by the composer himself. Plans were drawn up for monumental works on the theme of Leningrad's heroic defence. The works in question were completed towards the end of 1943, and the beginning of 1944. One was *The City on the Neva*, a cantata by G. N. Nossov, written to the verses of soldier-poets and consisting of five parts (*The Vow*, *Thoughts of a Soldier*, *Two Knights*, *The Lay of a Heroic City* and *Glory*). Another composition was a vocal symphonic cycle entitled *Leningrad* by O. A. Evlakhov (including the following pieces: *The Fortress-City*, *Night Patrol*, *Vow of a Leningrad Woman* and *Glory*, written to texts culled from newspapers). Then there is a Triptych of symphonic song by J. V. Kochurov; this consists of *Fortress-City* (verses by V. Sayanov), an aria for bass with an orchestral accompaniment, *Heroic Aria* for mezzo-soprano with orchestral accompaniment (verses by A. Reshetov) and *Song of Leningrad* to verses by Captain Kouznetsovsky for choir with orchestral accompaniment. *A Year in Leningrad* is a symphonic picture by A. O. Mityushin inspired by the book of that name by Nikolai Tikhonov.

Different as are these works on Leningrad, they have one trait in common—that is their historical quality; they are records of emotions and impressions personally experienced by the participants of a war unprecedented in history. They are unquestionably truthful and are written in passionate, stirring tones.

They have certain shortcomings that must not be passed over. With Nossov it is an unevenness in the tone of the narrative, a "discord" between the author's arrangement for

the pianoforte, and the score executed in an excessively formal and conventional manner by the composer B. V. Savelyev. In Evlakhov's work fault can be found with a certain negligence in the selection of texts which weakens the poetic expressiveness of the Finale. Mityushin is too engrossed in illustration which detracts from the breadth of the conception. These faults, however, are in great measure due to their authors' endeavours to express emotion in a vivid and spontaneous fashion and could be easily corrected. They should on no account be allowed to overshadow the merits of these first compositions dedicated to Leningrad.

If we take into account that throughout these years many of the big organizations, theatres, cinema-studios, etc., requiring music, were absent from Leningrad, it will become clear that the greater part of the music composed was the outcome of sheer disinterested creative enthusiasm.

Convincing evidence of this are the big compositions for the stage written by our Leningrad composers at the time. Nobody had ordered them; there was no prospect of their being performed. Technical difficulties made special demands on the author's powers of endurance and his capacity to withstand the hardships of everyday life. An exception might perhaps in this respect be made for operetta, as two ensembles remained in Leningrad throughout the blockade. The plays performed on their stages were: M. A. Gloukh's *Oreshek* (The Nut), *The Wide, Wide Sea* by V. Vitlin, N. Minkh and L. Krutz, and *A Tale of the Forest* by I. Loginov. All this music, however, having for the greater part been written in response to urgent orders, is, with the exception of some parts of *Oreshek*, of no particular interest. Mention must be made of *Militsa*, a ballet by Boris Assafyev on the theme of the struggle of Yugoslav partisans against the German invaders; of a patriotic opera entitled *Alexander Nevsky* by G. N. Popov which so far remains uncompleted but on which the author was working up to the moment of his leaving Leningrad in February 1942; of *Flavius*, an opera by M. A. Kilner, an interesting conception on the subject of a novel by Lion Feuchtwanger, and the libretto of a ballet, *Perseus*, by V. M. Deshevov. This is admirable in its wealth of imagery. We must mention also Deshevov's intensive and successful work on some ballet scenarios which resulted in the splendid librettos to *Princess Brambilla*, a fantastic ballet (after Hoffmann), and another ballet called the *Olive-Coloured Ribbon* on the heroic epic of our city. The ribbon in question is that which is attached to the medal "For Defence of Leningrad."

Among the more considerable works of Leningrad composers during the blockade, place must be given to a cantata not yet completed by M. A. Gloukh and his *Ballad of Stalin* which came under discussion several times at our reunions. The composer's searching treatment of many of the episodes lead us to anticipate the completion of this work with the greatest interest.

J. V. Kochurov's *Suvorov-Overture* which was awarded First Prize at the Leningrad Competition announced for the twenty-seventh anniversary of the Great October Revolution, is important as an example of the orchestrated narrative. The list of compositions in this genre may be completed by Kochurov's *Triumphal March*, Zhivotov's *Heroic March* and Kremlev's *Symphony* and *Suite*.

Music for pianoforte was enriched during the months of the blockade by some expressive miniatures contributed by O. A. Evlakhov (we have in mind his *Leningrad Notebook*); by the sketches, rugged but characteristically clear-cut, from the pen of M. A. Malner (*Front and Rear*); Kamensky's brilliant adaptations of A. Khachaturyan's *Poem about Stalin* and some fragments from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*, and the fresh breezy preludes of Maklakov.

Nor was chamber music forgotten. Two quartettes—one for string instruments by O. A. Evlakhov, the other by A. S. Mityushin for wood-wind instruments, both written in Leningrad during the blockade, offer many points of interest. The first is on folk-songs about Lenin and Stalin, which accounts for its originality of intonation and a certain element of improvization; the second might be called a colourful instrumental print executed strictly in the style of Russian musical folklore. Of all Mityushin's works written during the blockade this quartette is far and away the most remarkable.

A Russian *Suite for chorus and orchestra of folk-instruments* by Natalie Levi is a thing apart, comprising as it does elements of chamber and of mass music,—a somewhat paradoxical combination,—but one bearing the impress of undoubted talent.

Then there are several vocal cycles; two composed by A. S. Zhivotov (*Happiness* consisting of seven songs and *Leningrad* of five songs) to verses by N. Nathan-Gorskaya, and a cycle by M. A. Matveyev to some verses by F. Tyutchev. Much of what has been written by J. V. Kochurov is chamber music; his vocal pieces are on the border-line between lyrics, songs and arias.

Life in the beleaguered city and in front line conditions has laid its impress, powerful and noble, on the art of many of the Leningrad composers.

The war, and the thoughts and emotions born of war, urged O. A. Evlakhov to take the words for his songs from the patriotic lyrics of the 19th century poets. And it is undoubtedly the war and life during the siege that inspired the solemn strains of Kochurov's wonderful *Heroic Aria*. All these effects were attained at the cost of stubborn tenacious labour, day by day. Here is a case in point from the work of composers who catered for the Baltic Fleet. They would be sent an urgent assignment—to give, say, a song not later than the following day about the submarine men or torpedo boats. This had to be carried out punctually. To a true musician a request of this kind was a stimulus to genuinely creative effort. It had the effect of making a composer work rapidly and to time, but it did not bar his way to broad and elevated generalizations.

Boris Golts' song, entitled *Get Ready, Men of the Baltic Fleet, for the Cruise!* was set him as an assignment by way of encouraging the preparations for ship-reconditioning prior to spring navigation in 1942. The purpose of the song, like that of *At Daybreak*, a song written by N. Boudashkin at the same time, may seem at first glance extremely prosaic and commonplace. But both these songs, while their texts were strictly in accordance with orders, said something that went beyond the limits of the task that was set, and said it with heartfelt emotion and vivid imagery. They were instinct with heroism, they had the directness, inexhaustible energy and cheerful open-hearted spirit of the Soviet sailor. They sang of the men of the Baltic Fleet and their qualities, and for this reason it would be utterly erroneous to think of them as "incidental" numbers of a superficial nature. Reconditioning of ships in 1942 came to an end and the ships of the Baltic sailed out into the Gulf, fought the fascists at Peterhof, Oranienbaum and Kronstadt and returned to the Neva for the winter. Now they are away at Tallin and Königsberg, Danzig and Stettin. But the songs are still sung and will continue to be sung with ever-increasing significance, expressing the spirit of the people and their nobility revealed by the war.

Golts' lyricism is sometimes tender, sometimes rebellious. The composer of twenty-four preludes and scherzos for the piano and many songs written to Alexander Blok's poems,—he voiced the profound and lofty emotions of those days.

Golts died in February 1942. His death was one of the greatest losses sustained by our Association. But his songs live and will continue to live.

His example is perhaps one of the most striking. But we must remark on a similar widening of horizons in the case of almost all the Leningrad composers.

VALERYAN BOGDANOV-BEREZOVSKY

Editorial: The author of this article, the talented composer Valeryan Bogdanov-Berezovsky, was President of the Leningrad Association of Soviet Composers from August 1941 to August 1944. While directing the work of his comrades, he conducted personally all the reviews of the Association, as well as the concert tours to the front lines.

During the blockade, Bogdanov-Berezovsky arranged for the pianoforte his *Men of Leningrad*, a three-act opera to the libretto by Vera Ketlinskaya; a symphonic triptych entitled *The Fliers* which consists of the scherzo *The Flight*, and *Heroic Epitaph*, both works for orchestra, and *Song of the Three Falcons* for chorus and orchestra (to verses by Nikolai Brown); a Concerto for violin and orchestra dedicated to the memory of Chaikovsky (twice performed during the blockade at the Leningrad Philharmonic and conducted by K. I. Elyasberg); a Sonata for the pianoforte and several songs.

"No. 217"

(A New Film Produced by Mikhail Romm)

Mikhail Romm is one of the most talented representatives of the younger generation of Soviet film producers. He made his debut 11 years ago with the picture *Boule de Suif* based on Guy de Maupassant's story of the same title.

He had spent some years in the Red Army, later did some dabbling in painting and sculpture and finally spent a period at the Art Theatre Institute. He entered the film world as a scenario writer, a profession he has not forsaken even now that he is a well-known producer.

Boule de Suif was Mikhail Romm's first picture and the last Soviet silent film. The producer had succeeded in fully conveying Maupassant's mordant satire, preserving all the characteristic details of each role and translating the writer's splendid prose into the medium of another art, lacking at the

Still from "No. 217"

time that powerful vehicle of expression—the spoken word.

Mikhail Romm's next film, a talkie, created a big impression. It was entitled *The Thirteen* and related the story of an intrepid handful of Red Army men pitted against a band of basmachs (Central-Asian bandits) making incursions into Soviet territory. The struggle takes place in the waterless sun-scorched desert of Kara-Kum.

Boule de Suif and *The Thirteen* brought the young producer success. His next two films—*Lenin in October* and *Lenin in 1918*, in which Boris Shchukin plays the title role, brought him fame. These films about Vladimir Lenin, founder of the Soviet state, and his closest friend and colleague Joseph Stalin, dealt with most important stages of their state activities; the period when they were leading the struggle against numerous enemies of the young and still immature Soviet republics. In these films, historical truth found embodiment in a vivid art form, in them the screen conveyed the spirit of the new epoch of humanistic ideas, the cornerstones of the rising edifice of socialism.

And now comes *No. 217*, a film in which Mikhail Romm displays the art of a past master. From first to last the picture holds the audience in the grip of mounting tension.

The scenario is the joint effort of Mikhail Romm himself and Eugene Gabrilovich. They did not invent the happenings and situations, the characters and their conduct—all that was taken from human documents. From the occupied countries the fascists drove millions of slaves to Germany—mostly lads and girls from the Soviet Union.

The essence of the author's enthralling story is based on actual facts taken from diaries kept in secret, letters in code and stenographed reports taken down from the victims of the nazis after the Red Army had released them. That living truth gives the film its enthralling power, its crushing force as an indictment.

The opening scenes are pure newsreel. July 1944. Through Moscow tramps an apparently endless column of German war prisoners. . . Keeping their boiling hatred in check, Muscovites watch in grim silence. Trudging along in those grey ranks are fiends, ghouls who flung children into wells, who hanged and tortured inoffensive old men and women. . . Romm's drama begins to unfold against this background of the newsreel. Among the crowd watching the prisoner convoy appears Tatiana Krylova (actress Helen Kuzmina)—sunken cheeks, dark rings round dimmed eyes, grey locks of hair. "I'm twenty-five. . . do I look like it? Do I?" she asks of a chance acquaintance, her voice betraying her nervous tension.

No, it seems incredible. Nobody could have guessed the real age of this woman, so prematurely old.

And the tide of prisoner fascists rolls on—dust-covered, in tattered uniforms and patched boots. . . That was not the way they dreamed of marching through the streets of the Soviet capital. . . and Tatiana Krylova had seen them under totally different circumstances. Then they had been clean-shaven, worn immaculately white collars, had smiled warmly to their acquaintances and gallantly kissed the hands of dames. . . In a bespectacled limping officer among the prisoners Tatiana recognizes Rudolph Peshke, fiancé of the master's daughter. . . the rest of the film is Tatiana's story of what befell her in German captivity.

She was shipped off to Germany with other Soviet people in 1942. The train rolled on for ten days. . . for ten days the doors of the foul-smelling cattle trucks packed with human freight were not opened. The moral and physical torture began right there. The people were reduced to draft animals—their names were gone, instead, round their necks, hung the humiliating numbers of slaves. Tatiana's was No. 217.

They are taken to the slave market, an institution then to be found in many German towns. Buyers use the handles of walking sticks and umbrellas to turn the faces of the "numbers" to the light, they finger the muscles of their arms. They are all one price—15 marks a piece—take your choice, meine Herren and meine Damen.

Tatiana Krylova—No. 217—was bought by Johann Kraus, a portly respectable and amiable-looking grocer. It never enters his head that the newcomer can think or feel. For him No. 217 is an object that must be tamed and trained like a circus animal.

Actor Vladimir Vladislavsky acts splendidly as Herr Kraus. He holds a piece of bread in his outstretched hand and speaking with special distinctness and gesticulating as to a dog, initiates Tatiana into her household duties—how to sweep the crumbs from the table and feed the bird with them. From simple "experiments" he passes on to the more involved. If all goes well Kraus throws Tatiana the piece of bread, if there is a hitch she gets a blow in the face with a wet towel or muddy galosh. . . Kraus is genuinely surprised when after one "experiment" he sees tears in Tatiana's eyes. "I didn't hit her, I even gave her a piece of bread. What's she crying for?"

Episode follows episode, the long drawn out days and nights of this Russian girl in thrall to the nazi bürgers are shown as through a frightful kaleidoscope. There she is washing the dishes, then struggling with a heap of laundry, now she has to wash Johann and massage his frau. . . She is worked to death: from ten to fifteen hours a day. Tatiana sews, irons, chops firewood, makes beds, clambers onto the fire escape to clean the windows, hauls and pushes heavy things around until she drops from sheer exhaustion. . . to carry on again as soon as she recovers. The family ignores her presence, disrobe in front of her, treat her as if she were not human.

Kraus lodges Tatiana with another slave, Serguei Kartashov.

Living together, the two comrades in misfortune encourage each other to hold on to life, to live through it all whatever the cost so as to win through to ultimate freedom! . .

At home Kartashov had been an outstanding scientist—an inventor of optical instruments. Here he is made the janitor, an unskilled labourer. But even in captivity Karta-

Still from "No. 217"

shov fights down his utter physical weariness to carry on his scientific work. At night he sits up pouring over calculations and formulas. . . Johann Kraus cannot stand that. With the unfeeling cruelty of a savage he tears up Kartashov's papers—the results of inspired labour.

But when that fails to stop him Rudolph Peshke, Kraus' future son-in-law, that same limping fascist whom Tatiana sees later, in 1944, among the prisoners in Moscow—invents a medieval punishment. Every morning with vaunted German punctuality, exactly at 10, he hits the scientist over the head with a rubber baton. Let him stop thinking, let him lose his memory, let him become an animal indeed!

Tatiana, unable to restrain herself, struck the torturer and for that was thrust into a cell.

That is one of the most powerful episodes in the film—factual authenticity, the talent of the actor, the mastery of the producer, the art of the cameraman (Boris Volchek) and the emotional strength of the music (by Aram Khachaturyan)merge into a homogenous whole.

The cell is a narrow hollow pillar of stone in which you neither lie nor sit. You can only stand in one position until your legs swell and you lose consciousness from pain and hunger. Then the jailor opens the door and the inert body of the prisoner slumps on to the stone floor. A bucket of water is soused over him and he is again squeezed back into the cell.

Through Tatiana's clouded mind pass the happy scenes of childhood. Her father tells her the simple humorous story about Brer Rabbit. Now she is at school where the fairy-tales have given way to avid penetration into the secrets of nature, into the purpose of life. She listens to her teacher impressing on his class that the most precious thing on earth is man, that he must be respected for his mind and culture whatever his race or the colour of his skin.

These are the humanitarian principles fostered in Soviet schoolchildren, and these principles are savagely violated by the nazis, to whom Tatiana falls prisoner.

Then comes a skilful, unexpected but at the same time psychologically justified contrast in scenes: we see Tatiana's painfully swollen legs and then in her dim consciousness flashes the scene of her first dance. . . Her new shoes pinch, she cannot dance because of them. . . And how she longs to whirl into a waltz with her sailor lover! . . "Well, why not? I can take off my shoes. . . and then it will be still easier to glide over the floor." And happy, smiling Tatiana, her shoes dangling from her fingers, dances in her socks. . . while through the bars of the cell window the audience looks into Tatiana's tragic inflamed eyes—Tatiana the captive, Tatiana No. 217.

There comes a sudden change for Serguei Kartashov. They stop beating him, his head is plastered, his rags are changed for one of Kraus' suits, he is treated with respect and civility. What is it all about?

A German optical firm working on special government orders learns that Kartashov is a great scientist. They know about his books and his inventions. The firm wants to buy him from Kraus so that he can work for them at his profession. But Serguei Kartashov refuses—the Russian scientist will not purchase freedom with treachery!

Max, Kraus' son, and his friend Kurt, both officers who happen to be on leave, beat up the proud and noble scientist who later dies from his injuries.

Max and Kurt and their relations with old Kraus form a secondary but exceptionally revealing theme of the scenario and film. The overweening, brutalized nazis personify the poverty of the fascist outlook, the immorality and cynicism of the Hitler order.

The film shows us the fascist family, rotten from top to bottom. Old Kraus acquires the capital of his former partner, Kohn, a Jew. Peshke has designs on that money,—in fact it is only for this reason that he wants to marry Lotte Kraus. Max and Kurt squeeze the money out of the old man by threatening to expose him. At the parental table the drunken nazi soldiers make speeches about the Fatherland and hint broadly that confiscated property should be handed over to the

state. Actually they are going in for plain robbery and pocket the money they frighten the old man into giving up.

Kraus isn't so much upset at the conduct of his son as the loss of the spoils.

The murder of Kartashov, the maltreatment at the hands of the butchers in uniform and the butchers in civilian clothing, fill to overflowing the cup of bitterness for No. 217.

When Tatiana first came to the Kraus household she shrank from killing a chicken—it was fearful even to pick up the knife. Now she seizes a carving knife and steals up to the murderers' bed-room to exact justice. But she does not wish to kill sleeping men. She rouses Kurt:

"Wake up! See your doom!"

The sentence on the murderers is executed.

Soviet planes arrive, bombs fall, panic sweeps the household—it is Tatiana's opportunity to make a long-planned escape.

The Krauses are dashing about trying to save their belongings. Although old Kraus has not given Kurt all his money, he tries to recover what he has passed over.

This scene showing Johann Kraus searching the pockets of his lifeless son and Kurt attains Balzacian heights.

Tatiana escapes with a girl friend, Klavdia Vassilyeva, the slave of a German factory owner. Klavdia's master has driven her to the last stages of exhaustion, the hardships of the way are too much for her and she succumbs. Tatiana continues on her way and reaches a train returning to their own country worn-out "numbers" from German factories, mines and farms. Brought as strong young men and women, they are being returned armless or legless cripples, blind and deaf, suffering from typhus or consumption.

Helen Kuzmina in the role of Tatiana displays outstanding talent. Restraint is the hall mark of her technique—she barely smiles, hardly moves a muscle of her face, yet her slightest mimic is enough to convey in full the profoundest feeling or change of mood. Film folks call Helen Kuzmina the Soviet Buster Keaton in skirts. She began her career under producers Gregory Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg, appearing in their films *The New Babylon* and *Alone*. Her next were Boris Barnet's *The Backwoods* and Michail Romm's *The Thirteen* and *The Dream*. What a variety of parts and characters: the trim sales girl Louisa in a fashionable Paris shop during the stormy times of the Commune; the unassuming rural schoolteacher working in a remote part of the Soviet Union where the first school has just been opened; a middle-class girl from the suburbs, and the plucky comrade-in-arms of a Red Army commander; the primitive peasant girl from the Western Ukraine who goes to work at the café "Dream" so as to realize her one and only aspiration—to save enough to buy a cow. . . and now, the slave No. 217, who has passed through Dante's inferno of fascist captivity and tells the last bitter truth about it so that people remember the suffering undergone and are not in a hurry to forgive the Hitler slave-owners. . . For every episode Helen Kuzmina finds inimitable shades of intonation, conveys emotions while outwardly appearing almost immobile. Sincerity of emotion, profound penetration into the character and the subjective world of the person she is portraying are the distinguishing features of this gifted actress.

Some episodes in the new film are unforgettable—the prison, the scene with the dying Kartashov, Kuzmina's nocturnal entry into the bed-room of the murderers. . .

Vladimir Zaichikov playing Kartashov finely portrays those features of the Soviet man which, even in captivity, give him the strength to stand firm, to retain his dignity. He reveals his moral strength, his invincible faith in victory, his genuine noble spirit and the thirst for creative effort in the interests of his people.

Vladimir Vladislavsky plays Johann Kraus without straining after effect or exaggeration. His acting is not burlesque but a realistic portrait of a middle-class German who, under the Hitler system, has changed from an ordinarily decent individual into something bestial.

Lydia Sukharevskaya, Heinz Greif, Vladimir Balashov, and Pavel Sukhanov portray typical young nazis in revolting but true colours.

Boris Volchek at the camera has shot the picture in a somewhat conditional and expressionistic style. His abrupt and not always justified contrasts stress the instability of fascist life, fascist morals, the fascist family and system. "Yes, this exists, but it should not and must not go on, it will be only an ugly memory of the past in the world rid of nazism," —that is what the cameraman says to the audience through the medium of his art.

Some critics reproach Mikhail Romm for the grim tone of the film, for not providing lighter shades, happy episodes to relieve the strain on the audience. We do not agree.

Yes, it is awful but at the same time you cannot tear yourself away from it because you are gripped not only by the art of the dramatist but also, and primarily, by life itself in all its stark cruelty, unrelieved and unadorned.

Even in the grimmest episodes we witness the victory of man over the beast,—yes, even when it seems to the beast that he is "the arbiter" of the world promised the Germans by their führer.

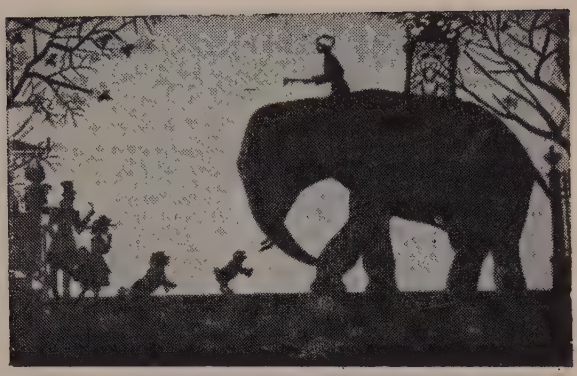
In *No. 217* rings the sentence of the nations on the slave-owners, it sounds an appeal to justice for whose triumph the United Nations are fighting.

OLEG LEONIDOV

ART NEWS

Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes*, produced by the Moscow Theatre of Drama, is the second play of this talented American playwright to be staged in Moscow during the current theatrical season. In style, construction and character this play approaches Russian drama.

The principal theme of the play deals with



Theatre of Shadows. Krylov,s fable "The Elephant and the Lap-dog"

various contrasts: greed and generosity, evil and good, treachery and justice—all illustrated by the actions of the Hubbard family. The central character, Regina Hubbard, is a dictatorial, resolute and heartless woman, stopping at nothing for the sake of profit. She has much in common with Vassa Zheleznova, one of Gorky's heroines. In fact Regina might be dubbed the "American Vassa." Although more elegant and refined, she is none the less just as cruel and merciless as her Russian "sister under the skin." The actress Klavdia Polovikova plays the role of Regina with great inner force and effective theatrical skill. Especially impressive is Polovikova's acting in the final scene with the sick husband, where every word uttered by Regina is a well-calculated murderous blow.

The audience derives great pleasure from the excellent acting of the entire cast. Catherine Stradomskaya, the producer, may be congratulated on the thoroughness and good taste with which the play is staged. The work done on the sets by Vadim Ryndin, the artist, doubtlessly contributes to the success of this production. His settings skilfully reproduce the atmosphere of outward respectability against which the drama of the Hubbard family develops.

This play scored a great success.

In Moscow is a theatre whose whole cast and paraphernalia may be transported in one wheelbarrow. This is the Theatre of Shadows directed by Sophie Svobodina, producer and teacher.

Moscow's schoolchildren consider the Theatre of Shadows fine entertainment. Its latest production, *The Magic Book*, is dedicated to Ivan Krylov. The play is presented in the form of a triptych: while the action takes place on the central screen the audience sees the silhouettes of Krylov himself and of his readers on the side screens.

The Russian critic, Vissarion Belinsky, correctly described Krylov's fables as "miniature dramas." Indeed, everyone of his fables is a complete miniature play in itself. The Theatre of Shadows succeeds in utilizing the dramatic features of Krylov's fables to full advantage.

The skilful literary interludes by the authoress Tamara Gabbe prove an excellent link between the individual fables.

The production of Samuel Marshak's *Teremok* (a small house built in old Russian style), a light and amusing play based on Russian fairy-tales, has found an appreciative audience among the youthful spectators.

A production by the Theatre of Shadows resembles a richly illustrated book whose drawings suddenly come to life and begin to move and speak. . .

The première of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* presented by the Novosibirsk Theatre of the Young Spectator, met with an enthusiastic reception among youthful audiences in that city.

Some time ago a very successful production, *The Savings Box*, by Labiche and Delacour, has been revived on the Russian stage by the Central Theatre of the Red Army, directed by Alexei Popov. The many young actors featured in the play lend freshness, humour and youthful ardour to this cheerful comedy.

The Leningrad Comedy Theatre, now on tour in Moscow, has revived the old Russian vaudeville *Lev Gurych Sinichkin*, produced by Nikolai Akimov.

The Moscow Drama Theatre, directed by Nikolai Okhlopkov, has recently given its 600th performance of Lopez de Vega's comedy *The Dog in the Manger*, produced for the first time in 1937. Maria Babanova played the role of Diana.

The two new productions of the Uzbek national theatre at Samarkand are the Russian classical comedy *Inspector-General*, by Gogol, and the Uzbek play *Dangerous Joke*, staged by the youthful Uzbek producer, Sabir Vakhidov.

The Blacksmith Gavet, a historical play which recently had its première in the Azerbaijanian Theatre of Yerevan, capital of the Armenian S.S.R., was inspired by Firdousi's epic poem *Shah-Name*, from which the playwright Shaisad Saamim borrowed his plot.

The latest production of the Stalingrad Dramatic Theatre is Maxim Gorky's *Foma Gordeyev*. The theatre is now rehearsing Ivan Turgenev's *A Month in the Country*.

The première of *The Girl of the Moon*, by the Oirot playwright Chota Yenchinov, was recently presented by the Oirot National Theatre (Siberia). This play pictures the life of Oirot herdsmen during the Patriotic War.

The Theatre of the Young Spectator directed by Boris Zon has returned to Leningrad. Its repertory includes Alexandra Brustein's *Life Goes On* and *King-Spider*; *Far-Off Region* by Eugene Schwarz, and Molière's *Tartuffe*. Soon to be presented is *A Fairy-Tale About Truth*, by the Soviet poetess, Margarita Aliger.

Coming six years after his First Symphony, composed in 1938, Vano Muradeli's Second Symphony reflects the heroic epoch in the life of the Soviet people, their emotions and experiences during the war.

The slow, restrained and somewhat gloomy prelude sounds like a faint foreboding of events to come. The vigorous principal theme of the first movement plunges the listeners into the atmosphere of these events. The second theme of this movement is soft and lyrical.

The lucid and, so to speak, introspective character of the second movement carries the audience to the world of memories of the recent past. It is in this movement that the composer's talent is most strikingly displayed.

There is no pause between the third and fourth movements whose principal contents may be described as joy at the final victory.

The lucid musical language, the simple and laconic mode of expression and profound content are the distinguishing features of Muradeli's Second Symphony.

Rimsky-Korsakov, when composing his opera *Vera Sheloga*, never dreamed that his composition would one day be interpreted by such unusual actors as a worker of a ceramics workshop who sings the part of the aristocratic Vera, or the physical-culture teacher who appears as Vera's sister, Nadezhda, or the architect who takes the role of boyar Sheloga.

Yet these are precisely the actors appearing in *Vera Sheloga*, produced by the amateur art circle of one of Moscow's workers' clubs. The repertory of this circle includes excerpts from Chaikovsky's opera *Eugene Onegin*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tsar Saltan* and Dargomyjsky's *The Mermaid*. Accustomed to seeing these productions on the billboards of the leading theatres, we wonder how an amateur art circle composed of workers and employees has succeeded in staging these operas; yet this operatic circle has been in existence for ten years and after working hours its members wholeheartedly study with the singing master or learn their parts. Then follows a general rehearsal. The club's director, Nikolai Ozerov, himself a trained opera singer, is a graduate of the Moscow Academy of Music. He inspires the members of the circle with his own love of art, profound understanding of classic opera and a serious attitude to their work. The activities of the members of the circle are not confined to singing and acting: they also include the preparation of stage scenery and other requisites.

The opera circle is now finishing work on Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*.

At the Moscow Academy of Music a regular session of the Scientific Council of the Faculty of the Theory of Composition was in progress, when a young man in military uniform entered the room, placed a small case fitted with tall legs on the table and attached it to the electric plug...

The visitor was Red Army Private Igor Simonov who had received leave to defend the dissertation for his M.A. degree. The dissertation dealt with the "companola," a new electrically-operated musical instrument invented by him.

All formerly existing instruments of this kind have a finger-board, like the guitar. Igor Simonov's invention is an instrument moved by keys. Demonstrating his "companola," which is no bigger in size than an ordinary cabinet machine, the youthful inventor revealed all its possibilities. With three scales at his disposal the player, by regulating the current, can extend the range of the instrument to six scales.

After citing numerous formulas and calculations to prove the technical validity of his invention, the soldier walked over to the instrument and touched the keys. The room was filled with the strains of Chaikovsky's *Sentimental Waltz*.

The soft timbre of the "companola" resembles that of the 'cello. It has a vast range of sounds, from those of brass instruments of the oboe type to the clavier or mandoline.

The Scientific Council unanimously decided to confer the degree of Candidate of Arts on Red Army Private Igor Simonov.

The All-Russian Theatrical Society of Moscow has an opera ensemble which has set itself the task of performing operas on the concert stage. Unhampered by settings, costumes and lengthy rehearsals, the ensemble, directed by Constantine Popov, has the opportunity to acquaint mass audiences with the most varied forms of operatic art.

The ensemble's latest production is the modern American opera *Porgy and Bess*. Its author is the distinguished American composer George Gershvin, known to Soviet musicians as one of the pioneers of American jazz music.

The members of the opera ensemble energetically worked on this production with great interest.

The first performance of George Gershvin's opera which took place in the Moscow Actor's Club, attracted a large audience of Soviet art workers.

In 1942 the newspaper *Red Fleet* published an account of the heroic exploit of twenty-five marines led by the Black Sea sailor, Ivan Nikulin. The real events were later reproduced by Leonid Solovyov in his novel [1] and subsequently formed the basis

[1] Published in No. 2 of *International Literature*, 1944.

for the film *Ivan Nikulin—the Russian Sailor*.

Twenty-five sailors, discharged from hospital, are returning to rejoin the Black Sea Fleet. But the roads have been intercepted by the enemy. The sailors encounter an enemy force, and though outnumbered three to one they wage battle and score a brilliant victory. Inspired by their first success, the sailors form a partisan detachment. Moving behind the German lines, the detachment grows stronger as new volunteers swell its ranks. Nearly all the sailors, as well as their daring commander, perish in unequal combat, but their cause triumphs and everyone of them wins a place in the grateful memory of the people.

Leonid Solovyov, the scenario writer, and Igor Savchenko, the producer, attempted in every way to convey this true story with the greatest possible historic precision, resorting to the aid of imagination only where it was necessary to substitute the missing links.

Due tribute must be paid to several of the actors, especially to Erast Garin who plays the role of station master of a small crossing. The first appearance on the screen of this long-legged, awkward man evokes nothing but good-humoured laughter. The actor succeeds in giving a convincing picture of the transformation of his unsightly hero into a daring soldier. A faithful and convincing character of a partisan has been created by Boris Chirkov, familiar to filmgoers from his acting in the popular trilogy about Maxim, which depicted the ordinary man of the Russian Revolution.

In the film *Ivan Nikulin* a new tricoloured method of printing has been applied, developed by the Soviet film industry during wartime.

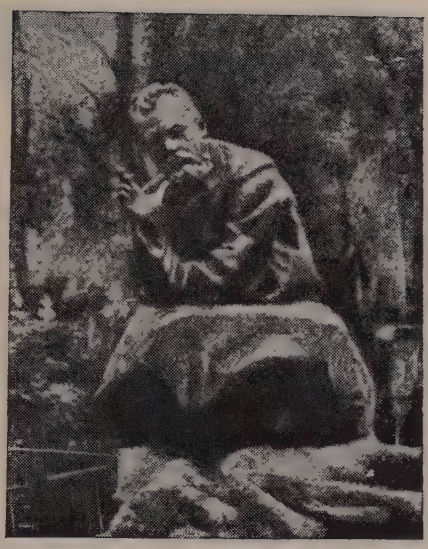
Following on *The Beast's Lair*, and *In Upper Silesia*, a new front line newsreel, *From the Vistula to the Oder*, has appeared on the Soviet screen. Fourteen front line cameramen directed by Manuel Bolshintsov cooperated in its production.

The film gives a detailed picture of the Red Army's operations which led to the forcing of the Vistula and the liberation of Warsaw.

The Polish capital is dead and deserted. The Germans have destroyed its finest sections. Huge expanses of lifeless ruins now replace former well-appointed streets. Monuments of art and culture have been consumed by fire. Nevertheless, life gradually revives once more. Citizens of Warsaw stream along the roads leading to their native city; a parade of the Polish troops is held to mark the liberation of the capital.

The Soviet troops continue their advance to the West. New Polish cities are restored to freedom and life. The German border is near... The scenes from the battle for Poznan make a lasting impression. Step by step we follow the fighting in the suburbs, then in the centre of the city, the siege and fall of the ancient stronghold.

Every new documentary film brings fresh evidence of fascist atrocities. The "death chamber" and guillotine in Poznan are succeeded by the Sonnenberg prison yard filled with corpses of prisoners.



Memorial to the writer Gleb Uspensky, by the sculptor Leonid Sherwood

The Red Army crosses the German border! The shots taken on German territory show the fighting in the Meseritz area, Soviet troops entering Schneidemühl, aerodromes captured from the enemy and the joyful meetings of the soldiers with Russian people freed from German captivity.

The film follows the Red Army to the Oder. Ahead lies Central Germany and Berlin!

Chaikovsky's opera *Cherevichki* (Slippers) was inspired by Nikolai Gogol's *Christmas Eve*. This novel conveys the charm of Ukrainian landscapes and bucolic humour and is distinguished by its rich and lively language.

A new Soviet film *Cherevichki*, recently released, is based on Chaikovsky's opera.

Leonid Sherwood, the veteran Russian sculptor, recently marked his seventy-fifth birthday. A native of Leningrad and a graduate of the All-Russian Academy of Arts, Leonid Sherwood began his career as a sculptor with a bust of Pushkin designated for one of St. Petersburg's theatres and which is now preserved in the State Russian Museum. Next followed a number of busts of outstanding men of art, letters and science: of the actress Vera Kommissarzhevskaya, the writer Vsevolod Garshin and the journalist Nikolai Mikhailovsky.

Sherwood's major works are his monument to Gleb Uspensky at the Volkov Cemetery in Leningrad and the monument to Admiral Makarov in Kronstadt. The sculpture *Sentry*, made in connection with the Red Army's fifteenth anniversary, brought Sherwood great popularity.

Despite his venerable age, the sculptor is still very active. He is now working enthusiastically on his model for a monument to the great master Ilya Repin.

NEWS AND VIEWS

DAYS OF JOY IMMEASURABLE

The previous night the Moscow radio had already spread the news of Germany's unconditional surrender and the great news of victory to every town and village in the country. The 9th of May was celebrated as Victory-Day—a day never to be forgotten. Hundreds of thousands of people thronged the festively garbed streets of Moscow. People unacquainted with each other embraced, offering mutual congratulations on the great occasion. Soldiers were tossed in the air and pelted with flowers. Crowds of people surged to the Red Square, to the Kremlin, the traditional scene of demonstrations and parades; the movement developed into a spontaneous people's demonstration. At nine in the evening crowds surged around the loudspeakers in the streets to hear Marshal Stalin's message to the people. A thousand guns fired a salute to the victorious army.

In the days that followed Victory-Day, the Soviet newspapers carried messages from prominent writers, scientists, artists and others on the great occasion.

Doctor Vladimir Komarov, President of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., addressed the following message to the world's scientists:

"Fighting men of the scientific world, brothers in the service of truth, comrades-in-arms brought closer together by the common struggle and by victory!

"In the name of all Soviet scientists I congratulate you on the occasion of humanity's celebration of the great victory. Never before has history known such a tremendous menace to civilization's very existence. Never before have the nations of the earth experienced such sufferings as occurred during the years of Hitler's aggression.

"The heroic struggle of the liberty-loving nations has brought us victory. Humanism, democracy and reason have triumphed over the forces of darkness, death and destruction. May the progress of civilization never again be marred by race hatred. Let the roots of fascism be torn up and destroyed!

"A guarantee of this is the alliance of the great democracies that defeated Hitler Germany.

"May our friendship, tempered in the fire of great events, remain unbroken for ever."

Another prominent Soviet scientist, Doctor Simon Djanashia, Vice-President of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, wrote in his Victory-Day greetings:

"Soviet intellectuals are at one with the whole people in supporting our government in the efforts to punish ruthlessly the "theoreticians" and organizers of this monstrous war, the murderers and destroyers of culture, and to ensure a secure existence for our children so that the attack on civilization and liberty will never be repeated. Only in a world completely cleared of the misanthropic fascist scum can one count on a just and enduring peace, only in such a world can the hopes of the liberty-loving peoples come to fruition."

Professor Peter Kapitza, Member of the Academy of Sciences, wrote in *Izvestia*: "Today's Victory celebration will go down to history as one of the most important dates of our era, the day on which all freedom-loving and civilized peoples have finally triumphed over the darkest and most reactionary forces ever known to mankind."

Mikhail Sholokhov, the noted author, recalled the following episode: "After our troops had taken Eydtkuhnen in East-Prussia, there appeared on the wall of the station, alongside the German inscription 'Berlin—741,7 kilometres,' an inscription in Russian. In big, firm letters somebody had written: 'All the same we'll get there. Chernoussov.'

"What splendid confidence in these simple words of a Russian soldier! They went there, and how they went!—burying for ever in the ruins of the bandit capital Hitler's mad dream of world mastery."

Nikolai Tikhonov, Chairman of the Union of Soviet Writers, expressed the feelings of millions of his fellow-countrymen when he wrote: "Our will to victory has triumphed. The Soviet people have carried out the orders of their leader to 'finish off the beast.' The Soviet people have the right to triumph."

Avetik Isaakyan, the Armenian writer, said in a *Pravda* message: "History's hand of justice has descended on the fascist state. Fallen and disgraced in the eyes of time and of the nations, bandit Germany lies in the dust. Rapine, misanthropy and the most rapacious reaction have been conquered. A new brilliant page in the history of mankind has been opened."

Yuri Yanovsky, the Ukrainian writer, calls on people to bow their heads before those who died at the front for the sake of victory:

"Standing on the tribune, I watch the columns of demonstrators passing in front of me...

"Looking at these passers-by on this day of victory, I think of those who previously marched in their ranks, but who will never now return from the front. I think of the thousands of our heroes who at the cost of their lives achieved victory in bloody battles. I see their faces, I hear their breathing. Glory to you, dear comrades, our beloved heroes! The country will never forget you!"

Itskhok Fefer, the Jewish poet, wrote in the *Literary Newspaper:* "Fascism is of recent birth but its elements have long been in existence. Misanthropy, racism, anti-Semitism, slavery, obscurantism, reaction—there is nothing new in these. When our glorious divisions stormed Germany they were not

only fighting for us but for the memory of our forefathers and for the fate of our children."

The Soviet people, however, did not only speak of their immeasurable joy in the days of the great triumph. They recalled the countless crimes of the hitlerite butchers and demanded a worthy punishment of those who had tried to turn back the wheels of history. The writer Leonid Leonov published a long article in *Pravda* in which he said:

"The murderer is on his knees. The weapons have been knocked out of his hands. He is at your feet, victors. He wants peace and mercy. The butcher of a century's experience, in addition, turns out to be a shameless creature... Judge him, people, by all the cannons of your great law!..

"In our thoughts we travel over desecrated Europe. There is not a surviving community in which the people today are not jubilant, even amongst the fresh graves and still burning fires. One cannot but sing on such a morning. Joy closes our eyes, at times the smoking ruins which should be retained for ever as evidence of the last fascist savagery, disappear from our field of vision. The saving habit of forgetfulness is already beginning to function but history does not want us to forget...

"The burned villages and even the money that has been spent on powder and tanks can be counted but a roll-call of the dead can never be taken... The court of justice of the freedom-loving people will decide who has been guilty of the crimes committed.

"The time has come to pay. Come forward, were-wolves and vampires, graveyard jesters and hangmen; do not hide in the midst of the nation that you have disgraced so long... Get you gone, cease to exist, fade with the smoke of the powder, cover your ugly face with the coffin lid, give us a chance to laugh in such a spring..."

The newspapers published numerous poems by Lebedev-Kumach, the late Demyan Bedny, Vera Inber, Olga Bergholz, Alexei Surkov and others.

Festive meetings were held all over the Soviet Union to celebrate Victory-Day. Moscow artists met in their club which had been gaily decorated with flags and pictures. Alexandra Yablochkina, one of the oldest Russian actresses, greeted the guests of honour, generals and other officers of the Red Army. Speakers at the meeting included the actors Yuri Zavadsky, Solomon Mikhoels, Serguei Obraztsov, the writer Ilya Ehrenburg and others. A similar well-attended meeting of art workers was held in Leningrad. Many of those present had spent the difficult period of the siege in their native city. On that occasion they recalled Stalin's prophetic words: "Our day will come."

In May 1945, spring returned to mankind. These May days will never leave the memory of Soviet people, the contemporaries of and participants in the great battles of our epoch which culminated in the unexampled victory of a just cause.

On April 22nd, 1945, the peoples of the Soviet Union observed the seventy-fifth anniversary of the birth of Vladimir Lenin. This memorable date coincided with the concluding historic battles against Hitler Germany which, a fortnight later, surrendered unconditionally to the United Nations.

A special anniversary session was held on April 21st in the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow. Vladimir Kruzhkov, director of the Institute, gave a report at this session on the publication of Lenin's works and scientific elaboration of Lenin's literary heritage. He revealed that by the beginning of 1945 the total edition of Lenin's works had reached hundred forty-two million copies. Lenin's works have been published in fifty-six languages of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., including those peoples who had no written language before the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The Institute is now preparing for the press the fourth edition of Lenin's works.

Newspapers throughout the country dedicated special issues to the anniversary. Numerous articles stressed Lenin's role as the founder of the Soviet state which has now emerged victorious from a war which in scope has no parallel in history, and also depicted Lenin as the founder of the friendship of the peoples.

"The Soviet people are observing the treasured date of Lenin's birth in the midst of great victories," wrote *Pravda* in the editorial. "... The spirit of the great Lenin has found its striking reflection in the heroic exploits of the Red Army. Lenin foretold that the Socialist system would arouse brilliant and incalculable talents from the midst of the people." This forecast has come true. Its living embodiment is to be found "in the unmatched exploits of the soldiers, generals, partisans, the heroes of Stalingrad, Leningrad and Sevastopol, in the organizational abilities and heroic labour of the people in the Soviet rear."

Among the articles published by *Pravda* was one by Staff editor Piotr Pospelov, which was devoted to Lenin's great ideological contribution to the treasure store of world science. Other contributors were Academician Alexander Vyshinsky on Lenin's role as the organizer of the Soviet state, Major-General Mikhail Galaktionov on "Lenin—Inspirer of the Defence of the Socialist Motherland" and Nikolai Tikhonov's article "A Great Man."

Writing in *Izvestia*, the Leningrad authoress Olga Bergholz recalled how the memory of Lenin inspired the Leningraders during the grim days of the siege. "Lenin is inseparable from the life of the great people... During the years of the blockade we felt it with a force as hard to describe as life itself, because this would mean writing about everything down to the minutest detail. Now, in these days of victory, I have an especially vivid recollection of the furious enemy onslaught on Leningrad in the autumn of 1941: the very realization that 'we are citizens of the city of Lenin' lent immeasurable strength and inspiration to the Leningraders, and Lenin's words addressed in October, 1919, to the workers and Red Army men of Petrograd, contained not an

historic but an urgent note for the Leningraders, like a combat order written and issued precisely in those days."

Anniversary issues of newspapers likewise carried poems by Stepan Shchipachov, the late Demyan Bedny, Anatole Sofronov and other poets.

An article in the *Literary Newspaper*, entitled *The People Sing of Lenin*, stated:

"In the stern days of the Patriotic War, when the destiny of the people was decided in sanguinary battles, Lenin was an inexhaustible source inspiring love of life and loyalty to Country. Noteworthy is the fact that the Lenin Mausoleum, this shrine of the Soviet people which before the war had an average of six to seven thousand visitors daily, was visited by eighteen thousand people on June 22nd, when the Hitlerite brigands launched their treacherous attack against the U.S.S.R.

"... In Soviet cities and villages the base German invaders destroyed monuments to Lenin erected by the people. But these were invariably restored. Alexandra Pomessyachnaya and Maria Lychak, modest schoolteachers in the Ukrainian village of Staryie Borovichi, risked their lives to save Lenin's works from the Germans.

Literary Newspaper also published Professor Boris Meilach's article *Lenin and Literature*.

A complete collection of Lenin's works in the Georgian language is being published in Georgia. Fourteen volumes have already been issued. One hundred and sixty-two works of Lenin have been published in Georgia during the Soviet period in more than one million copies.

An anniversary exhibition dedicated to Lenin's life and work has been opened in Riga.

Another exhibition to mark this occasion is "Lenin as Portrayed on the Stage and Screen," arranged by the All-Russian Theatrical Society.

The Large Hall of the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow is crammed full of young people. There are boys and girls attending the upper forms of Moscow schools who have come to hear a lecture by Academician Serguei Vavilov on "Lomonosov and Russian Science." This is the first of a series of "Lomonosov Lectures" aimed at acquainting the youth not only with the versatile activities of the great Russian scientist but also with present-day conditions and the outstanding problems of natural, technical and social sciences.

Some of the most famous names in the country are scheduled to take part in this year's lectures, including the following academicians: Lev Shevyakov, the mining expert; Eugene Tarle, the historian; Peter Shirshov, specialist in oceanography and hydrobiology; the chemist Alexander Arbouzov; the botanist Boris Keller; the corresponding members of the Academy of Sciences: Pavel Lebedev-Polyansky, the authority on the history of literature; Anatole Alexandrov, the physicist; Khachatur Koshtayants, the biologist.

The first lecture deals with Lomonosov himself, a man with a supreme capacity for taking pains, a scholar of manifold scientific interests, ardent advocate of science in Russia. "Not a single one of the tasks he undertook," says Academician Vavilov, "be it a chemical modification, the composition of an ode, or a geographical project, was performed unwillingly or in a mood of indifference. Lomonosov was always enthusiastic to the point of inspiration and self-forgetfulness—testimony of this being every page he ever wrote. In science he was not only a scholar, but also a poet; in poetry not only an artist, but also a scholar. . ."

It was hard to find a biography more thrilling and edifying for the youth than the path traversed by Lomonosov whose inquisitive mind probed the depths of the ages. He foresaw a great deal of what was later to prove the glory of Russian science and Russian research. He called upon Russian scientists to develop originality and independent thought. Citing Lomonosov's words, Vavilov says: "Think for yourselves. Do not set me up for an Aristotle, or a Descartes or Newton. If you dub me such, then know that you yourselves are slaves and that my fame falls with yours."

The first lecture of the series was followed by the youthful audience with the liveliest interest.

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