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NEVER BEFORE № 37



Special issue to the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic war



Anatoly ABRAMOV in 1944

Анатолий АБРАМОВ

9 МАЯ 1945 ГОДА

Израсходован запас проклятий.
Гнев излился, вычерпан до дна.
Всё – о Гитлере!

Давайте, братья,
О другом, о том, что не война.

Злость, и та до самого до донца
Оскорблённых добралась сердец.
Кляли тьму. Давайте мы о солнце
Сложим гимн! И о тебе, боец!

И о наших матерях, что дали
Нам приказ всей женскою
судьбой,
Всею страстью муки и печали –
В этой битве встать
на смертный бой.

И о сёстрах, у станков стоявших,
И о тех, кто в медсанбатах нас
Поднимали – под огнём упавших,
Раненых, контуженых, уставших,
Говорили снова: в добрый час!

И ещё давайте скажем слово
О земле, о семьях, о любви,
Обо всём весёлом и здоровом,
Что отныне встало на крови.

Да, родные, так уж получилось.
Вот она, всем радостям цена.
Потому и выпала нам милость
Видеть, как Отчизна

не сломилась,
Поднялась, живой водой
умылась,
И поёт про всё, что не война.

1945 г.

In December 2019 the English Chair for Science Departments announced a translation contest from Russian into English of the poem "May 9, 1945" written by the former Head of the Soviet Literature Chair of our university Anatoly Mikhailovich Abramov. Professor A.M. Abramov (1917 – 2005), Doctor of Philology, literary critic, poet, member of the Soviet Writers Union, and Honoured Scientist, during the Great Patriotic war fought at the Karelian front. The poem was written in 1945 just after victory was declared.

Today we publish the original poem, the translations of the three prize winners as well as that of the jury member professor Anatoly Babushkin.

The stock of curses has been used up.
Wrath has run out all the way down
And Hitler's fate is known.

Let me speak up
Not about the war –
let other be renowned.

That is enough for spite that
seized us tight
And gravely wounded to the core.
We swore the dark – now the sunlight
Will be hymned up – we have got
through the war.

Let me remember our mother's order
Given by the name of women's grace –
By her precept we fought with ardour
And didn't think about
her mournful face.

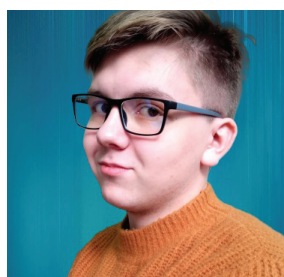
Let me remember sisters
who replaced us in the rear
And nurses who raised us, shocked
and wounded, from the dead
In the crossfire – right
on the battlefield – they would appear
Everywhere to save and heal and
wish us modestly "Godspeed"

And let me say a word I am to say
About our country, families and love
And everything that was risen
from decay,
From the bloody morass
where it could dive.

Forgive us all, loved ones, but life
is not a bed of roses:
The price to pay for victory was
very high –
We saw how fatherland did suffer
awful losses
But it recovered to sing aloud
against the war and didn't die.

Ilya DANILOV

AMM Department 3rd year student
FIRST PLACE



We all exhausted curse stocks,
Got rage down the hatch
Saw Hitler passim. Folks,
We need to get a peace patch.

With mind trapped in loathing,
With heart engulfed in flames
We darkness cursed.
Instead of groaning
Let's carol sun and fighters' names.
Let's carol mothers who
ordered us
With all the might of loving hearts
With deepest sorrow and torment
To fight for our homeland.

Let's carol sisters
who sweat blood
At plants and at the forefront
In the crossfire carrying us,
Who got shell-shocked
and badly hurt.
Their blessing smiles
were best desert.

Let's carol what we held so dear:
Our home, and land,
and kin, and love,
Felicity pristine and clear
Being earned with hands
in bloody gloves.

That's all is why you're
breathing now
That's all the price
for tears of mirth.
Coz someone from
above allowed
Us to observe firsthand of how
Our greatest victory worked out
And let us carol peace rebirth.

Victoriya NESTRUGINA

AMM Department
2nd year student
SECOND PLACE



May 9, 1945

All the curses have been uttered,
There is no anger any more,
That's enough for Hitler talks,
And no more talks about the war.

The malice, right to the end
Has reached the wounded souls.
Let's talk about the sun,
now that darkness went.
Let's sing a hymn,
getting rid of fouts.

Hymn to our mothers, who gave
the deadly order.
Hymn to our mothers,
emotionally gutted,
Hymn to our mothers,
grief-stricken to disorder,
Sending their sons to the battle
of murder.

Hymn to our sisters, exhausted
to the bone,
Hymn to those, who raised
and helped the injured up.
And those who carried
the shell-shocked, tired and alone,
Encouraging their brothers
in the killzone:
Good luck, my friends, cheer up!

But now let's say another word
About our home, our families
and love.
Let's hide and stash
our bloody sword,
That paid us in lives,
But now it's enough.

Yes, dear, it just so happens.
That's why your grandpa
is so hoar.
We've given up all gory weapons
To sing a song, as never before,
About anything, but the war!

Nikita YANOV

Department of Romance and
Germanic Philology
4th year student
THIRD PLACE



All the curses are exhausted now.
There isn't Hitler any more.
We will change the topic
and from now
Let us sing about peace, not war.
Anger filled the hearts
and bitter mourning
Is approaching
its long-awaited end.
Night is over.
Glory to the morning
And respect to you,
my Army friend!
We will sing a hymn
to all the Mothers
Who with pity sent us to the front.

To defend the country I as others
Went inspired by the
Mothers's tongue!
We will sing to honour
of the sisters
Working in the rear day and night,
We will sing for you,
the warlike sisters
Saving soldiers wounded
in the fight
And returning them to battle site.

And we'll say a word or two about
Home land and sweethearts
left behind.
Things that are so cheerful
and sound
Were built on blood.
Keep it in mind!

Having washed her face
with living water,
Motherland has peaceful life
in store.
Now she will sing
in every quarter
Songs about all, but not the war!

Anatoly BABUSHKIN

Professor, Head
of the English Chair
for Humanities



INTERVIEWS WITH VSU TEACHERS — „CHILDREN OF THE WAR“

On the eve of the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic war we interviewed four VSU teachers – the so-called “children of the war” and addressed them several questions.

We hope that are readers will be interested in the memories they shared with our correspondents.



Anatoly Nikolaevich LATYSHEV,
Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Professor

– How old were you when the war began?

– When the war began, I was 8. When it ended, I was 12.

– Will you tell about the most vivid memories of that time?

– “Vivid” in what sense? You know, it was the hardest period of life. So, I think, the word “vivid” is inappropriate. I can tell about several things that I remember.

The first is when the air attacks on Voronezh began. The Germans flew to bomb... We saw those airplanes. At night they were illuminated by spotlights. In the daytime we also saw explosions from anti-aircraft guns – small white clouds. At that time the most common boys’ pastime was to search fragments of exploded shells, that were still warm.

Before that, at the very beginning of the war, I remember me and my father sitting near the river. Mother came to us and said that the war had begun. I remember that moment, but I do not remember what I felt. Of course, I didn’t understand what war was.

In some days my father was called up for military service. In the place where nowadays there is a military institute – the so-called “pentagon” – there was a cinema. There, in a little tree-lined square the conscripts were gathered. We visited my father, fed him through the fence. During the war I saw him only once, when the front was near Kursk. My father was a sapper. After that we saw him only after the end of the war. He had been through the entire war, was on the front line all the time, was contused. In 1949 he died, I suppose, because of all that he had to go through: mines, bridges, roads – all constructions were on their shoulders.

When the fascists came to Voronezh, my mother had three children – I was the oldest. We were told that Voronezh wouldn’t be surrendered. And my mother firmly believed that it wouldn’t. Officially it wasn’t. The front passed along the river. My mother vainly attempted to move to the other side of the river. Our neighbor had a boat and profited from it. He took such a huge sum that my mother had money only for transportation of one person. He didn’t help us, as a neighbour. But it’s even better the he didn’t because those very days the Germans’ airplanes flew and shot everybody who moved from the right bank to the left.

The Germans came and turned us out of the house. Two soldiers with rifles and bayonets came in. We had a small garden – literally three apple trees. It was July and there were only two ripe apples there. I remember those large hanging apples. We never got a chance to taste them. When we came back the whole garden was cut down. Except for apple trees cucumbers had grown there. While one of the Germans was turning us out, the other was raising

the leaves of cucumbers with a bayonet, picking cucumbers and putting them into the pocket without leaning over. He didn’t even condescended to lean and to look for cucumbers properly.

I was dark-haired, while my mother and the other family had fair hair. At that time Russian women saved Jewish and Gypsy children. So, the Germans thought that this was just such a case. Of course, I didn’t understand, but I remember it quite clearly. The soldier separated me from my family with a bayonet – I even still remember the prick of that bayonet – and said: “Yudo, yudo, yudo”. My mother threw herself at his feet and began to prove that all her children had the same father. Such a tragedy! Then the officer came – the so-called “specialist in noses”. In his opinion I didn’t look like a Jew or a Gypsy. That is why I stayed alive.

We were sent to a camp near Kuziha – the concentration camp. I suppose, they kept there the ill, the old and those who had little kids. My family stayed a few days there – other people stayed much longer. My mother couldn’t feed her baby, so she drank from a puddle and got dysentery. Just imagine such a situation: ill mother, three children including an infant. If she died, we would die too. So, she decided to run away together with two more families. I remember the gates – a frame made of logs, intertwined with barbed wire. We pushed them aside and ran away. Of course, the Germans were guarding the territory. They were staying in about 50 meters. I am sure, that they noticed us – a big group with two squeaky prams. But they pretended not to see.

Then we wandered through the fields. The locals couldn’t shelter us. Even if they wanted to, the Germans, and most importantly, the so-called “policais” came and kicked us out. We came to a house, the hostess looked at us worrying very much and decided to feed the children. She brought a cup of milk and bread for each of us. I was the eldest one, so I was the last to get it. But her husband turned out to be a “policai”. He ran out with a rifle under his arm and yelled: “Communists, get out of here! Or I’ll shoot you all!” And he kicked that milk out of his wife’s hand. I still remember the taste of the bread and milk that I anticipated after several days or even a week of complete starvation. I hadn’t tasted it, but I could already feel it.

– What do you remember about the Victory Day?

– At night we were awakened by sounds from the outside. The neighbours shouted: “Victory! Victory!” That is how we learnt about the victory. Everyone who stayed in Voronezh went to Koltsovsky square that evening. There was a monument to Nikitin, that nowadays is replaced to Nikitin’s square. Around that monument there were some pipes that were used to set off fireworks. There was a grand celebration of victory. Bright lights, happy faces, tears.

– What do you remember about the years after the war?

– The city was completely, absolutely destroyed. There was not a single building in the city center. Everything was burnt and shattered.

The building of our school was suitable for recovery. We collected bricks from the surrounding area. Imagine a chain of children that stretched for tens, maybe even hundreds of meters. At the beginning of this chain, bricks were disassembled. Someone used a hammer, someone used a shovel – stronger guys disassembled those bricks and passed them to the children in this chain. The bricks were passed from hand to another to the school yard. When the guys at the beginning of this chain tarried, boys in the middle didn’t want to stand still. They began to take some bricks from the nearest destroyed house. But it turned out that some people lived there – not in the house, but in the basement. When the inhabitants saw that their house was being disassembled, of course, they went out to oppose it. However, there was no swearing, no scandal. The people who lived there didn’t offend the kids, they only asked them not to touch their house – without shouting, without fury that we could see and hear now.

Margarita DENISENKO
3rd year student of AMM



Vladimir Semenovich LISTEN-GARTEN,
Candidate of Historical Sciences, Associate professor

– Could you tell me how old you were when the war began? What do you remember about June 22nd, 1941?

– I was 8.5 years old and I just passed to the second grade. I vividly remember that day, it was Sunday and my parents and I were walking in our Park of Culture. Since it was a weekend a lot of families went for a walk too, there was a happy atmosphere and everyone was celebrating a long-awaited day off. When the weather got worse and it started to rain slightly, we decided to go home and on our way back we saw many people standing near the street loudspeakers. There was Molotov’s voice on the radio. Everyone was listening carefully to him and I noticed a lightning change in their faces. All of them frowned and were extremely focused. In spite of being a little boy, I immediately felt how serious the atmosphere had become.

– What about your parents? What were they doing during the war?

– My mother was immediately called to work in a hospital. My father worked in a building trust before the war. So when the war began, it was transformed into an emergency regiment. As for me, despite the fact that I was already a schoolboy, during the summer holidays I was attached to a group of children in a kindergarten. And there I met children from families who had fled from our western territories. They were the ones who’d already SEEN THE WAR. Their stories of how they were fleeing away while Nazis were bombing and shooting them down, struck me deeply. For us, it was impossible to understand how those people could attack civilians. It was the first time I realized those people weren’t human beings but monsters.

Later, my mom, her coworkers and I were evacuated to Ferghana in Uzbekistan. These were harsh times... Coldness and hunger... However, there was no doubt that the victory would be on our side and

that we just needed to live through, to overcome these difficulties. Even during the darkest times, there was the overall positive mood that salvation would come.

– When did you come back to Voronezh?

– We were in Ferghana till 1943 when we got a telegram from my dad saying that we could come back. When we arrived at the railway station we didn’t recognize the city. We barely found the way back home, because all the streets and buildings were destroyed. By the way, international specialists later said that it would be pointless to restore Voronezh and that it would be better to build the city in a new place. However, our city was completely restored by 1950.

– What do you remember about May 9th of 1945?

– Before the end of the war, in April of 1945, I was sent to Artek, it was opened after the liberation of Crimea in 1944. So the victory day we celebrated there. I remember it was a wonderful day, we were woken up by an alarm around 3 or 4 am in the morning and we were told that the war had finished and we won. It was a great holiday... that day there was a big concert by an ensemble of the Black Sea Fleet. But at the same time, there were a lot of children who were a little bit older than me and who had been in partisan squads during the war. I was taken aback when I saw them crying. I didn’t understand it at the beginning... I wondered why they were crying on such a day. But then I realized what they’d been through...

I assume that our generation, those children of war, were together with the whole nation fighting for the victory all through the war. And that’s the reason why we were able to inherit it from the GENERATION OF WINNERS...

Yuliya MAKSIMENKO
3rd year student of AMM



Stanislav Georgievich KADMENSKY,
Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Professor

– How old were you when the war began?

– When the war started I was 4 years old.

– What about your parents? What were they doing during the war?

– My parents were builders and before the war they worked at the aircraft plant in Voronezh. In 1942 they moved to Kuibyshev along with the aircraft plant and stayed there during the whole war. Only after the war ended we returned back to Voronezh.

– What do you remember about your life in Kuibyshev?

Our family was given a 2-room apartment. Construction of the plant began, it was literally built on an empty place. People built walls, roofs and about two months later the plant started producing the first aircrafts. In 1944 I went to school.

Kuibyshev at that time became the capital of the country: the Soviet government, the Bolshoy theater were evacuated there. It also became the greatest industrial center: only from Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic States 2400 plants were moved to Kuibyshev.

There were many interesting episodes. For example, in 1944 German prisoners began to appear. By the end of the war, there were more than a million of them in Kuibyshev. They worked as builders there. What was the attitude of Russians to the prisoners? Russians pitied them, even though they had brought so much blood and pain, so that they could have hated them. I remember how two German prisoners came to us in the winter, they knocked on the door and asked for some work. They were allowed to leave the camps so that they could work somewhere. There was no strict discipline. They were ready to repair the clock, plumbing, etc. The people understood that they were starving, just like everyone else, and they helped the Germans. The attitude of the Russian people to people of other nationalities is amazing.

Viktoriya TYAN
3rd year student of AMM



Evgeny Mikhailovich SEMENOV,
Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, Professor

– How old were you when the war broke?

– I was born in 1940 in Grozny. My father had been recruited before I was born and in 1941 he was killed.



Evgeny and his mother Nina Kapitonovna, a teacher at the VSU Chemistry Faculty

– What do you remember about the life during the war?

– The only reason for our family (my mother, my grandmother and me) not to get into occupation, was the fact that German army was stopped 20 kilometers before Grozny. I recall bombs falling onto Grozny and fountains of burning oil raising many meters up. I also remember how we went to the abandoned gardens of the Chechens who had been expelled to Kazakhstan.

– Please, tell some words about the post-war period.

– We returned to Voronezh in the summer of 1946. It was a very hungry time. The only food we had were potatoes (still limited). I was also given one salted cucumber a day. Since that time I strongly believe that salted cucumbers are the tastiest food in the world!

Nikolay AVDEEV
1st year post-graduate student of Mathematics Department



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