

HOMEFRONT PATRIOT:
WORLD WAR II IN A WORKER'S DIARY

By

Ian Mazitov

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Charles Shaw

Second reader: Professor Marsha Siefert

Budapest, Hungary

2018

Copyright in the text of this thesis rests with the Author. Copies by any process, either in full or part, may be made only in accordance with the instructions given by the Author and lodged in the Central European Library. Details may be obtained from the librarian. This page must form a part of any such copies made. Further copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the written permission of the Author.

ABSTRACT

This thesis based on the wartime diary of a worker Alexander Dmitriev, who lived in Molotov and worked on one of the defense industry plants. It shed light on the Soviet society under conditions of hard times and mobilization, including labor relations, rationing system and everyday life. This research also provides several discussions on the Soviet subjectivity, labor history and biographical turn in historiography. Combination of these methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks, as well as the uniqueness of the source allows to provide some significant aspects of Soviet society and life under wartime, which does not match to the conventional picture of hard times.

Table of contents

ABSTRACT.....	ii
Table of contents	iii
Introduction.....	1
From Stalin to Putin.....	1
The Phenomenon of Workers’ Diaries	2
Labor Aspect.....	6
Biographical turn	8
Thesis structure.....	11
Chapter 1. Alexander Dmitriev and his diary.....	12
Meanwhile in Molotov	12
“Today I came up with the idea of keeping a diary of my life”	15
“I have been meaning for a long time to write a large work in the form of a poem”: diary and creative exercises	18
“My diary is a marvelous thing”: diary as a communicative act	23
Chapter 2. Labor and War in Dmitriev’s diary.....	34
“That bastard Hitler has embittered many lives”.....	34
“Events happened recently have ruined my summer plans...”.....	44
“I worked well today, although I was drunk”: War, Labor, and Stereotypes.	48
Chapter 3. Food and War: provisioning in Dmitriev’s diary	58
“It is currently the major question of the life”: War and Food	59
Conclusion	68

Bibliography	72
Primary Sources.....	72
Secondary Sources.....	72

Introduction

From Stalin to Putin

In 2001 on the security check desk of former Communist Party Archive of Perm region appeared an aged gentleman, who requested the meeting with the archivists. That person was 83-years old Alexander Dmitriev, who brought to the Archive a precious gift - his intimate notes, which he kept for 60 years. The archival staff members evinced an untypical for them promptness and agreed to deposited this unique historical source in their storages. The Dmitriev's diary, being on the shelf, though, remained there for the next ten years, until the moment, when the archivists finally realized, what a rare thing came to their hands, and started involve historians and other researchers for the surveys. Nevertheless even by now the archive published only a smallest part of this diary, which covers period from 1941 to 1953. However, they made a right choice of a chronological framework, which presents soviet society under war and in period of the late Stalinism.

The author of this diary - Alexander Dmitriev (1918-2005) - was born on the Urals, in Perm almost simultaneously with the Soviet regime, in 1918. He graduated from secondary school and later from the aviation technical school and at the age of 20, in 1938, he got the position of the engine mechanic on the Aviation Factory # 19 named after Stalin. Since that year he never left the factory until his retirement in 1982.

The first diary entry appeared in the summer of 1941 when the German army was already moving deep into the Soviet territory. The last notes were made in 2001, a few years before his death. These 63 large notebooks of Dmitriev's entries became a long story, which shows the transformation of the country from Stalin to Putin and opens vast perspectives for researchers to survey the second half of the 20th century in Russian history, presented in the diary.

This thesis uses Dmitriev's diary as a main source, but it is limited by the chronological framework of wartime. It is based on the notes, which the diarist made from summer of 1941 to summer of 1944. This unusual limitation caused by the fact, that the notebook with the entries, covers period from the mid-1944 to March 1946, did not survive. Nevertheless it was hard to prevent the thesis author's curiosity and to not look into the entries from the postwar time. This, although, helps to expand the understanding of wartime and trace perspectives for the further research. This thesis aims at the study of Soviet society under the war through the lens of the worker's diary, including some discussions on the soviet subjectivity, labor history and everyday life.

The Phenomenon of Workers' Diaries

The phenomenon of workers diaries in Russia and later in the Soviet Union rooted in several interrelated intellectual traditions. This was the feature of European culture in general, which was accepted by Russian nobility and later on by intelligentsia. Among this last category of diarists were engineers and highly skilled workers. Although workers' diary remained quite rare some of them were introduced into historical studies. These sources became especially relevant for labor historians, who target to reconstruct labor relations and working and living conditions of workers in pre-revolutionary times. Some of these diaries were analyzed by Victoria Bonnell in her book *The Russian Worker: Life and Labor under the Tsarist Regime*. She focuses on diaries of Semen Kanatchikov, P. Timofeev (pseudonym for P. Remezov), Fedor Pavlov (pseudonym for A. Bykov), E. Oliunina, and A. Gudvan.¹ Bonnell reconstructs such aspects of workers life as stratifications of labor force, position of women workers, standards of living, including lodging, food, leisure time activities, etc.

¹ Victoria Bonnell, *The Russian Worker: Life and Labor under the Tsarist Regime* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 30.

The second tradition related to the workers diary formed in 1920-30s together with the concept of a New Soviet Man. This idea was associated with existed traditions and combined with the new policy and ideology of the young Soviet state. The New Soviet Man was not only brave, strong and ready to the World Revolution and war, but also well-educated and intellectually developed. This ideal image affected the main pattern of diary writing in this period. For new soviet ideology this notion was very important. It became one of the feature of what historian Stephen Kotkin calls unique Soviet civilization.

Bolshevism itself, including its evolution, must be seen not merely as a set of institutions, a group of personalities, or an ideology but as a cluster of powerful symbols and attitudes, a language and new forms of speech, new ways of behaving in public and private, even new styles of dress-in short, as an ongoing experience through which it was possible to imagine and strive to bring about a new civilization called socialism.²

Another historian Jochen Hellbeck elaborated Kotkin's notion and methodology and formulated the theoretical framework of Soviet subjectivity. Hellbeck illustrates this idea and develops the concept in his book *Revolution on My Mind: writing a diary under Stalin*.

Hellbeck's research of worker's diary based on the accounts of the young Soviet worker and of peasant origin Stepan Podlubny, who kept his notes from 1931 to 1939. He started his diary when he moved to Moscow from the village in Ukraine. Collectivization was the reason, which forced him to leave his home and find the job in the city. However, in the Moscow the diarist faced a new problem - he had to change his personality and became a proper Soviet citizen. This fact is crucial for Hellbeck, who argues, that necessity of transformation forced Podlubny to keep a diary and use it as a tool for this transformation. For that purpose the diarist had to accept and perceive Soviet ideology. Mentioning the notion of ideology, Hellbeck brings new definition of this phenomenon. For him Soviet

² Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization* (1997), 14.

ideology was not the ready-made construct. It, more likely, worked as “a ferment”, which produces “great deal of variations as it interacts with the subjective life of a particular person”.³ As Hellbeck argues, each Soviet subject “unpacked and personalized” this ideology, which became “living and adoptive force”.⁴ Nevertheless, the most useful and significant idea, which appeared in the study on Pudlubny’s case, constitutes in fact, that diary could be the reflection of soviet subjectivity: “these Soviet diarists revealed an urge to write themselves into their social and political order. They sought to realize themselves as historical subjects defined by their active adherence to a revolutionary common cause. Their personal narratives were so filled with the values and categories of the Soviet revolution that they seemed to obliterate any distinction between a private and a public domain”.⁵

This Hellbeck’s notion is essential for this thesis, although it has a serious disadvantage, related to the chronological framework of his research. For diarists of 1930s ideas of Revolution or even World Revolution and New Soviet Man were still relevant. However in 1940s circumstances changed dramatically. The notion of the Revolution was replaced by the war and the concept of a New Man was shifted towards the patriotism. Nevertheless, this fact does not principally denies the necessity of soviet subjects to perceive and interpret the ideology. Despite the fact, that some ideological statements changed because of the war, the nature of the Soviet ideology remained the same and soviet people continued to “unpacked and personalized” it. This premise makes the concept of the Soviet subjectivity applicable for the diaries of the wartime, hence to the Dmitriev’s diary as well. That is why the Soviet subjectivity is one of the methodological frameworks of this thesis.

Nevertheless, it is worth to note, Soviet subjectivity as an approach has certain limitations, which caused by the fact, that Soviet society and its cultural context was more

³ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: writing a diary under Stalin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 12.

⁴ Ibid, 13.

⁵ Ibid, 4.

complex and less unidimensional, than Hellbeck and other adherers of this theoretical framework try to argue. Literary scholar Mark Lipovetsky credibly illustrates in his book *Charms of the Cynical Reason: Tricksters in Soviet and Post-Soviet Culture*, that “the focus only on the process of the internalization of Soviet modernization by Soviet subjects allows to ignore such important phenomena as guile, double-thought, mimicry, and cynicism, which, [...] were equally (if not more) crucial for the survival of Soviet subjects”.⁶ In his critique of the Soviet Subjectivity methodology, Lipovetsky challenges Hellbeck’s arguments about Podlubny’s attempts to transform himself. He argues, that Podlubny demonstrates just his ability to adapt for the circumstances, but not the intention to change his personally. “The self-modernizing subject translating the Soviet vision of modernity into everyday practice [...] constitutes just one of several Podlubny’s ‘personae’” - Lipovetsky concludes. Among other diarist’s personalities, scholar distinguishes “modes” of kulak, secret NKVD agent and womanizer. As Lipovetsky correctly mentions, “the most amazing effect of Podlubny’s diaries lies in the parallel coexistence of these personae, and the ease with which Stepan switches from one biographic regime to another, seemingly ‘forgetting’ about his other ‘selves’”.⁷

This thesis takes into account all these aspects and surveys Dmitriev’s diary from the position of soviet subjectivity, as well as with the consideration of other important aspects of Soviet society, which Lipovetsky describes. As a result, it brings the understanding of the society’s complexity through the lens of the diary. To some degree this extension of the scope, is achieved by the implementation of other discussions in this thesis. Among these are notions of labor history and biographical turn in historical research.

⁶ Mark Lipovetsky, *Charms of the cynical reason: the trickster's transformations in Soviet and post-Soviet culture* (Brighton, 2011), 46.

⁷ Ibid.

Labor Aspect

Labor in the Soviet case directly related to the notion of the social mobilization. As Sheila Fitzpatrick illustrates in her essay *War and Society in the Soviet Context: Soviet Labor before, during, and after World War II*, social mobilization affected first of all labor and labor relations. Analyzing general paradigm regarding the society under the war, Fitzpatrick points out the main features of this development. She rightly notes increased government controls, the concentration of power, and centralization of the economy. As a result, Fitzpatrick continues, 'it created a rationing system for the distribution of food, fuel, and clothing, and made citizens to various drafts, compulsory job assignments, and forms of registration in peacetime.'⁸ However, as it was mentioned before, she brings this paradigm related to the Soviet Union into wider historical context. This helps her to show that even before USSR was fully involved in the war the Soviet society had features comparable to wartime conditions. Fitzpatrick uses the labor during World War II and in the decades before and after to elaborate this notion.

Describing the prewar period Fitzpatrick refers to the Soviet concept of a 'new man', which became even stronger during the Industrialization. Thus Fitzpatrick elaborates her understanding of the Soviet society before and during the war in the term very similar to Kotkin's. She emphasizes several important features of the Soviet society under the war conditions. Among them the notion of struggle in propaganda, "extraordinary" administrative methods, variety of controls, restrictions, and forms of registration, as well as passport system, wartime rationing system, etc. Most of them appeared in pre-war time and were ratcheted up during the war.

⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *War and Society in Soviet Context: Soviet Labor before, during, and after World War II*, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 35, 1989, 37.

Fitzpatrick emphasizes as well specific aspects of labor at that period. The most crucial labor features for her was full employment, which was achieved in a large extent through of the Labor Reserves system, which mobilized young laborers mostly from the rural area. However during the even urban population also were involved into this conscripted labor associated with the Labor Reserves. As Fitzpatrick mentions, only in 1943, 7.6 million urban and rural residences were drafted as labor conscripts.⁹ Of these, author specifies, 1,320,000 were for industry and construction, 3,830,000 for work in agriculture, and 1,295,000 for timber procurements.¹⁰ Unfree, semifree and conscripted labor likewise was one of the features of this period. Fitzpatrick argues that such kind of labor ‘may be seen in part as compensation for the ineffectiveness of central planning in the recruitment and distribution of free labor’.¹¹

No less significant for Fitzpatrick was the increase of the labor of adolescents and women. These two points became even more significant in the wartime because of the extended mobilization of men to the military service. As Fitzpatrick notes, ‘by 1942, 15 percent of the employed labor force was aged eighteen or younger, as against 6 percent in 1939 (and this figure does not include adolescents in the Labor Reserve schools); and there had been a corresponding increase in the proportion aged fifty and over from 9 percent to 12 percent’.¹² Moreover, wartime brought important changes in the labor conditions. Fitzpatrick emphasizes that ‘after the outbreak of war, defense industry and transport workers were put under military discipline, with a punishment of from five to eight years imprisonment for

⁹ Ibid, 42.

¹⁰ Ibid, 43.

¹¹ Ibid, 41.

¹² Ibid, 43.

unauthorized departure from the job’.¹³ Besides that the rationing system for distribution of basic foods and clothing, which had been phased out in 1935, was reintroduced in 1941.¹⁴

Dmitriev’s wartime diary is a perfect illustration for the notion of social mobilization in Fitzpatrick’s terms. That is why her approach helps to understand the nature of labor relations, living and labor conditions, everyday life, etc., presented in the diary.

Biographical turn

Despite the soviet subjectivity and the labor aspect, this thesis deals with the biographical approach, because of the main source nature. The survey of the diary required specific theoretical framework. Significantly, that in the historiography the understanding of this framework as a fully-featured methodological approach formed just in previous decades. According to historian David Nasaw, even though, many scholars argue that such ego-documents as biographies can not provide the “analytically sophisticated interpretation of the past that academics have long expected”.¹⁵ Nevertheless, he continues, “biography has been and continues to be a vital genre of historical writing”.¹⁶ The such research, which were mentioned before, as Hellbeck’s book, illustrates this notion and give an example of a successful implementation of this approach.

This thesis also tends to use the term biographical turn and it’s methodological framework, for the better survey of Dmitriev’s diary. The guideline, which was used in this research, presented in the article by Irina Paperno *What Can Be Done with Diaries?*

¹³ Ibid, 44.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ David Nasaw, “Historians and Biography,” *American Historical Review* 114, 3 (2009): 573.

¹⁶ Ibid, 575.

Dmitriev's completely meets the descriptive definition, which Irina Paperno brings in her article. As many other intimate notes, it is 'a text written in the first-person, in separate installments, ideally on a daily basis, and ostensibly for the purposes of giving an account of the writer's personal experience in a given day, which is not necessarily addressed to someone other than the diarist'.¹⁷ In the other words, which the scholar uses in the concluding part of the article, 'the diary is built around basic epistemological categories applied to human experience: subjectivity, temporality, and private-public'.¹⁸ From this perspective, Dmitriev's diary is a typical example of such ego-document.

First of all, he writes his diary in a first-person. Interestingly, Dmitriev tended to keep diary in the first-person even when did not need to, for example, when he was writing some earlier diaries. These notes were kind of travel accounts written in a form of tourist diary. As a widespread practice, these accounts were meant to be kind of collective diary with impersonalized or even third-person narration. However Dmitriev, who was responsible for keeping it, eventually came to the first-person perspective. This symbolic failure of his chronicler attempts shows that he tended to write personal accounts even in this case. Thus it is no coincidence that the first-person narration in Dmitriev's main diary is the only way to present his life and thoughts.

Second, the structure of the diary organized on the daily basis. Moreover, in the vast majority of cases, each entry gives an account of Dmitriev's personal experience in the given day. However, in some notes, he brings a call to his memory and, for example, describes his trip to Moscow in 1941 which impressed him a lot. Nevertheless, this fact does not contradict Paperno's concept. The scholar clearly expresses the idea that 'the diary invites the diarist to deal with the past while interacting with the present'. From this perspective, Dmitriev's

¹⁷ Irina Paperno, *What Can Be Done with Diaries?*, Russian Review, N4 (Oct, 2004), 562.

¹⁸ Ibid, 571.

recordings about his trip to Moscow are just the extended regular diary entry, which describes not the given day, but more distant past. Furthermore, in his notes, Dmitriev addresses to the ‘unknown future’, which, according to Paperno, is peculiar to any dairy. To the same degree, Dmitriev’s diary corresponds to the scholar’s statement about the fact that ‘the diary form transcends the present moment by delving into the past and future alike’.

Third, the diarist explicitly expresses the idea, that he started the personal accounts, but not the chronicle of current events. In the very first entry, he mentions that he is starting to keep the diary of “his own life”. Moreover, he follows the concept of intimacy and honestly shares with the diary his thoughts or even tells about private matters. Nonetheless, almost from the very beginning of the diary, Dmitriev keeps in mind the idea, that someone could read his notes. He also tells about facts when he gave his diary to be read by his fiancée with attempts to prove that he is a proper groom. Finally, he himself deposited the entire diary to the archive and did not restrict the access to it. This means, that he was fully aware of the fact that someone will read it. In Paperno’s terms, Dmitriev’s dairy case shows very well the communicative situation, which mediates the private and public spheres. Even more, from Paperno’s perspective, this diary is an example of the paradox of ‘coexistence of the presumption of privacy and the violation of privacy’.¹⁹

Understanding of these source’s features not only allows to investigate diary itself, but also helps to reach research goals related to other methodological approaches implemented in this thesis. Biographical aspect in this sense shows soviet subjectivity to the wider extent and provide better analysis of labor aspect and labor relations, presented in the diary.

¹⁹ Irina Paperno, What Can Be Done with Diaries?, *Russian Review*, N4 (Oct, 2004), 572.

Thesis structure

This thesis consists of introduction, three body chapters and conclusion. *Chapter 1. Alexander Dmitriev and his diary* investigates diary mostly from the biographical point of view. It contains the aspects of Dmitriev's biography, which represented in the diary itself and other archival sources. It also shows diarists reasons and motivations for keeping the diary. This chapter also focuses on the communicative nature of diary, which is essential for understanding of Dmitriev's personality and his subjectivity.

Chapter 2. Labor and War in Dmitriev's diary focuses on war and its effects, represented in diary. The major effect surveyed in this chapter related to the labor aspect. As it was mentioned before, changes in the labor and labor relations were the most crucial element of social mobilization especially in the wartime. Nevertheless this chapter sheds light on some labor related aspects of wartime, which does not match to the conventional image of hard times, but helps to understand the complexity of picture and situation.

Chapter 3. Food and War: provisioning in Dmitriev's diary surveys another aspect of social mobilization in the wartime, related to the rationing system and argues, that question of food was one of the central issues of this time. Nevertheless, as in case of the labor relations in Chapter 2, provisioning problem also forced diarist to present special behavior, which seems untypical for the traditional understanding of war, but interprets from perspective of the Soviet subjectivity.

Chapter 1. Alexander Dmitriev and his diary

Meanwhile in Molotov

On July 23, 1941, Sovinformburo informed its readers and listeners, that Soviet Army continued its tough fight against Wehrmacht, anti-aircraft defenders in Moscow fought off attacks of Luftwaffe and defense industry workers kept producing more and more weapons and tanks.²⁰ In the evening of the same day Soviet worker, who lived in the deep rear, took an ink pencil, open a notebook and wrote on the first page: “Today I came to the idea of keeping a diary of my life”.²¹ This was the beginning of a long diary keeping, that continued for the next 60 years. The worker’s name was Alexander Dmitriev, he lived in Molotov and worked on one of the numerous defense industry plants. This Chapter investigates wartime entries of the diary and their nature and focus on the diarist’s personality and his communication with the diary.

The diary of Alexander Dmitriev is a relatively newly discovered source, which is stored in the Perm State Archive of Social and Political History (Permskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii or PermGASPI). The diarist was born in Perm, Russia in 1918 and started keeping his notes in 1941. He was a highly skilled worker on the Aviation Plant #19 in Molotov (a name of Perm from 1940 to 1957). Dmitriev graduated from secondary school and later on from the aviation technical school. At the age of 20, in 1938, he got the position of the engine mechanic on the Aviation Plant and since that time he never

²⁰ Sovinformburo’s report on July 23, 1941, accessed June 7, 2018, <http://9may.ru/chronicle/19410723/22531.html>

²¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 3-4 ob.

left the plant until his retirement in 1982. He remained in the plant even during the Great Patriotic War as a highly skilled specialist.

Dmitriev's first diary record appeared in the summer of 1941 when the German army was already moving deep into the Soviet territory. He kept his notes for the next 60 years. The last recordings were made in 2001, a few years before his death. Around the same time, Dmitriev decided to deposit his diary, which consists of 63 large notebooks, in the archive.

Notably, Dmitriev's diary is of course not the first case of workers' diaries investigated by historians. Jochen Hellbeck in his book *Revolution on my mind: writing a diary under Stalin* researches another diary of worker of peasant and even kulak origin Stepan Podlubny, who was Dmitriev's contemporary. Nevertheless Alexander Dmitriev's case differs a lot from what Hellbeck investigates. First of all, Dmitriev was born in 1918. This 4 years difference in age with Podlubny is not so significant at first sight. However, it is necessary to elaborate this aspect. From the very beginning of his life, Dmitriev was the member of the Soviet society. This means that he started to perceive soviet ideology willingly or unwillingly from his childhood. Moreover, he was already born in the city and came from a working-class background. Combination of these two factors is very meaningful for the understanding of Dmitriev's personality and subjectivity.

Dmitriev grew up in the city and could see all elements of Soviet ideology, including red banners, socialist slogans on the streets and buildings, parades and other kinds of manifestations dedicated to the Soviet holidays, etc. As a school student, he was deeply involved in the Soviet educational system. This meant not only being a Pioneer but also perceiving of all elements of propaganda implemented to the school system. The further he remained in this soviet surrounding, the deeper and wider he perceived the ideology even if he did not intend to.

The Dmitriev's diary, which he started to keep on July 23, 1941, shows the extent of his Soviet subjectivity in a full measure. Nevertheless, as it was shown before, this was a subjectivity differed from Podlubny's one. By the moment of the start of the diary, Dmitriev held a position of an engine mechanic on the Aviation Factory#19 in Molotov, where he was hired straight after graduation from the aviation technical school in 1938. He was responsible for the testing of aircraft engines, which meant that he did not spend days and nights at the machine sit. He mostly took the instruments' readings, recorded engine troubles, evaluated the technical process' status, etc. Nonetheless, this kind of job required his qualifications, skills, and abilities. That is why he was in a good standing with the shop floor's management, and, moreover, belonged to so-called "labor aristocracy". This term is needed to clarify, which is important for the understanding of the Dmitriev's subjectivity. The term "labor aristocracy" first appeared in Marx's *Capital* in regard to the well-paid labor.²² In the following Marxist discussion, this term received negative connotation rather than positive. However, for labor historians "labor aristocracy" first of all means the highly-skilled and privileged, as well as well-paid worker.²³

It also worth to portray some additional aspects of Dmitriev's biography, which appears in the diary. By the moment Alexander started his notes, he lived with his family in the private residence in Molotov. Dmitriev's father - Ivan Dmitriev - has remarried and lived with a new wife, her children, and Alexander together. His birth mother lived separately, but they kept in touch. Before 1941 and during the war Ivan Dmitriev worked in some canteen in Molotov, but his occupation was never clarified in the diary. Alexander's stepmother was a housewife and did not work.

²² Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, (New York, Modern Library, 1906), 733.

²³ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Books, 1980) 263.

In November 1943 Alexander Dmitriev got married to a girl named Zina, who he met in the early March 1943. In summer of 1945, she gave a birth to their son Boris. This together with other factors was the reason why Dmitriev and his new family started to live separately from parents at some moment between 1944 and 1946. The exact date is hard to be ascertained because of the absence of notes in the diary from late July 1944 until late March 1946. It comes from the diary that Dmitriev and his wife even managed to buy the house, where they started to live.

All these aspects, including Dmitriev's origin, educational background, biography and social status, are significant for the understanding of his subjectivity and the way how he perceived the Soviet ideology. The notion of the ideology is also crucial here. According to Hellbeck's perspective, the ideology in the Soviet terms was not the ready-made construct, especially when it operated on the personal level. The ideological statements, after they perceived by the particular person, are "unpacking and personalizing", which later on constitutes subjectivity.

"Today I came up with the idea of keeping a diary of my life"

The notion of diary as a source needs to be evaluated. Dmitriev's diary completely meets the descriptive definition, which researchers usually give to such kind of ego-documents. As many other intimate notes, it is "a text written in the first-person, in separate installments, ideally on a daily basis, and ostensibly for the purposes of giving an account of the writer's personal experience in a given day, which is not necessarily addressed to

someone other than the diarist”.²⁴ Nevertheless, one of the diary's features is its communicative nature. From this perspective, Dmitriev's diary is a typical example of such ego-document.

Importantly, as a typical diarist, Dmitriev keeps his notes in a first-person. This point needs to be clarified with the bringing of an example of Dmitriev's earlier diaries, which he kept even before the main one. These notes were kind of traveler accounts written in a form of tourist diary.²⁵ As a widespread practice, these accounts were meant to be kind of collective diary with impersonalized or even third-person narration. At the beginning of this travel accounts Dmitriev, who was responsible for keeping it, tries to keep this way narration. Even when he accidentally shifts to the first-person, he uses “we” instead of “I”. In the other cases this first-person narration appears in the form of enumeration of his mates: “Me, Polia, Kolka, and Galya made up a bed behind a brick barn”.²⁶ Dmitriev eventually came to the first-person perspective, especially in the late travel accounts. This symbolic failure of his chronicler attempts shows that he tended to write personal accounts even in this case. Thus it is no coincidence that the first-person narration in Dmitriev's main diary is the only way to present his life and thoughts.

Another and more significant aspect, which supervenes from these facts, related to the reasons for keeping the diary and motivation for it. As it was mentioned before, Dmitriev was aware of the traditions and practices of keeping some notes. Moreover, the idea of diary keeping was well popularized by the Soviet ideology. It became a part of a school curriculum

²⁴ Irina Paperno, What Can Be Done with Diaries?, *Russian Review*, N4 (Oct, 2004), 562.

²⁵ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 44.

²⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 44, l. 34 (Jul. 26, 1937).

and state-sponsored practice of workers.²⁷ The question is just why Dmitriev came to the idea of keeping the diary exactly at the beginning of the war? The diary itself gives the answer.

As it was mentioned before, Dmitriev started his diary on July 23, 1941. Interestingly, he justifies the reason of keeping the diary with the notion of boredom: “Today I came to the idea of keeping a diary of my life. Life has become so boring that I don't want to do anything else”.²⁸ At the first glance this mentioning of boredom does not correspond to the general stereotype of the wartime. However Dmitriev diary is full of such facts, which does not fit within the conventional framework of hard times.²⁹ . Nevertheless this notion of boredom finds to some extent the reasoning the consecutive sentences of this entry: “I have few friends left. Semen and Vitka are in the Red Army now. Pashka is studying. Kolka, Petka, Vladik and Vitka S. are also in the Red Army. Victor F. and Tolka Ch. work at the plant”.³⁰ This very symbolic note about friends who participate in the war well correlate with Dmitriev’s attempts to go to the front, which were inspired by the romanticization of war.³¹ Moreover this idea of envy of his friends’ developments could be interpreted as one of the reasons to keep the diary. That is to say, the diary is a tool for compensation of his staying in the rear. This idea finds endorsement in the following part of the diary. In the note on January 5, 1944 he shares his thoughts on it: “The guys will come from the front soon. I will let them read the diary. There are a lot of interesting things in it”.³²

²⁷ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on my mind: writing a diary under Stalin*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2006), 44.

²⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 3-4 ob.

²⁹ These facts are described and analyzed in the following parts in this thesis.

³⁰ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 3-4 ob.

³¹ See Chapter 2 of this thesis.

³² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 98 ob. - 99 ob.

“I have been meaning for a long time to write a large work in the form of a poem”: diary and creative exercises

Besides these reasons, Dmitriev explicitly mentions in the diary his attempts to be a writer or poet. This idea corresponds with the case of Podlubny, who intended to be a writer.³³ Moreover, for Podlubny the diary was a tool for improving his writing skills, and he, keeping the diary, eventually came to the idea to make his notes as a “personal memoir that would also be a “chronicle” of the 1930s”.³⁴ In contrast, Dmitriev used the diary as a tool for improvement of patriotism and his behavior justification rather than language practice. It is fair to point out that Alexander’s was well-skilled in the language terms. In his notes he makes just minor mistakes, mostly punctuative or grammatical.³⁵ This difference is understandable. As it was described before Podlubny came to Moscow from Ukraine, hence his native language was Ukrainian, moreover, he never studied systematically, because of his life circumstances. Dmitriev never faced the same problem. His native language was Russian and he graduated from school, thus he was literate.

It is equally important that Dmitriev, in contrast with Podlubny, never considered his diary as a work of art. He clearly distinguished diary, as a space for his private notes, from his attempts to write a novel or poem. Moreover, according to the archival sources in the Dmitriev’s personal papers, he started his creative experiments even in the “pre-diary” period. There is a poem written in 1934 and dedicated to Kirov’s death in this papers:

On Kirov's death

³³ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on my mind: writing a diary under Stalin*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2006), 171.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ As an illustration, he uses incorrect case for the verb “to want” (khotet’). Instead of correct khotim, he uses khochem.

Our KIROV is dead, someone killed him,
But the business he started will not be lost.
We all swear on his grave,
That we would move his path forward.

He was killed by a treacherous hand,
By a coward evilous enemy's shot.
The enemies wanted the party to disrupt,
But it will never happen.

One was killed, but fifty were shot,
They had no mercy from the court.
On a member of the party killed by enemies,
A tombstone was laid.

It says " Sergey Mironych KIROV»
A colleague of STALIN and faithful member of TsK,
He was immured in a stone grave,
And workers would never forget him.

And we swear on the pioneers' honor,
That we will remember all his deeds,
We promise to get down to a school
And we will never forget the dear leader.

Na smert' Kirova

Pogib nash KIROV, ego ubili,
No delo nachatoe im ne propadet.
My vse klianemsia na ego mogile,
Chto budem dvigat'sia ego tropoi vpered.

On byl ubit predatel'skoi rukoiu,
Truslivym vystrelom ozlennogo vraga.
Vragi khoteli v partiiu vnesti smiatenie,
No etogo ne budet nikogda.

Ubit odin, rasstreliano polsotni,
Im ne bylo poshchady ot suda.
Na chlena partii, ubitogo vragami,
Byla vozlozhena nadgrobnaia doska.

Na nei Napisano «Sergei Mironych KIROV»
Soratnik STALINA i vernyi chlen TsK,
On zamurovan v kamennoi mogile,
I ne zabyt' ego rabochim nikogda.

I my klianemsia pionerskoi chest'iu,
Chto budem pomnit' vse ego dela,
My obeshchaem krepko vziat'sia za uchebu
I ne zabudem milogo vozhdia.³⁶

³⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 42, l. 1.

It is hard to evaluate the artistic merit of this poem, even despite the fact that Dmitriev wrote it at the age of 16, being a high school student. Nevertheless, this text shows to what extent the author was influenced by Soviet ideological agenda. Some expression he uses in this poem literally repeat phrases from the front-page article in Pravda dated 2 December 1934, on the next day after Kirov's assassination. Hence Dmitriev not only took on faith circumstances of Kirov's death but also artistically interpreted it and reflected in the poem. It is impossible to substantiate the reason for its creation. He could write it for the school homework, as well as for his own needs. I argue with great probability, though, that he wrote this poem for the public, as he did later in life. Thus, he intended not only to show his creativity but also react on the ideologically significant event and illustrate his loyalty to the regime and its leaders. In Hellbeck's terms, this Dmitriev's behavior is a Soviet subjectivity in action. Interestingly, Dmitriev wrote this poem at the same age as Podlubny began his personal transformation, which depicts, to some extent, that already in 16 years old Dmitriev well perceived the elements of the ideology.

Dmitriev's poetical background, or at least his will to be a poet, was expressed in the diary. He frequently mentions his thoughts and plans on this concern in the entries: "I have been meaning for a long time to write a large work in the form of a poem, and I am going to do it somehow. The topic is the Patriotic war and its heroes".³⁷ Significantly, in several days in the other entry he notes, that he "schemed the chapters for the poem", but he never mentioned the chapters themselves.³⁸ The idea to write the poem about the Patriotic War did not come to Dmitriev's mind out of nowhere. The date of the entry suggest the reason, which constitutes in the ideological agenda of this time. Moreover, Dmitriev uses the certain term

³⁷ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 30 ob. - 31. (Sep. 30, 1941).

³⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 32 ob. - 33. (Oct. 4, 1941).

“Patriotic War”, which appeared in propaganda from the very beginning of the war. Nevertheless the only mentioning of the poems or novels he planned to write or even wrote, was a typical Dmitriev’s way of dealing with this topic. In a note on July 28, 1942 he describes another story of creating the work of art:

A friend of mine Vitka Kozlov gave me an idea to write down all the jokes and anecdotes in a notebook and create a kind of book of funny stories. And I decided to do that. I am thinking of writing two notebooks, one with more polite stories, and the other in vulgar words. One of the things I will name “Laughter: Small Stories about Big Deeds”. And to the second one thing I will give the name “Bawdry: The Frank Talk”. I will write in the form of stories and small sketches. I think that it will be a good thing. The other day I will start to look for topics for stories. I am going to start with more decent (*tsenzurnie*) things.³⁹

Interestingly, the diarist dedicated the whole entry to tell about his artistic plans. However, again, as in the case of the poem about the war, these stories never appeared in the diary and were not saved in the archive. Nevertheless in several months, on October 24, 1942, he mentioned one of his stories again: “I have finished writing my “Laughter”. The guys are already rewriting it. It turned out to be a good thing”.⁴⁰ Despite the fact that this note was a part of a bigger entry, the mentioning of his success was important for him. The sign of the story’s quality was the fact, that his friends or colleagues started to rewrite it. Dmitriev was definitely proud of himself. Moreover, to some extent, he was inspired by his success and kept writing some things. In last entry of 1942, on December 26, he notes, that he wrote the lyrics for a new little song called “The Tank”: “I like this song! I do not know how it will be received by those to whom I now show all my poems. Actually, recently I have been reading my poems to almost everyone”.⁴¹ The content of this song does not appear in the entry, but according to the title, it also covers the topic, related to the war, inspired by the agenda.

³⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 17 ob.

⁴⁰ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 29 ob.

⁴¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 37 - 38 ob.

During his life, Dmitriev has never left the idea to be a writer. Since the late 1950s, he has been actively engaged in activities related to regional studies. Dmitriev wrote numerous articles for local newspapers on the history of Perm, its districts, streets, and some buildings. In the early 1980s, he became a member of Perm Local Historians club and for an active participation in its work and a great contribution to Perm historical studies he was awarded the title of Honorary Local Historian.⁴² Thus, in contrast with Podlubny, he in a sense became a writer, even despite the fact that he never used the diary as a space for presenting his creative practices.

“My diary is a marvelous thing”: diary as a communicative act

Besides the notion that the diary to some degree was related to Dmitriev’s creative efforts, some of the examples given before implies another important feature of this diary. This feature is related to the well-explored communicative aspects of diaries, which has two dimensions. The first dimension exists within the diary, and from this perspective, diary is an “act of intimate communication the diarist is having with himself”.⁴³ The second dimension deals with the external readers or in other words “addressees, from an intimate friend (or an intimate circle) to an unknown reader, who might read the diary in the future”.⁴⁴ In case of Dmitriev’s diary, both of these aspects exist and play the significant role.

⁴² Archival report on Dmitriev’s personal papers, accessed June 5, 2018, <https://www.permgaspi.ru/db/inventory/636945>

⁴³ Irina Paperno, What Can Be Done with Diaries?, Russian Review, N4 (Oct, 2004), 564.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Generally, the entire diary is a communicative act of Dmitriev with himself. Starting with the notion of boredom, he eventually began to enjoy keeping the diary. Approximately in a year after he started his notes, Dmitriev concludes, that the “diary is a marvelous thing”: “It will be interesting to take the diary and read it in some years. And all the past life will be spread before the eyes!”.⁴⁵ In the note dedicated to the anniversary of keeping the diary he, even more, clarifies his thoughts on this point:

It turned out to be a year since I started to keep a diary. Much has happened during this time, and almost all this recorded in my diary. It will be interesting to take all my notes and read them later. A lot of things could be forgotten, but here I can refresh my memory.⁴⁶

The notion on re-reading of the diary and revising the events took place in the past was also crucial for the diarist. First of all, he uses the pages of his diary as a space for remembering the past. This was not only the immediate past in a form of a given day reflection, but also the memories about events happened much earlier. In the same note dedicated to the one year anniversary of keeping the diary, Dmitriev started to refresh his memory about the day of July 24 in last 5 years. In the concluding sentence dedicated to the current day, he summarizes: “These are all my notes from the last five years. They indicate everything, even the weather. And every year the weather is different. Today, for example, it is raining. I don't even know how to go to work”.⁴⁷

For Dmitriev, this notion of the diary as a tool for the memorizing was a kind of a discovery, which attracted him a lot. Later, in February 1943 he came back to this practice in the entries, where he describes his trip to Moscow in 1941 and his impressions on the war outbreak, which he faced there. He dedicated eight entries for this purpose. However, in the

⁴⁵ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 98 - 99. (May 4, 1942).

⁴⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 12 - 15 ob.. (July 24, 1942).

⁴⁷ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 12 - 15 ob., (July 24, 1942).

most cases these notes were incorporated into the entry and besides his Moscow memories, he describes current developments. Nevertheless, each note about this trip has its own name. The very first one in the entry on February 14, 1943, named “The memories of daft days of my life: impressions of summer” (“Vospominaniia o veselykh dniakh moei zhizni: letnie vpechatleniia”).⁴⁸ The last note on this was made on March 11, 1943. Dmitriev finalizes this entry with the idea, that “these days will remain in my memory for a long time”.⁴⁹ From the perspective of a intimate communication with himself, these Dmitriev notes are significant. He perceives the diary as a private and safe space where he could reminisce and feel a kind of nostalgia for good pre-war days, which was even more essential in the hard times.

Interestingly, the hardcopy of the diary evidences that Dmitriev came back to his notes from time to time. Almost every entry includes some sentences underlined by the diarist much later than these notes were made. Moreover, these sentences were underlined in different times, because the diarist used different writing-ink, depending on the moment, when he underlined the sentence. Nevertheless it is hard to trace the logic of the sentences' underlining. He probably just marked the thoughts and ideas, which he found significant, while he was re-reading and revising his diary. Thus the diary for Dmitriev was not only the tool for expression of his current thoughts or memories, but it also was the space for remembrance, where he could return if he needed to.

Another aspect of communication with the diary in Dmitriev's case constitutes the notion of sharing intimate thoughts on the life developments and impressive events. Dmitriev considers the diary as space where he could express his dreams and confidential plans. For a long time since the war outbreak, he planned to volunteer on the front and dreamed to perform a feat and receive the award. This first of all was related to the romanticization of

⁴⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 46 ob. - 47 ob.

⁴⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 60 - 61.

the war. However, because of his high-skill, the shop floor's management did not let him go. Hence all his ideas about the participation in the war were accompanied in his diary with a notion of a dream.

Expressing the dreams also appears in the diary, when Dmitriev was exhausted of his work and everyday life and planned to escape Molotov illegally and move to Moscow in April 1943. In this case sharing of these thoughts were also the way to blow off the steam and express his frustration over the rough and tumble of life. Thus the diary to some extent was the psychotherapeutic tool for Dmitriev. Moreover, in the words of another diarist Vladimir Gelfand, who was Dmitriev's contemporary, the diary is a "dear friend" ("priiatel dorogoi").⁵⁰ This addressing to the diary as a friend well reflects the diary's essence as an intimate space for sharing thoughts and feelings to the same degree as people usually act toward friends.

Moreover, Dmitriev shares with the diary concerns regarding his personal relations with girls. Starting with the very first entry he mentions some girlfriends or just passing romances. Curiously, Dmitriev could be easily called the womanizer, because of the number of relations, he describes in the diary. According to his notes, he easily strikes up an acquaintance with girls and managed to be sexually active:

I have arranged again the summer home in the pantry next to my house. I covered the walls with wallpaper, made a bed, and it turned out to be a good room. It will be possible again to invite the girls and suggest them to look at pictures and photos. I can do anything there because the pantry is far enough from the house, where father and others sleep. I will start this straight after I start work on the day shift.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Vladimir Gelfand, Diary, 3.09.1943, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://prozhitto.org/person/27>

⁵¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 10 ob. - 11 ob. (Jul. 21, 1942).

By the term “to invite the girls and suggest them to look at pictures and photos” he more likely means, “to have sex”. The connotation of this euphemism becomes clearer when he describes one of the occasions with a girl in the entry on August 24, 1942:

On the same day in the evening we – me with S. and Zhenka - went to the park. [...] In the tram on the way home I met a girl. I invited her to come to my place. [...] Then the guys have gone and just two of us stayed. I started to push her, but she would not let me, so I decided to give up all my attempts. Eventually, I even did not take her home.⁵²

Dmitriev even does not mention girls name in this entry in contrast with other girls who he met and described in the diary before. It probably came because of his annoyance of this unsuccessful case, which was also illustrated by the fact that did not take her home. Nevertheless, according to the diary, Dmitriev was actively involved in relations with girls and had active sexual life, and which is more important, he shared all this with his diary. Significantly, this active sexual life, which Dmitriev performs here, could be also interpreted from the perspective of non-participation in war compensation. He never explicitly mentions this, but being womanizer is a way to illustrate men’s masculinity in the rear, while his friends were espousing they masculinity by fighting on the front. Dmitriev, though, never makes the parallel between these two ways of being a man in the traditional understanding.

Unsurprisingly, Alexander describes in the entries the story of acquaintances with his future wife. In the entry on March 2, 1943, he describes one of the parties where he went to: “I was mushed on two girls and could not choose one to be with. In the beginning, I tried to spend all night with Ania, but it eventually came, that I went home with Zina. I promised her

⁵² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 20 ob. - 21 ob. (Jul. 21, 1942).

that we would meet her next time”.⁵³ Zina, the girl who he mentions in this entry, became Alexander’s wife several months later, in November 1943.

Apart from the notion of friendship between the diary and the diarist, this type of communication has another psychological aspect. As one researcher mentions, a diary is a tool of “defense against annihilation”.⁵⁴ This feature related to the diary’s day-by-day way of keeping. Hence, accounting one’s time, “the diary stems from the fear of watching life grow shorter with each passing day”.⁵⁵ This idea reflected in Dmitriev’s entries as well. From the very beginning, he considers his notes as a diary of his life. Moreover the fact of re-reading the diary, which was described before, also contributes to this notion. The “defense against annihilation” was also presented in the form of reflection on life and death and the age. Several times Dmitriev describes occasions of death at the shop floor or just in the city.

There was a terrible accident at work, the day before yesterday. The screw killed one of the motorists Bushmelev A. It immediately killed him. The screw hit his head. The guy was very good, and despite the fact that he worked only three shifts, I really liked him. But nothing can be done, this is our job.⁵⁶

This example was really significant for Dmitriev, and after the re-reading of this entry, he even underlined it. Thoughts about life and death, apart from that, correlate with the wartime circumstances. The fact of death at the shop floor in a way reminded Dmitriev that war was ongoing and people dead not only somewhere on the front, but also very close to him. That is why he decided to share this fact and his attitude to it in the diary.

The concerns about age and aging also appear in Dmitriev’s entries. By the first diary note he was 23 years old and that was probably not the age, when people think about years.

⁵³ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 55 - 55 ob.

⁵⁴ Irina Paperno, What Can Be Done with Diaries?, *Russian Review*, N4 (Oct, 2004), 563.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 85 ob. (Sep. 21, 1943).

However eventually he comes to such kind of thoughts. It coincided with his marriage, when he first mentioned his age. In the entry on January 5, 1944 he notes: “I still can not get used to family life. But that is understandable. After all me and Zina are still quite young. And both of us have not seen bad life, because she lived with her mother, and I - with my father”.⁵⁷ He notes this at the age of 25 after six months of marriage. Nevertheless, Dmitriev returned to the thoughts about aging only in four years, in January, 1948, when the war ended and he was already around 30:

I am starting to get older. Though in my heart I am still young, but I look older. Sometimes I walk somewhere around the club and see how many new girls and guys are there, but when I went to clubs, they were just small children. Yes, life runs forward all the time.⁵⁸

This entry is a very illustrative example of defense against annihilation because the diarist uses the notions of getting older and flow of life. Moreover, in this case, he compares himself with the younger generation. This comparison gives him the sense of age and changes in the life. Interestingly, exactly in four years he returned to the same thoughts, and noted in the entry on October 14, 1952:

I think about myself. I am 34 years old. And upon conditions of a quiet life, I can live as much again. That means, I can see the same number of joyful and sorrowful days, as they were during my life. So, perhaps, I could get tired of life. If, especially, all the other days will be bleak. But I am sure I should not be offended by life.⁵⁹

Such kind of philosophical comprehension of himself and his life differs diarist in 1941 and in 1952. Nevertheless, it is hard to explain this four years cycle in returning to existential thinking. It is more than likely, that it is just the coincidence or unconsciousness act. But

⁵⁷ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 98 ob. - 99 ob.

⁵⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 13, l. 78 ob. - 79, (Jan. 30, 1948).

⁵⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 15, l. 24 - 24 ob.

anyway it helps to trace the evolution of the diarist's personality and his attitudes to life, and more importantly to emphasize the nature of intimate communication in the diary.

It worth to note, that in the late 1943 Dmitriev decided to stop keeping the diary. This idea coincided with his marriage, which he uses for justification of this act: "I wonder, what if I stop keeping my diary? It is, perhaps, enough. Now after all I have already started my family life. Me and Zina officially got married. [...] All my dreams now are about friendly and happy life".⁶⁰ The notion of a family life, as a new life is crucial for Dmitriev in this entry. He symbolically tries to draw a line between his old or bachelor life, and start a new one. However, it is more likely, that even for himself this justification does not seem valid enough and he continues to keep the diary. Only after next several entries he returns to this idea and tries to find another justification: "I will stop keeping this diary soon. That is enough! I have already recorded everything, that happened to me in the last three years".⁶¹ Nevertheless, he eventually came to the conclusion that the diary became a significant part of his life and stop keeping it was a bad idea. His entry on this looks like weighty manifest: "No! I will still continue keeping my diary. I got used to it very much and I don't want to push this matter aside. I will write again regularly. I resolved it firmly!"⁶²

This case with diarist's idea to stop keeping a diary is very important and illustrative. The fact, that he could not stop doing it, corroborates the reasons and motivations of keeping the diary. For Dmitriev, this activity almost immediately after the start became more than the attempt to fight with boredom. He probably even has not realized the moment when the diary became the inalienable part of his life. However, it eventually occurred that he can not stop keeping the diary. This intimate communication with such kind of "dear friend", played the

⁶⁰ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 95 - 96 ob., (Dec. 20, 1943).

⁶¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 98 ob. - 99 ob., (Jan. 5, 1944).

⁶² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 12, l. 3 -4 ob., (Feb. 1, 1944).

role in Dmitriev's life, which was too significant to avoid it. The diarist was so imbued that he continued his "friendship" almost until his death.

As it was mentioned before the communicative nature of diary writing has another dimension - the communication with external reader. In case of Dmitriev's this notion is also significant and helpful for the understanding of the diary's features. Alexander probably realized from the very beginning, that someone could read his notes, but only on his own permit. In this realization he, first of all, meant some of his friends or relatives. In several months after he started keeping the diary, he notes, that he told to his girlfriend about the diary.⁶³ Alexander did not let her read it, however he also did not deny this idea totally. He also mentions several time the hypothetical possibility that someone will read his notes and predicts that them could look weird or funny: "Someone who will read these notes in a few years may find the feeding entries funny, but it is now the major question of life".⁶⁴ The notion of hypothetical reader appears in the entries from time to time, which means he intends to give someone to read his diary and even use it in his own interests. In the entry on August 8, 1943 he notes: "I have checked all my old diaries. There is nothing dangerous in there. I could, perhaps, let Zina read it. I let her know what I am!".⁶⁵ This entry illustrates very well, that Dmitriev considered his diary as a good reflection of himself. Good in two senses: first, he seems as a good person (good enough for his girlfriend); second, the diary fully represents his personality. As it was mentioned before, Dmitriev also intended to give this diary to read to his friends, when they will come back from the front. However, the diarist never described the fact, that someone read his notes, at least in the entries from war and first post-war time.

⁶³ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, l. 17 - 18 ob., (Feb. 1, 1944).

⁶⁴ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 4, (Jun. 12, 1942).

⁶⁵ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 79 ob. - 80.

Nonetheless, Dmitriev kept the idea of a hypothetical external reader. The fact, that he deposited the entire diary to the archive is very illustrative in this sense. This decision to open these intimate notes for public did not appear out of anywhere. Being an amateur local historian he probably understood very well, that his diary will generate interest for researchers and someone will eventually read or even publish it.

It worth to mention, that the fact of diarist awareness of hypothetical external readers arises the question of a verity of the information. In what extent the diarist was honest to his diary and how we could verify the facts described in the entries? In case of Dmitriev's diary, we also face this issue, however in the lesser degree. First of all, Dmitriev describes numerous examples of improper or even criminal behavior (these facts elaborated in the following chapters of this thesis). If it had come to NKVD or later to KGB, Dmitriev could find himself in a sticky situation. Second, the contortion of facts consciously or unconsciously, and moreover recognizing and analyzing of this contortion seems even more interesting, especially for the research of the Soviet subjectivity. Nevertheless, it as hard to estimate to what extent Dmitriev falsifies his thoughts in the diary, and yet this source could be considered as veracious enough and useful for the research.

Communicative nature of Dmitriev's diary is crucial for understanding of the diarist's personality and subjectivity as a Soviet citizen. The analysis of his inner communication helps to provide the wide scope of findings. Trust-based relations between Dmitriev and his diary illustrate the degree in which he was honest with himself and make this diary unique, authentic and immediate source for the research of wartime. Moreover, the communicative aspect reflects in the way how the Dmitriev describes his behavior, which often had an

improper nature, and justifies it. This justification seems reasonable, at least for the diarist, from the perspective of ongoing war and people needs in the hard times.

Creative attempts of the diarist are no less significant for the study of Dmitriev personality. Consciously or unconsciously, all this attempts were related to the wartime. Moreover the idea of the diary itself was inspired by the effects of the war. To some extent Dmitriev's efforts to keep these notes were in a way a compensation of his staying in the rear, but not participation in the war. The diary writing as an expression of his creativity and creative works, which he mentions in the entries, illustrate his intentions to be a patriot and to present it explicitly. Most of the works, he describes in the diary, were related to the war or this time hardness and represented the ideological wartime agenda. Thus the diary was not only the reflection of his intimate thoughts and ideas, but also product of external factors and circumstances of its creation, and what is more important, ideology, which he perceived. This notion makes Dmitriev's notes a unique source on the wartime, which is significant for the following chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 2. Labor and War in Dmitriev's diary

“That bastard Hitler has embittered many lives”

Preparedness of the Soviet Union to the war is a still problematic question, notwithstanding the fact, that mobilization of the society started more than ten years previously and the idea of the world revolution and later of the war was in the air. Nevertheless, the German invasion on June 22, 1941 occurred unexpected for the majority of Soviet population. Anti-Hitler and even wider anti-fascist propaganda appeared immediately after the outbreak of war. Hence it is no coincidence that, for many Soviet people Hitler was the culprit, who caused the problems of the entire country in general and each member of the society in particular. That is why Dmitriev mentions Hitler in his diary from the very first entry on July 23, 1941: “Events happened recently have ruined my summer plans. That bastard Hitler has embittered many lives. I'm looking forward to seeing the enemy will be vanquished”.[43] Notably, Alexander places this notion, not at the beginning of the entry. First, he describes some events of his life and even shares the thoughts about the girl he is in love with. After, the diarist comes to the idea to write something meaningful about the war. Even so showing attitude to the war, he primarily states personal impact and complains, that the war ruined his summer plans. And finally, Dmitriev comes to more general level, on which he concludes that he is not the only victim of circumstance. This is a very typical way of thinking about the war which appears in Dmitriev's diary.

This Chapter focuses on the perception of war in Dmitriev's diary and investigates the most crucial aspect of wartime shifts - changes in the labor relations and its representation in

the diary. Moreover, the labor as a focal point of this Chapter is also essential for understanding of the process of the society's mobilization. Significantly, Dmitriev started keeping his diary in the wartime. This fact is important not only in the biographical terms but also for the understanding of the Soviet subjectivity in a time of a social mobilization. The topics, which the diarist raises in his notes, include the labor aspect, everyday life, his social activity, leisure time, private and family relations. Despite the fact that in this thesis, following the Fitzpatrick's idea, I assume that social mobilization in the Soviet case appeared long before the World War II and remained in the late 1940s - early 1950s, wartime changes were crucial. They, of course, were, widely reflected in the Dmitriev's diary. What is more important, these changes and diarist's attitude to them, help us to trace the features of the Soviet subject in the hard times.

The personal impact of the war is more important for him. Nonetheless, there is nothing unusual in this fact. First of all, it is one of the ego-documents' features, which reflects in the diaries even brighter. Second, Dmitriev still does not avoid to discuss the importance of the war for the society in whole. Moreover, his diary is full of feelings of the historical moment's importance.

There is still no change at the front. The *Fascists* stubbornly offense.⁶⁶ The struggle is fierce, and it is understandable - the issue is being solved on both sides - "to be or not to be." One or the other: either Germany will be Soviet, or our territory will decrease from the Carpathians to the Urals. But I firmly believe that, despite some success of the *Fascists*, we still will win. Yes, it cannot be otherwise.⁶⁷

Realizing the grade of the danger, Dmitriev even comes to geopolitical conclusions. Less than half a year passed since the war began, but the diarist thinks about postwar order. However, this is understandable. First of all, as many other Soviet citizens, Dmitriev feels the

⁶⁶ *Fascists* was the common term for the Nazi or Germans in general in the Soviet propaganda.

⁶⁷ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 31 ob – 32, (Oct. 3, 1941)

effect of the war shock and the life changes followed the war. Another diarist almost of the same age, worker and student from Moscow Vladimir Portsevsky, writes in the similar mood on June 26, 1941: “the Germans are rapidly moving in one direction - direction of the main strike. [...] Moscow will be probably reached. The people and the country could be sacrificed to save the state.”⁶⁸ Being in Moscow at the moment of the diary entry, Portsevsky understands the danger especially sharply. Nevertheless for Alexander, who was in more than 1 500 km away, in Molotov, this feeling is sharp as well. He thinks a lot about events on the front, tells about his friend in the army. In the entry on October 15, 1941, Dmitriev notes almost in Portsevsky’s terms: “The Germans are on the offensive to Moscow. Something will happen! But, in my opinion, we will not abandon Moscow to the enemy. Many people will die, but Moscow always was and will be Soviet. The Germans will get bubkes”.⁶⁹ Indicatively, though, the war shock disappears in the following parts of the diary, hence the direct reference to the war became more rarely, its reflection less explicit. However it has not vanished entirely and Dmitriev mentions war and its effect from time to time even in late 1940s - early 1950s.

The second reason of such attention to the war in the diary constitutes in the fact, that war, of course, was not Dmitriev’s private struggle, but also the developments preoccupied the entire public mind. Dmitriev actively read newspapers, listened to the radio, took part in Komsomol meetings. The war was the main topic of this time agenda. Moreover, Alexander perceives the war’s picture given by propaganda. As many others he does not mistrust the “Party’s and the Government’s political line”:

Our troops left Novgorod. What is the purpose of the military commanders, who let the enemy get so far into our territory? I have no doubt that this is done for the

⁶⁸ Vladimir Portsevsky’s diary is accusable on the web-recourse *Prozhito* <http://prozhito.org/person/367>

⁶⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, l. 36.

purpose. I cannot believe the fascists moved so fast with their attacks' might only. But it is still interesting to know when their offensive will end?⁷⁰

One cannot suppose that Dmitriev gives such feedback on the catastrophic retreat of the Red Army due to his naivety. The only official sources where he could find information about the war developments were reports from Soviet Information Bureau (Sovinformburo) in newspapers and on the radio. Being so far from the frontline, Dmitriev together with millions of Soviet people trusted to the official digests. Articulated by Stalin, these facts sounded even weightier. On November 7, 1941, Dmitriev notes:

Today is the 24th anniversary of the great October revolution. But the mood is not festive. And how can it be otherwise when on the front the life-and-death struggle is going on. [...] Yesterday comrade Stalin made a report on the radio. He announced the number of dead and wounded on our and their sides. They have many times as large dead than we do.⁷¹

This entry in reflects the morality on the home front to a full extent. Dmitriev in his notes not only shows the perception of tragedy but also expresses the beliefs in the victory. He unambiguously admits the information about war losses. From this perspective, Stalin's effort to make Soviet people believe in the superiority of the Soviet regime reached its aims. Nevertheless, the diarist does not reflect in his note Stalin's idea addressed directly to Dmitriev as a worker in the rear: "It is necessary [...] that all our workers and office employees, men and women, work untiringly in the factories and supply the front with ever-increasing quantities of tanks, anti-tank rifles, and guns, aircraft, artillery, trench mortars, machine-guns, rifles and ammunition...".⁷² It is hard to imagine, that Dmitriev just

⁷⁰ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 23 ob. – 24, (Aug. 26, 1941)

⁷¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 47 ob. – 48.

⁷² Stalin, "Speech at Celebration Meeting of the Moscow Soviet of Working People's Deputies and Moscow Party and Public Organizations, November 6, 1941", accessed June 3, 2018, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1941/11/06.htm>

disregarded this notion. He perfectly realized that his work on the factory was his contribution to the common goal. The diarist mentioned from time to time in his entries, that he does not have enough work in the shop floor and because of that, he complains, he does not benefit the state.⁷³

Notably, the influence of Stalin's authority should not be overestimated. As historian Jeffrey Brooks shows in his book *Thank You, Comrade Stalin: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*, Stalin's presence in the media diminished to some extent in the first year and a half of the war. Brooks interprets it as press' tendency to "abandoned its single-minded effort to center all Soviet identity on Stalin".⁷⁴ One of the indicators of this change, for Brooks, was the decrease of number of the Stalin's pictures in newspapers: from June 1941 until the end of 1943, according to Brooks, *Pravda* featured him in 25 front-page pictures; in contrast, the same index for 1939-1941 was 31.⁷⁵ Only by the end of 1942 "Stalin again became the front of recognition and honor".⁷⁶ Interestingly, Dmitriev's diary was in way the reflection of this press' efforts. In the entire wartime entries, Stalin was mentioned just 2 times, meanwhile Hitler, for example, 8 times.⁷⁷ Nevertheless it does not mean that Hitler's propaganda or his importance in the Soviet press was stronger, than Stalin's one. The reason for such perception constituted in two main factors. First, Dmitriev consider war and its effect very personally and reflect on it in most cases quite emotionally. Second, Hitler and his "fascist regime" was mentioning in press together with the war developments and was associated with it. Consequently, for the Soviet people, Hitler was the chief culprit of their disasters and caused strongly negative emotions. That is why in Dmitriev's diary Hitler always appears with negative connotations, associated with war so frequently.

⁷³ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 5 ob. – 6 ob., (25 07 1941).

⁷⁴ Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank you, Comrade Stalin! : Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*, Princeton University Press (1999), 160.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 165.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 186.

⁷⁷ According to the content analysis made with <https://voyant-tools.org>

As a active member of *Komsomol* Dmitriev took part in its meeting, which were used as a way to deliver the actual political information and inform people about the war developments. He describes his impressions after one of such meetings:

Today for the first time I attended a meeting of the Bureau of the Komsomol. We discussed some serious issues. Komsomol organizer has informed us about the latest developments and our work in the period of the Patriotic War. [...] Yeah, we are in a tight spot right now. The government left Moscow for Kuibyshev. There is the fierce struggle on the outskirts of Moscow. If the Germans win us, we will have rough times. Hitler directly says that all Russians will be slaves. I am not that kind. I would rather die than to be living like a slave! Even if it turns out that until the last moment I will not be taken into the army, then I will try to fight the Germans during the occupation. And then in the end death will be inevitable. But do not think that the fall of Moscow will mean end the war. It will continue until the defeat of fascism. Even if it has temporary victories, but in the end we will win. My heart hurts. Even the weather is a kind of gloomy.⁷⁸

Expressing the feeling of fear, Dmitriev, though, declares his willingness to defence his homeland. Significantly, construing such a sensitive topics, he uses official language. Diarist, probably, unwittingly repeats the language of *Komsorg* (Komsomol organizer), who gave a speech on the meeting. Dmitriev's description of the war developments was written in the same terms as a typical reports of Sovinformburo with such phrases as fascists and the Patriotic War. This notion of using an official language is essential for Hellbeck's understanding of the Soviet subjectivity. He argues, that soviet diarists used this kind of phrases intentionally in attempts to express their thoughts and feelings in revolutionary epithets and, hence, to be more Soviet.⁷⁹ However, it is hard to find the same reason in the case of Dmitriev. His usage of official language is simply reflection of information he received. Nonetheless this fact leads to two major conclusions. First, Dmitriev was under the influence of propaganda and its language. Hard to evaluate the degree in which he was

⁷⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 39 – 41 ob., (25 10 1941).

⁷⁹ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on my mind: writing a diary under Stalin*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2006), 194.

affected by it, but reflection of the ideological agenda and usage of official language in his notes illustrate this fact. Secondly, the diarist realized extremely well the idea of the war and its effect. Moreover, for Dmitriev as well as for the majority of the Soviet population, this idea was the tremendously formative factor, which preoccupied all their thoughts. This realization of the significance of the war and even more significance of the historical moment correlates with Hellbeck's idea, that the Revolution and the construction of the Communism played the crucial role in the forming of Soviet subjects' consciousness in 1920s-1930s. In other words, ongoing war occupied the place of Revolution in mass consciousness. However it is debatable whether notion of war displaced this previous idea or just took the vacant space. I guess, the second option is more reasonable. Stalin's ideology gradually refused the revolutionary rhetoric since the mid-1930s, when so-called Stalin's "Great Retreat" happened.

In the comparable degree of the Revolution, the notion of the Patriotic War had the romanticizing component in the mass consciousness. This component also had strong mobilization function. Participation in the war was not only the contribution to the homeland defense but also the expectative behavior of a proper Soviet citizen, as well as the chance for a New Soviet Man to show courage and bravery. Alexander Dmitriev highly precisely reflects this perception in his diary. In the entry on August 20, 1941, he notes: "Today I watched a film "Behind enemy lines". Yes, this is genuine heroism! Scout Boikov is a true Soviet patriot. If I were him, I would have done the same, although I have never been in the army and never felt a sense of fear".⁸⁰ Dmitriev here explicitly expresses his understanding of a 'true Soviet patriot', which he correlates with the main character of the film "Behind enemy lines". According to the film's plot group of Soviet scouts covertly cross the frontline during the Winter War (1939-1940) and heroically help Red Army's ⁸¹artillery to cannonade the

⁸⁰ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, l. 22.

⁸¹ Elena Sinyavskaja, "'Obraz vraga' i 'bychie upriamstvo': Kak russkie i finny pokazyvayut drug druga v 'voyennom' kino", Krasnaia Zvezda, June 7, 2005.

enemy's territory. As Russian historian Elena Sinyavskaya mentions in her article in newspaper Red Star, the film "Behind enemy lines" has typical for Soviet films explicitly propagandistic nature. Even despite the fact that in the Winter War the Soviet Union fought with Finland, the main enemy was Germany and Finland appeared as its satellite.

One can presume, that the degree of war romanticization could become less intensive or even disappear with the relaxation of war shock. Nevertheless, even more than half-year later after the war's outset, Dmitriev demonstrates his inspiration and readiness to take part in the war. In his entry on February 1, 1942, he describes the visit of military pilots to the shop floor. They came to see the examination of engines, which they tested on the aircraft. With undisguised envy, Alexander notes that these pilots had military awards. Later on, in the same entry, he tells about the meeting in the Komsomol club:

Yesterday I visited the Komsomol youth evening in the club. The Secretary of the regional Committee of Komsomol comrade Popov gave a speech on his trip to the front. He told us a lot about what he saw there and described several impressive episodes. Yes, a large number of Komsomol members from nearby areas went to the front. Most of them are sent to reconnaissance and sabotage groups. They receive orders for their heroism, but a lot of them die. It would be so good to go somewhere to sabotage the enemy's rear and return from there alive. But all these are just dreams!⁸²

Dmitriev in a way following thoughts of famous poem's character Vasily Terkin, created by Alexander Tvardovsky. "No, guys, I'm not proud/ And I am not looking into the future,/ I would ask: why do I need the order?/ I agree to take just the medal".⁸³ The idea to accomplish a feat and receive the award attracted Dmitriev a lot. Moreover such kind of Komsomol meetings was the part of a large program of the voluntary recall. As a member of Komsomol Dmitriev was a part of their target audience. Imbued with a sense of duty and

⁸² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 71 ob. - 72.

⁸³ Alexander Tvardovsky, *Poemy*, Perm' (1973), 144, "- Net, rebiata, ia ne gordyi./Ne zagadyvaia vdal',/Tak skazhu: zACHEM mne orden?/Ia soglasen na medal".

patriotism, he tried to volunteer on the front several times. Significantly, he attempted to volunteer not only in the beginning of the war, but even in the late 1942. On December 19, 1942 Dmitriev visited the *Voenkomat* (military enlistment office) for the reregistration. “On the enlistment officer’s proposal, I filed the application for sending me to the aircraft school. Now I am waiting for the draft notice”, writes Dmitriev. However he was not only waiting, but also started some preparations:

Just in case, I prepared everything in advance to be ready for the departure. It would be so good if I could finally change my lifestyle. I am sick and tired of the life in the city. All my friends are in the army. It would be good to go to some far away school. At least I would see something new. But still, shop floor’s management, probably, will not let me go. So, well, we will wait for further events.⁸⁴

Diarist’s readiness to volunteer was not only the idea. He made concrete effects for this. However, shop floor’s management considered that he was more needed on the factory, where he remained during all wartime. Nonetheless, he has never denied the idea of participation the war and was envy even when some of his female friends from Komsomol were sent to them from: “Since we are not taken to the front, let them at least fight”.⁸⁵ Eventually, Dmitriev started to refer to his attempts to volunteer less frequently, which, although, did not mean that he refused this idea. He probably shifted his focus on the other, more current issues, especially after his marriage in 1943 and the birth of a child. Moreover, within the time he changed his attitude to the notion of getting awards. On October 5, 1946, Dmitriev together with other colleagues was awarded The Medal "For Valiant Labour in the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945” - the World War II award for the civilian laborers. However, he writes about it casually, after the story about potatoes stores replenishment. “Let it be kind of memory about the war. I am not going to wear it, because it is inconvenient”, he

⁸⁴ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 36 – 36 ob.

⁸⁵ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 92 – 93, (April 4, 1942).

concludes.⁸⁶ By mentioning this inconvenience he challenges his moral right to wear this medal.

Attempts to make a contribution to the victory were the logical behavior of a patriot. Even despite the fact that Dmitriev never explicitly expressed this notion in the respect of himself, all his attitudes to the ongoing war and the ways in which he could make a good for the state show his engagement with the concept of patriotism. He admired the heroes of books and films, who defended their homeland, he tried to volunteer on the front, he worked on the Aviation Factory, etc. There were no other ways to act, as only be a patriot in this manner. No less significant, that Dmitriev's perception of this concept was formed under the influence of the regime's ideology and propaganda. The ongoing war was the challenge for the entire Soviet model of economy and life. The regime faced with the strong necessity to defend itself from the German invaders, evacuate a large number of people and industries, and simultaneously to enforce the social mobilization. The ideology and propaganda was the universal tool for all this purposes. Such people as Dmitriev could not avoid its influence, because they were inherent part of this system. However, as Hellbeck correctly states, Soviet ideology was not a ready-made concept. It "may be better understood as a ferment working in individuals and producing a great deal of variation as it interacts with the subjective life of a particular person".⁸⁷ As in case of Hellbeck's diarists, Dmitriev did not literally repeat or transmit this ideology. He instead filtered the main features of this ideology through the prism of his subjectivity, transformed it and reflected on the pages of his diary. Nevertheless, his subjective reflection in the diary remains very Soviet and typical for this times. The war as a central event of the epoch had determinative importance for the diary of this period.

⁸⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 12, ll. 87 – 88 ob.

⁸⁷ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on my mind: writing a diary under Stalin*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2006), 12.

Although it was not the only topic of the most entries. The other aspects of Dmitriev's life which were reflected in the diary are in the following parts of this chapter.

“Events happened recently have ruined my summer plans...”

As it was mentioned previously the very first entry written on July 23, 1941, reflects the general trends of the wartime Dmitriev's diary - the World War II and its impact on the diarist's life. Moreover, even despite the fact that war was to some extent an independent topic, it is impossible to shed the light to the other existential aspects of the Soviet Society in these hard times without the perspective of the war. This notion becomes even more important in terms of Dmitriev's perception of the war impacts, which for him was a justification of life changes. Moreover, he interpreted this justification depending on the situation. In some cases, the war was the reason for the hard work, but in the others - an excuse for abuse of regulations. Most of the cases of this justification were related to the labor aspect of his life, which is crucial for this subchapter.

Despite the fact that the Soviet society was already mobilized by the war outbreak, new circumstances required the strength “increased government controls, the concentration of power, and centralization of the economy”.⁸⁸ These changes affected the labor sphere and led to the hardening of worker's life. This primarily meant the deterioration of labor conditions, introduction of military discipline for workers, as well as the punishment for its

⁸⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick, War and Society in Soviet Context: Soviet Labor before, during, and after World War II, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 35, 1989, 37.

violation and special rationing. Being a part of the society and the subject of this changes, Dmitriev experienced all these transformations to a full extent and reflected them in the diary.

Wartime labor conditions, first of all, were related to the increase of daily working hours. According to Dmitriev's evidence, the 6-hours working day was extended to 8 hours, then to 10 hours and later on it reached up to 12 hours. Moreover, from time to time Dmitriev worked even two or more shifts in a row. There were at least two main reasons for such stiffeners: first, ongoing war required more effects from the industry, especially from its military sector; second, the decrease of the labor power, caused by the military mobilization, put a strain on workers remained in the industry. For Dmitriev personally, as well as for the entire Soviet society these circumstances were the durability test. He notes on October 28, 1941:

Woke up late - I slept off for the previous days. I worked on Sunday and after all, I had to go to work again after 8 hours. Yesterday, as soon as I came home, I immediately dropped off to sleep. [...] I didn't go to military training yesterday. But this is understandable: I can not survive without sleep for more than a day. Those 2 extra hours of work are exhausting, and especially now, when the food is so bad, and we even do not obtain milk at work. I have never eaten porridge before, and now I have to. The war will teach us many lessons.⁸⁹

Exhaustion and lack of sleep became one of the signs of the wartime in Dmitriev's diary.

"The last few days I had to work a lot. All this time I had only one thought - to sleep, only to sleep!" - he complains in the entry on June 9, 1942.⁹⁰ From time to time he slept after the shift directly in the shop floor and then came back to work. On April 20, 1942, he describes

⁸⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 41 – 42 ob.

⁹⁰ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 3 ob.

the working day which lasted 15 hours, because of the shift changes.⁹¹ Labor conditions were even harder in winter time, which is usually very cold on the Urals.

It is freezing outside! I almost have to run to get to the factory. I rarely wore valenki (felt boots) before, but now I have to wear it even on the shop floor. It is better to work in valenki, than to freeze my feet. [...] Sometimes I jump out of the cabin like a wild man, just because my fingers are unbearably cold.⁹²

Nevertheless Dmitriev as the other workers had to work even in such hard conditions and complete the plan. “Work is going well. If this continues, I can earn good money for this month. I froze all my fingers on my hands, but I also complete the plan on a daily basis” - he complains.⁹³ Besides workers themselves, the shop floor's machines and other equipment suffered from the weather:

The frost greatly affected the work of the shop floor. It is so cold in the there. Steam, air and electricity are intermittent. The engines either work very badly or even do not start at all. Cabins are full of ice, water, and lube. Everything is neglected. The people are mostly in the shop floor's canteen because it is the warmest place in the whole shop floor.⁹⁴

Combination of the hard labor conditions, weather, and law rationing (which is elaborated below) lead to the serious health problems for Dmitriev. Besides the frost issues, several time he was injured on the factory floor and even received a burn from the fire caused by the incident with fuel's deflagration.⁹⁵ Several times he experienced the health problems with his

⁹¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 94 – 96.

⁹² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 68 ob. – 69, (Jan. 1, 1942).

⁹³ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 69 – 69 ob., (Jan. 24, 1942).

⁹⁴ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 43, (Jan. 18, 1943)

⁹⁵ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 35 ob., (Dec. 9, 1942): “There was a fire my cabin the day before yesterday. During the extinguishing it, I got a little burn. My skin burned near my left eye. The eye was not injured. But I look horribly”.

eyes, caused by the hard labor conditions. These problems even forced him to request the medical assistance and skip several shifts on the factory.⁹⁶

The militarization of the labor, especially for the Aviation Factory, also meant the hardness of the punishment for discipline violation. The “punishment of from five to eight years imprisonment for unauthorized departure from the job was introduced” straightly with the outbreak of the war.⁹⁷ The violation of the technology caused the machines and equipment damage was also risk for workers. Dmitriev faced with the similar cases on the factory. His colleagues’ experience prevents him from such mistakes.

One of the foremen from our shop floor is put on trial and fired from the factory. He broke the technical process, which caused the engine's hydraulic shock. Miska K. faced the same problem yesterday. What will happen is not yet known. I have to hard to look after my workers because I do not really want to be put on the trial.⁹⁸

Most of the time this violation considered to be the sabotage, even if it happened without intention. Dmitriev describes several cases when this happened. On February 4, 1943, one of such incidents took place: “Fuel was released again in the culvert yesterday. The culprit was found immediately. He was taken away under escort (*pod vintovkoy*), and he is hardly going to be back to the shop floor. That serves him right!”.⁹⁹

There also was another effect of the labor militarization. Almost immediately after the outbreak of the war, the attitude to security was changed and NKVD introduced the strengthening of control on the factory. Dmitriev as an active member of Komsomol was involved into these activities. On October 7, 1941, he mentions the order for vigilance and the preservation of military secrets issued by the factory: “Indeed, it was often possible to

⁹⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 19 ob. – 20, (Aug. 19, 1942).

⁹⁷ Sheila Fitzpatrick, War and Society in Soviet Context: Soviet Labor before, during, and after World War II, International Labor and Working-Class History, No. 35, 1989, 44.

⁹⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 18 - 18 ob., (Aug. 13, 1941).

⁹⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 45.

hear conversations about the work of the shop, the plant, the site in the tram, in the dining room or even on the streets. I also sometimes shared my knowledge with the close friends, but I immediately abandoned it. We have to keep mouth shut in wartime”.¹⁰⁰ Later Alexander even joined the military security assistance group of the factory. Formally he was obliged to become the part of this group by the decision of the Party organization, however, he never complained about this activity in the diary and even perceive it as normal for the wartime. He clarifies his duties in the entry on May 2, 1942: “My duties include the suppression of all non-Soviet talks. Moreover, I have to report about such talks. It is spying of course, but orders are orders”.¹⁰¹ It worth to outline, that in this case Dmitriev behavior could be compared with Podlubny’s one, who also cooperated with GPU for the same reason. However, Pudlubny’s reasons were much more different from Dmitriev’s. He acted so with the aim to illustrate his sovietness. In Dmitriev’s case, the purpose was distinctive. Despite the fact that he realized the “spying” nature of such behavior, for him it was reasonable acting of the Soviet citizen in the wartime, caused by the needs to preserve the military secrets.

“I worked well today, although I was drunk”: War, Labor, and Stereotypes.

The uniqueness of the Dmitriev’s wartime diary also constitutes in the fact, that it to some degree contradicts the image of the hard time. Despite the evidences described before, the diary full of the examples, which are not congruent with the traditional understanding of the time hardness. As it was mentioned before he complains the lack of the work on the shop

¹⁰⁰ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 33 – 34.

¹⁰¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 97 – 98.

floor. However, it was not the single case. The absence of the work was the significant topics of his diary notes. “There is no work on the shop floor. All workers just sit and doze, some of them even manage to sleep” - this is the typical complaint on the lack of the work, which appears in the entries.¹⁰² Eventually, Alexander also started to sleep on the shop floor or read books and write letters when there was no work. “I always sleep at work, when I have free time. Today, for example, apart from sleep, I wrote some poems I had conceived before, and read the book by L. Ovalov “Stories of major Pronin”. This book is about the *chekists*’ (security officers) work - the good thing”, describes his day Dmitriev.¹⁰³ Another unusual story happened in October 1943, when Alexander made small playing cards, and several times during the work he and his colleagues even managed to play.¹⁰⁴ Notably, Dmitriev and his coworkers were not just playing cards, but they were gambling.

The law against the absence and unauthorized departure from the job, which was already mentioned before, had to prevent improper behavior. Dmitriev was aware of the punishment, however, from time to time he was significantly late or even skipped his shifts.

I did not work today. I actually had to work, because the government announced that the day off is postponed to January 1, 1942, but since everyone got to know about it late, a lot of people did not come to work. That is why I also did not come, even though I knew that we had to work.¹⁰⁵

In the entry on February 9, 1942, Alexander explicitly demonstrates, that he realizes the illegal nature of such behavior: “Today, I violated The Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of USSR twice - I was late myself and sent one of the motor mechanics home 3 hours before the day was over. But none of these facts will be ever found out, so

¹⁰² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, l. 39 ob., (Oct. 23, 1941).

¹⁰³ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 70 ob. (May 22, 1943)

¹⁰⁴ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 70 ob. (Oct. 25, 1943): “the cards turned out to be very miniature: each card was less than one square centimeter”.

¹⁰⁵ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 62 ob. – 63, (Dec. 28, 1941).

there is nothing to worry about”.¹⁰⁶ Noteworthy, Dmitriev finds justification for such way of acting in the wartime:

On January, 3 we all were in the factory’s club. [...] We actually had to work this day, but there was not any work, and we managed to get away from the factory. Serezhka easily received the day off. I had the expired permission, but I got the pass anyway. It is actually illegal, but all is fair in the wartime.¹⁰⁷

In most of the cases, Dmitriev got away with these violations, even when he came drunk to the work, which, according to the diary, happened on several occasions.¹⁰⁸ The shop floor’s management typically turned a blind eye to Alexander’s acting. The reason for that was the same as the logic why he remained in the factory instead of participating in the war - Dmitriev was the highly skilled demanded worker. Understanding his effectiveness, management, who was caring about the accomplishment of a plan excused his almost every time. In on of the cases he earned just reprimand for an unexcused absence, but officially he could be even imprisoned.¹⁰⁹

It worth to note that specificity of the technology on the factory and in the Dmitriev’s shop floor, in particular, depended on materials. From the very beginning of the war the factory experienced the lack of fuel and some technical equipment. On October 21, 1941 Dmitriev notes: “If the Germans surround Moscow, the supply of carburetors will discontinue. And, of course, the engines cannot work without carburetors”.¹¹⁰ From time to time Dmitriev complains that there was no work because of the fuel’s dearth. This circumstance was also crucial, because his shop floor could not run the engines’ tests without it. These facts to some extent explain the lack of work, which was experienced by Dmitriev.

¹⁰⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 71 – 73 ob.

¹⁰⁷ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 39 – 40, (Jan. 6, 1943).

¹⁰⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 39 – 40, (Mar.19, 1943): “I worked well today, although I was drunk”.

¹⁰⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 12, ll. 13ob. – 14, (Feb. 28, 1944).

¹¹⁰ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 38 – 39.

However, the factory's management usually tried to engage workers in some non-core works in the other factory's departments. Dmitriev calls such kind of activities "productive trip" (*"proizvodstvennyi pokhod"*). For that purpose Alexander and other workers were engaged to, for example, road construction or snow shoveling: "Today we were building the road. We dug and carried the ground. That was again the *proizvodstvennyi pokhod*, but I dashed away after 40 minutes. In general, I am tired of such trips".¹¹¹ Understanding, that he is overqualified for such *pokhod*, Dmitriev complains a lot and even conflicts with the management about it. In September 1943 he even refused to go to the road construction, when the foreman tried to send him there: "The day before yesterday I was sent to build the road, but I declared to the Party organizer and the foreman, that I will not go and that is all! [...] They, of course, did not like it, but they could not do anything with me".¹¹²

The engaging in the non-core activities and lack of the work reflected on Dmitriev's salary. "There is still no work. We apparently will not receive the bonus, which we earned for October. I even do not wait for it anymore" - Dmitriev notes in the entry on December 11, 1941.¹¹³ The worry about the lack of the work and the low salary affected the workers' morality. Nonetheless, Dmitriev and his coworkers tried to keep the enthusiastic approach to the work. In the very end of 1941, Alexander was obliged to take the night shift on December 31. That is why he spent the New Year of 1942 directly on the shop floor. However, he perceived even this fact with the understanding of wartime necessity.

It's been an hour since the New Year, and I have just come home from work. This is the second time I spent the New Year at work. Today, at the moment. when 1942 started, I run the engine. It would be good to have the work at the whole year.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 12ob. – 13, (Aug. 5, 1941).

¹¹² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 86 – 86 ob., (Sep. 29, 1943).

¹¹³ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 59 – 59 ob.

¹¹⁴ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, l. 63 ob., (Dec. 31, 1941).

Interestingly, Dmitriev here follows the traditional beliefs, according to which the incoming year will reflect the way how people spent New Year. Moreover, for him it was the symbolic moment, when he run the engine. It shows his enthusiasm and readiness to work. From time to time he expresses similar feelings in the diary:

Now we have a lot of work on the shop floor. The other day I was at the meeting with the party organizer and the new Director of the factory. They said that now the factory will work smoothly. I gave my word that I will work well! However yesterday I broke my word. There was a fire in the cabin, but we quickly extinguished it. That is why I did not fulfill the task yesterday. I was even embarrassed to go to the shop floor today. How can I demand a good job from my workers, when I failed! No, I am sure, I will find out the way to make the work well in my cabin! For example, today I have already given two engines and completed the task by this. I will keep it up!¹¹⁵

The factory administration realized the importance of the workers' morality. Such kind of meetings with the director and other high rank managers were popular, but not only tool to keep workers' enthusiasm up. Traditional for the Soviet economy practices of social mobilization and inspiration remained actual in the wartime. Among these practices Dmitriev describes two very common for the whole economy: Socialist Competition (*sotssorevnovanie*) and notion of Stakhanovite movement. The Socialist Competition as a mobilization tool was introduced during the Industrialization in the late 1920s and endured until the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Aviation Factory #19 took part in the industry-wide Socialist competition and Dmitriev together with other workers of the factory participated in this competition. In the entry on June 17, 1942 he describes the meeting with the director, where they discussed the plan and perspectives:

The discussion on the meeting was lively. Everybody has undertook a commitment to complete the program of June ahead of schedule. The task is not easy, but feasible. If we do this, the plant will take the 1st place in the Socialist competition of aviation

¹¹⁵ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 101 – 101 ob., (May 22, 1942).

plants. This means improving the life of the factory workers. The 1st prize is 1,000,000 rubles after all. I hope that we will achieve this goal.¹¹⁶

The factory eventually won this competition in July 1942: “The factory took the premier place in the Socialist Competition. Many of us were photographed for the newspaper Pravda and, perhaps, I will be photographed for the Komsomolskaya Pravda as well. But I am still not sure”.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the competition was traditionally organized not only on the industry-wide level but also on the level of factory’s departments. In this part of the competition, Dmitriev's shop floor also put itself on record: “Our shopfloor received the red challenge banner of the 1st Guards Fighter regiment for the second place in the factory. It would be nice to get some bonuses by the way. Now I will perform the plan well”.¹¹⁸

The Socialist Competition, in this case, had a double meaning for workers. On the one hand, it was an honor to win and got some symbolic awards, which correlates with typical Soviet practices, inspired by propaganda. On the other, Dmitriev realizes the material motivation and explicitly expresses the importance of the bonuses for workers’ life in the wartime. According to his notes, both of this encouragements were effective and helped to keep the enthusiasm up.

The second practice, related to the Stakhanovite movement also appeared in the diary. Together with the *sotssorevnovanie*, the Stakhanovite movement or super-productive labor (*udarniy trud*) were the results of the Industrialization. In the diary, this notion emerges in a form of special meal, which Dmitriev received for his productivity in the shop floor. He calls it Stakhanovite meal (*stakhanovskiy obed*). He was awarded with this meal on June 13, 1942.

¹¹⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 4 ob. – 5.

¹¹⁷ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 7 ob. – 9, (Jul.10, 1942).

¹¹⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 9 – 9 ob., (Jul.13, 1942).

He of course refers to it in the diary entry and dreamily mentions, that he would like to have the same meal every day:

Oatmeal soup - 1 portion;
Millet porridge - 1 portion;
Ice cream - 200 grams;
Milk - 1 liter;
Noodle soup - 1 portion;
Meat cutlet with porridge - 1 portion;
Boiled eggs - 2 pieces;
Bread - 100 grams.¹¹⁹

The notion of these two tools was crucial from the perspective of social mobilization. As it was in the 1930s the regime used the carrot and stick policy. The “carrot” in a form of bonuses or *stakhanovskiy obed* was used together with the “stick” - the severe punishment for the discipline violation. This is to some degree another illustration of the Fitzpatrick’s idea about the preexistence of the social mobilization in the pre-war time.

Nevertheless combination of wartime pressure, hard labor conditions and salary issues influenced the enthusiasm to a large extent. Unsurprisingly, even despite all attempts of the factory management to obtain the enthusiasm and the keep effectiveness up, workers morality started to decrease. This circumstance to some degree explains Dmitriev’s behavior and reduction of the interest to the work. At the end of 1943 he also spent the New Year in the shop floor, but in contrast with the 1941/42 New Year he was not so excited: “I spent New Year at work again and it was poorly. I worked 12 hours and was so exhausted that even

¹¹⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 4 ob.

almost fell asleep at work. I have not slept in about two-and-half days”.¹²⁰ Moreover about the same time he stopped feeling guilty about the lack of work. Instead of notions of boredom about it he mentions, that he have done well for himself: “I work now with the commission engines.”¹²¹ Sometimes I do nothing the whole shifts”.¹²² This decrease of morality even caused Dmitriev’s thoughts about the escape from the factory and Molotov in general. In the spring of 1944 he seriously considered to move to Moscow:

I am now more and more willing to run away from this city. I really want to get to Moscow. It is only hard with the transportation now. [...] Importantly, guards check the documents in the train, but I will have everything they need, even if have to forge documents. And yet, 99 out of 100 percent I can get instead of Moscow to some concentration camp as a deserter from the production. I could easily forge the documents especially the passport. I just need to change 1941 for 1944 and then I could live in Moscow on temporary residence permit for within a month. I also have the place to stay there. The major issue is just to get to Moscow, and the rest would not be matter. But these all are just dreams.¹²³

Significantly, this entry appeared when Dmitriev was already married, and even this fact did not prevent him from thoughts about the escape. Such way of thinking illustrates the grade of exhaustion and decrease of his morality. Moreover, Dmitriev’s attempts to escape to some extent correlate with his idea to go to the front. The romanticization of the war, which was elaborated in the previous subchapter, attracted him more than factory’s routine. It worth to note, that hard labor and living conditions and decrease of motivation brought into sharp focus Dmitriev’s personality and to some degree his subjectivity in Hellbeck’s terms. At some point of the Spring 1942 he was sent to the other factory’s department where he had to deal with the other kind of work, which he did not really like. He notes on March 23, 1942: “I do not like my new job. I already managed to hurt the hand (there is an abscess on the

¹²⁰ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 98 ob. – 99, (Jan.5, 1944).

¹²¹ Commission engine is the professional term for the engines, which come to the special commission for more elaborated tests

¹²² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 12, ll. 20 ob. – 21, (Apr. 4, 1944).

¹²³ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 12, ll. 20 ob. – 21, (Apr. 4, 1944).

thumb). Now I try to get rid of such work at every possible way. Actually, since I do not receive according to my needs, I do not work according to my abilities”.¹²⁴ Indicatively, Dmitriev here follows one of the basic statements of Communism, but he interprets it in his subjective manner, as a justification of rules violation. This is in Hellbeck’s term the way how Dmitriev “unpacks and personalizes’ the ideology.”¹²⁵

Unsurprisingly, the notion of war and its effects is a significant aspect of Dmitriev’s diary and one of its essential parts. It was a forming factor for the society and required a lot from it in general and from diarist’s life in particular. The war influenced the way of people’s actions and even thinking. This hard times required not only patriotic feelings from Soviet citizens but also their active participation in the homeland defense. This participation, though, could be performed by the bravery on the front, as well as by the hard work in the rear, which was reflected in the widespread ideological formula “Everything for the front, everything for victory”. For such workers, as Dmitriev, it meant the deterioration of labor and living conditions.

Dmitriev’s diary explicitly shows the grade of wartime hardness. Nevertheless, in contrast with the conventional image of this times, the diarist shows that this picture is more complex. He gives plenty examples of improper behavior, violations of rules, cheating, etc., which does not match to the traditional understanding of the wartime. It is even more remarkable, that he got away with it and stayed safe.

¹²⁴ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 88 – 89.

¹²⁵ Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on my mind: writing a diary under Stalin*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2006), 13.

These aspects are really significant for the understanding of Dmitriev's personality and features of wartime Soviet society. It is worth to note, that diarist all the time finds the justification for his behavior. And, interestingly, this is the same justification as for the acceptance of the wartime hardness - the war itself and its effects. Moreover, this fact brings another significant notion. Justifying his behavior, Dmitriev uses common ideological statements, which were related not only to the wartime but also to basic concepts of communism. He uses them and interprets in his own interests. As it was mentioned before, this is the Hellbeck's soviet subjectivity in action.

Chapter 3. Food and War: provisioning in Dmitriev's diary

In the late April 1942, Alexander Dmitriev watched five films and visited opera house ones. This is, though, was the typical way to spend his leisure time. Nevertheless, in the entry on April 27, 1942, he explicitly explains the reason for such active visiting cinema and theater: “I go to the cinema theatre every evening to avoid thinking about food”.¹²⁶ However, for Dmitriev, this was not the only way to get through the hunger. As in the case of the labor, which was investigated in the previous Chapter, in food issues Alexander also performed his unusual way of acting, including violation of rules and improper behavior. This Chapter focuses on food question in the wartime and Dmitriev's way to solve it, presented in his diary.

Besides the labor issues, the food was one of the most important topics of Dmitriev's diary. The lack of food and rationing, which was introduced almost directly after the outbreak of the war, were the significant effects of these hard times. Several reasons, including the German occupation of the most fertile regions and necessity to reinforce the army provision, caused the decrease of food for the civilians.¹²⁷ Moreover, the state had to adopt “the rationing system structured around the basic hierarchies of allocation”.¹²⁸ As historian Donald Filtzer correctly notes, the Soviet Union did not have “enough food to feed to feed both its military and civilians”.¹²⁹ That is why the state followed the logic of feeding workers

¹²⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 96 – 97, (Aug. 18, 1941).

¹²⁷ Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer, “Introduction: The Politics of Food and War” in *Hunger and war: food provisioning in the Soviet Union during World War II*, ed. Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer (Indiana University Press, 2015), 12.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Donald Filtzer, “Starvation Mortality in Soviet Home-Front Industrial Regions During World War II” in *Hunger and war: food provisioning in the Soviet Union during World War II*, ed. Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer (Indiana University Press, 2015), 226.

who produced the weapons in the defense factories, rather than other civilians. Nevertheless, these dramatic changes in the state system of provisioning, could not provide enough food even for the most demanded group of workers. Only miners and high-rank official received more or less sufficient in biological terms amount of food through the rationing system.¹³⁰ The rest of the Soviet population suffered from the lack of food or even hunger and had to manage to find other sources of food. Alexander Dmitriev's case is a good illustration of this complex picture. He was a highly demanded worker in the defense industry, but even though he had to think about ways to receive the food all the time.

“It is currently the major question of the life”: War and Food

Understanding the war's effects, Dmitriev justifies the necessity of changes in the food supply, especially the introduction of rationing system:

I have heard from reliable sources that the rationing system, including the cards for the bread, will be introduced in the city. It is going to be very hard to bear. So, well, let us see! Everything going to be ok, we just have to expel this fascist scum from the Soviet territory as soon as possible! Mother has hoarded some more bread, but we will have a rough time. After all, just father and I work in the family, but the rationing cards will be delivered only to workers.¹³¹

Notably, Dmitriev accuses rather external factors, such as the war in general and Hitler in particular, in the poor food, than the state who according to the system's logic has to provide provisioning: “The feeding in the shop floor is still poor. They give us something like the pig-

¹³⁰ Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer, “Introduction: The Politics of Food and War” in *Hunger and war: food provisioning in the Soviet Union during World War II*, ed. Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer (Indiana University Press, 2015), 14.

¹³¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 21 ob. – 22, (Aug. 18, 1941).

swill. There is no one to be peeved with. It is really this bastard Hitler who is to blame for all this”.¹³² Dmitriev ultimately comes to the conclusion that the food is the major question of the wartime. Interestingly, he comes to this thought after the relatively good meal he received in the factory’s canteen (“grain soup, sausages, ice cream and milk”):

Someone who will read these notes in a few years may find the feeding entries funny, but it is now the major question of life. Even one of the members of the government said in his speech: Foodservice is a subsidiary shop at the place of production (M. I. Kalinin).¹³³

Interestingly, the diarist refers to the Mikhail Kalinin – the formal head of the Soviet state – and uses the official language with an attempt to prove and justify his ideas. Moreover, at the moment of writing this entry, Dmitriev probably could not remember the author of this quotation and he just added the name in a superscript afterward. This means that he had to check the author’s name somewhere to write in the diary and make his own words more credible. Nonetheless, Dmitriev uses and interprets this citation for his purposes as a typical Soviet subject who deals with the ideology.

Another curious case of food and war correlation in the diary appears in the entry on November 20, 1941: “I had a wonderful meal today. Mother made *pelmeni*, and I gladly destroyed them. I would destroy Germans with the same pleasure if I was at the front”.¹³⁴ By the word “destroy” in regard to the food he means here to eat ravenously. This, of course, metaphorical way to show his attitude to the war and food illustrates the importance and interrelation of these two topics in Dmitriev’s life, as well as in the ideological agenda of the time.

¹³² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 54 – 54 ob., (Nov. 22, 1941).

¹³³ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 4, (Jun. 12, 1942).

¹³⁴ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, l. 51 ob.

The issues of war and food also effected on the Dmitriev's personality. As he mentioned before with regard to other spheres of life, wartime requests the extraordinary efforts for the food as well:

Food is the major question of the wartime. I have to eschew different human conventions (shyness, conscience, etc.) and ask the new friend M. to bring me something from the canteen more often. The only danger that she can get attached to me. Well, nothing ventured, nothing have.¹³⁵

In this entry, Dmitriev means a friend who he met accidentally on the street. Her name was Marusia and she worked in the Oblast' Executive Committee's canteen, where she had an access to food. Alexander decided to use this acquaintance for his own needs and practice what in the Soviet everyday language called blat. In Fitzpatrick's terms, blat is a "system of reciprocal relationships involving goods and favor".¹³⁶

For Dmitriev, this case was not the first and not the only occasion when he used blat. Nevertheless, the notion of blat and war was crucial for him. In the entry on November 13, 1941, he also argues that the war forced him to change his personality: "Yes, the war makes you do a lot of things after all. I used to think of myself as a completely independent person, but now I have to ask for a help from an acquainted barmaid, who brings me some food from the canteen without any norm".¹³⁷ Nevertheless, he desists to regret about blat practices to the same extent as he stops to complain about the lack of work on the shop floor. Moreover, he extended his semi-legal behavior not only to labor relation but also to the food issues. He often describes the occasions when he by means of cheating received some meals in the

¹³⁵ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, l. 68, (Jan. 16, 1942).

¹³⁶ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: ordinary life in extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 63.

¹³⁷ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 49 ob. – 50 ob.

canteen, rationing cards or even food. For example, in the notes from 1943 he gives several illustrations of such behavior.

The mother had found a pass to the factory's canteen number 3. I wrote in my last name there. Serezhka forged the seal. I am going there for lunch today for the first time. If I get caught, I could say I bought this pass at a *khitriy rynok* (black market). But I hope that everything will go well.¹³⁸

The next time, when he forged some documents is described in the entry on March 30, 1943, when he had a dinner at the place where his father worked:

I had a dinner again at father's canteen. I ate two portions. One of the coupons for the dinner was forged by myself. I made it so skillfully that even the barmaid could not recognize the fake after comparing it with other coupons. Once again I confirmed that everyone works as best he can, only the result is important. And the result was good - the hearty dinner.¹³⁹

This notion of a good work and good results are to some extent another way of communism ideology statement interpretation. And again Dmitriev uses this interpretation to justify the rules violation. The next entry correlates with this idea of fairness and brings again the notion of war:

I am in the process of doing great forgeries of coupons for commercial launches.¹⁴⁰ I make them so well by hand, that they could not be even distinguished from the original. Many people will think that it is not good, but I will find an objection: is it good when the canteen deceives workers and gives them portion almost half the smaller than it should be? No! I find nothing shameful about that. And especially in the wartime.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 46, (Feb. 13, 1943).

¹³⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, l. 64.

¹⁴⁰ The term "commercial launches" means the food, which people could buy without rationing coupons at commercial prices, settled by the People's Commissariat of trade. These prices usually were higher than in the rationing coupons.

¹⁴¹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 93 ob. – 94 ob. (Dec. 16, 1943).

In the same entry, Dmitriev justifies the increase of the criminality in Molotov. For him the main reason for it was the lack of food: “A lot of robberies again happens in the city, as it was in 1933. Criminals take people's clothes off straight on the streets. This is all because many people have almost nothing to eat”. Notably, Dmitriev compares the current situation with the other time of hunger, which he experienced in his life. He probably means here the Soviet famine of 1932–33, which also influenced the Ural region.

This mentioning of the increase of criminality could be interpreted in two related ways. On the one hand, he commensurates his own cheating with robberies on the streets, justifying all this, though, by the wartime. On the other, Alexander, comparing this two ways of improper behavior, implicitly and probably even unconsciously shows that his cheating is a lesser evil. This is a way very typical doublethink, which is also considered as the feature of a Soviet subject. Moreover, Dmitriev applies the same doublethink when he criticizes his father, who also used the blat and his occupational status (he worked in the canteen) to receive some benefits.¹⁴² (6 02 1944)

Nevertheless, Dmitriev does not limit himself to the cheating and another semi-legal acting. He, for example, often speculated on the black market. He even explicitly uses terms speculation and commerce in regard to his behavior. “I recently engaged in the commerce. I had some cigarettes, and I sold them all. I bought coupons for meat for these earnings” - he notes.¹⁴³ But he as in other cases justifies himself by the wartime. He continues doing that even when he literally has stolen two magnetos from the factory in May 1944¹⁴⁴ and exchanged them in the countryside for some food.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 12, ll. 6 ob. – 7 ob., (Feb. 6, 1944).

¹⁴³ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 55 – 55 ob., (Mar. 2, 1943).

¹⁴⁴ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 12, l. 31 ob., (May 23, 1944).

¹⁴⁵ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 12, ll. 33 – 35, (Jun. 1, 1944).

The visits for exchange in the countryside were one of the ways to find the food in the wartime. Dmitriev and his family did it from time to time. They had there some relatives who helped them receive some food in return for the goods, which they brought from the city. Significantly, Dmitriev at the beginning of the war criticized peasants who took part in this exchange. In the note on November 3, 1941, he mentions the occasion, which he witnessed, when peasants exchanged some food for clothes. In this entry he again refers to the Soviet experience from the previous times, which he, however, could not observe: “Peasants again began to do the same as in 1918, means they exchange nothing for the money, but only for some goods”.¹⁴⁶ This mentioning of peasants sounds explicitly critical and related to some extent to the kulak’s behavior, which was unambiguously criticized in terms of the Soviet ideology. Nevertheless, after several years, when he faced harder lack of food he himself started to visit countryside for the exchanges.

* * *

Despite the fact, that Dmitriev was the defense industry worker and had the opportunity to receive more food than other categories of the Soviet people, he still had to make a lot of efforts to find food. In the most cases, these efforts were edging with illegal and improper behavior. Probably the only relatively innocent way was to collect some mushrooms and berries or even hunt in the surrounding forests or to fish in rivers and lakes. Alexander, as many others, did that from time to time, and scrupulously mentioned all his trips to the forest in the diary. Nevertheless, all the rest means were less legal and innocent, but Dmitriev stayed safe and kept doing this without any damage to himself and his consciousness, even understanding their illegal nature. One of the reasons for this behavior

¹⁴⁶ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 44 – 45 ob., (Nov. 3, 1941).

was the fact, that all these specific ways of acting were not novel for the Soviet society. Blat, black market, cheating, and other phenomena pre-existed even before the outbreak of the war. To the large extent, they were the reaction of the society to the planned economy and social mobilization.¹⁴⁷ In the wartime, all these phenomena just reached larger scale and took some other forms.

It is difficult to ascertain, whether Dmitriev practiced the same before the war or not because he did not keep the diary before 1941. There are two to some extent ambiguous reactions to this semi-legal practices in his diary. The first reaction constitutes in the fact, that he criticizes people when they were cheating or violating rules in the labor relations, especially in the first years of the war. Nonetheless, as it was illustrated in the previous subchapters, eventually he comes to the conclusion that in the wartime all means are acceptable. It is again difficult to argue to what extent this decision was hard or not for him, however in his own terms, he had “eschewed different human conventions” and started widely apply these practices in his everyday life. Significantly, the Diary was for him the “soul laboratory”, nevertheless he used it in exactly the opposite way in contrast with Podlubny. For Podlubny the diary was the tool, which he used for the purpose of creating and elaborating his sovietness, while Dmitriev, vice versa, tried to justify his improper, hence non- or even anti-soviet in terms of the law and social norms, behavior or in the other words become less Soviet. Nevertheless, even despite this, he remained soviet subject, who was referring to the communist ideological statements and interpreting them according to his needs. That is to say, the Dmitriev’s case illustrates the Soviet subjectivity, but just from the other perspective. Moreover, Dmitriev gradually comes to these conclusions, which shows the evolution of this subjectivity.

¹⁴⁷ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: ordinary life in extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 41.

The second type of Dmitriev's reaction to these practices relates to his previous experience. From time to time he comes back to his memories of the pre-war time in the diary. In one of the entries, the diarist describes the very beginning of the war, which caught him in Moscow. He mentions, that directly after June 22, 1941, the martial law was declared and local shops stopped to sell the alcohol. However, he still managed the way to buy it, even despite the fact that it was illegal.¹⁴⁸ This means, that, first, he knew the way how to do it, second, this practice was not new for him, hence, the pattern of such behavior already was familiar for Dmitriev. It is, of course, difficult to make such conclusion only by the one occasion appeared in the diary, however, and this to some extent explains Dmitriev's success in all these practices.

The other sign of his success was that Dmitriev in contrast to many other Soviet citizens did not experience hunger and starvation to the full extent. He explicitly mentioned in the diary, that has food, maybe not as much as it was before, but still. In the entry on July 11, 1943, he explicitly notes, that he never experienced hunger in the wartime.¹⁴⁹ This fact is even more significant because 1943 was one of the hardest years of the war in a sense of food and provisioning. Especially it was relevant for the Ural region, which faced the starvation at that year.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Dmitriev had food and ate well, which again does not match the stereotype of wartime hunger.

Nonetheless, all these facts of relatively soft labor and living conditions, provisioning and other everyday practices do not refute the notion of the wartime hardness. Dmitriev's life definitely was not easy. He had to work hard, with some exceptions, he had to make a lot of efforts to make money and receive food, etc. One of the explanations of the perception of the

¹⁴⁸ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 11, ll. 57 ob. – 59 ob., (Mar. 8, 1943).

¹⁴⁹ PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 76 ob. – 77, (Jul. 11, 1943).

¹⁵⁰ Donald Filtzer, "Starvation Mortality in Soviet Home-Front Industrial Regions During World War II" in *Hunger and war: food provisioning in the Soviet Union during World War II*, ed. Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer (Indiana University Press, 2015), 270.

wartime life as relatively not hard in the diary is constituted in the fact, that to the large extent Dmitriev as a Soviet citizen was ready for this hard times, hence, mobilized together with the entire society.

Conclusion

One cannot disagree with the Alexander Dmitriev's phrase, that his diary is a "marvelous thing". Its marvelous nature constitutes not only in the uniqueness of the diary and its authenticity, but also in the vast perspectives for scholars, who are interested in the Soviet history. This thesis aimed to study the Soviet society under the war through the lens of the worker's diary. Methodological framework of this research includes some discussions on the soviet subjectivity, labor history and everyday life. The combination of these approaches and theoretical frameworks helps to shed light on some features of Soviet society and its mobilization.

The developments in the wartime illustrates, that the Soviet society was already mobilized even before the war. During the hard times Soviet regime, of course strengthened the process and the degree of the mobilization, however it acted according the same patterns, as it did before the war. Nevertheless, labor and living conditions became harder and life of Soviet citizens. This notion, which is very typical for traditional understanding of the war, is relevant for Dmitriev's diary as well. However more detailed scope on this intimate notes helps to understand that the wartime picture is more complex and controversial. Bringing of all this facts to the discussion on the Soviet subjectivity makes the complexity even more magnified. As it was mentioned in the Introduction, the notion of the Revolution was replaced by the war and the concept of a New Man was shifted towards the patriotism. Nevertheless, this fact does not principally denies the necessity of soviet subjects to perceive and interpret the ideology. Despite the fact, that some ideological statements changed because of the war, the nature of the Soviet ideology remained the same and soviet people continued to "unpacked and personalized" it. This premise makes the concept of the Soviet subjectivity applicable for the diaries of the wartime, hence to the Dmitriev's diary as well.

The war itself and its effects is a significant factor reflected in the Dmitriev's diary and one of its essential parts. It was a forming factor for the society and required a lot from it in general and from diarist's life in particular. The war influenced the way of people's actions and even thinking. These hard times required not only patriotic feelings from Soviet citizens but also their active participation in the homeland defense. This participation, though, could be performed by the bravery on the front, as well as by the hard work in the rear, which was reflected in the widespread ideological formula "Everything for the front, everything for victory". For such workers, as Dmitriev, it meant the deterioration of labor and living conditions.

Dmitriev's diary explicitly shows the grade of wartime hardness. Nevertheless, in contrast with the conventional image of these times, the diarist shows that this picture is more complex. He gives plenty examples of improper behavior, violations of rules, cheating, etc., which does not match to the traditional understanding of the wartime. It is even more remarkable, that he got away with it and stayed safe.

These aspects are really significant for the understanding of Dmitriev's personality and features of wartime Soviet society. It is worth to note, that diarist all the time finds the justification for his behavior. And, interestingly, this is the same justification as for the acceptance of the wartime hardness - the war itself and its effects. Moreover, this fact brings another significant notion. Justifying his behavior, Dmitriev uses common ideological statements, which were related not only to the wartime but also to basic concepts of communism. He uses them and interprets in his own interests. As it was mentioned before, this is the Hellbeck's soviet subjectivity in action.

To the same degree Soviet Subjectivity was reflected in the diary's entries about the food issues. Despite the fact, that Dmitriev was the defense industry worker and had the

opportunity to receive more food than other categories of the Soviet people, he still had to make a lot of efforts to find food. In the most cases, these efforts were edging with illegal and improper behavior. Probably the only relatively innocent way was to collect some mushrooms and berries or even hunt in the surrounding forests or to fish in rivers and lakes. Alexander, as many others, did that from time to time, and scrupulously mentioned all his trips to the forest in the diary. Nevertheless, all the rest means were less legal and innocent, but Dmitriev stayed safe and kept doing this without any damage to himself and his consciousness, even understanding their illegal nature. One of the reasons for this behavior was the fact, that all these specific ways of acting were not novel for the Soviet society. Blat, black market, cheating, and other phenomena pre-existed even before the outbreak of the war. To the large extent, they were the reaction of the society to the planned economy and social mobilization.¹⁵¹ In the wartime, all these phenomena just reached larger scale and took some other forms. This illustrates again, that Soviet society was already mobilized and used the same patterns of behavior.

Notably, that Dmitriev in contrast to many other Soviet citizens did not experience hunger and starvation to the full extent. He explicitly mentioned in the diary, that has food, maybe not as much as it was before, but still. In the entry on July 11, 1943, he explicitly notes, that he never experienced hunger in the wartime.¹⁵² This fact is even more significant because 1943 was one of the hardest years of the war in a sense of food and provisioning. Especially it was relevant for the Ural region, which faced the starvation at that year.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, Dmitriev had food and ate well, which again does not match the stereotype of wartime hunger.

¹⁵¹ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: ordinary life in extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 41.

¹⁵² PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5, d. 10, ll. 76 ob. – 77, (Jul. 11, 1943).

¹⁵³ Donald Filtzer, “Starvation Mortality in Soviet Home-Front Industrial Regions During World War II” in *Hunger and war: food provisioning in the Soviet Union during World War II*, ed. Wendy Z. Goldman and Donald Filtzer (Indiana University Press, 2015), 270.

Nonetheless, all these facts of relatively soft labor and living conditions, provisioning and other everyday practices do not refute the notion of the wartime hardness. Dmitriev's life definitely was not easy. He had to work hard, with some exceptions, he had to make a lot of efforts to make money and receive food, etc. One of the explanations of the perception of the wartime life as relatively not hard in the diary is constituted in the fact, that to the large extent Dmitriev as a Soviet citizen was ready for this hard times, hence, mobilized together with the entire society.

As it was mentioned before, Dmitriev's diary does not limit with the end of the war. He continued writing it for the next several decades, which makes the diary unique source for studies. However, according to the topic of this thesis and its aims, the most interesting part of the diary is the postwar entries. Focus on this period could be perspective topic for future research, which could show continuity in war and post-war time, trace the degree of social mobilization and discover some new aspects of Soviet history.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Dmitriev, Alexander. "Diary". PermGASPI, f. 6330, op. 5.

Gelfand, Vladimir. "Diary". Accessed June 5, 2018. <http://prozhito.org/person/27>

Portsevsky, Vladimir. "Diary". Accessed June 5, 2018. <http://prozhito.org/person/367>

Sovinformburo. Reports. Accessed June 7, 2018.

<http://9may.ru/chronicle/19410723/22531.html>

Stalin, Josef. "Speech at Celebration Meeting of the Moscow Soviet of Working People's Deputies and Moscow Party and Public Organizations, November 6, 1941". Accessed June 3, 2018. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1941/11/06.htm>

Tvardovsky, Alexander. *Poemy*. Perm', 1973.

Secondary Sources

Bonnell, Victoria. *The Russian Worker: Life and Labor under the Tsarist Regime*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Brooks, Jeffrey. *Thank you, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*. Princeton University Press, 1999.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. "War and Society in Soviet Context: Soviet Labor before, during, and after World War II." *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 35 (Spring, 1989): 37-52.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Everyday Stalinism: ordinary life in extraordinary times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Goldman, Wendy Z. and Donald Filtzer, ed., *Hunger and war: food provisioning in the Soviet Union during World War II*. Indiana University Press, 2015.

Hellbeck, Jochen. *Revolution on My Mind: writing a diary under Stalin*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Kotkin, Stephen. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization*. Berkeley : University of California Press, 1997.

Lipovetsky, Mark. *Charms of the cynical reason: the trickster's transformations in Soviet and post-Soviet culture*. Brighton, 2011.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York, Modern Library, 1906.

Nasaw, David. "Historians and Biography," *American Historical Review* 114, 3 (2009).

Paperno, Irina. "What Can Be Done with Diaries?". *Russian Review*, N4 (Oct, 2004).

Sinyavskaia, Elena. "'Obraz vraga' i 'bychie upriamstvo': Kak russkie i finny pokazyvayut drug druga v 'voyennom' kino", *Krasnaia Zvezda*, (June 7, 2005).

Thompson, Edward Palmer. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Penguin Books, 1980.