

[L. 2]

Commission on the Compilation of a Chronicle of the Great Patriotic War

Odessa. June 17, 1944.

Stenogram of conversation with comrade P. S. Karsavin.

Conversation conducted by researcher of the Commission comrade Chermenskii.

Comrade Roslyakova records.

Petr Stepanovich Karsavin - ballet soloist, ballet master temporarily.

Year of birth 1899. Russian. Non-party. Native of Odessa. Received education in Odessa. At the Odessa theater<sup>1</sup> since 1919.

The first days when the Romanians entered the city, I did not leave my house, because the Romanians were catching all the men outside, whether they had documents or not, and sent them for labor to Romania or to Germany. I was afraid to show myself outside. I would spend the night at my acquaintances'. But all the same they caught me and forced me to dismantle ~~catcombs~~ barricades. Then they wanted to send this group off to the train terminal. I was able to run into the front lobby and hide. I remained behind thanks to that.

They made a horrific impression. The rules at the theater were such that we did not have the right to enter the audience hall. If they gave an entrance pass, then one could only go to the gallery.

They gave rations. At first, the rations were alright. Later the rations became bad. I even went three months without going and getting them. I was also working with children at the conservatory.

There were always large numbers of officers backstage. People were constantly coming and going both backstage and in the dressing rooms. That was in the beginning. Later they were forbidden to go backstage. They would go there as if they were going out to the boulevard.

Their touring performers would come, and their ballet master came. Their ballet technique was good for nothing, though they would say that theirs was better than ours.

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<sup>1</sup> The Odesa Opera and Ballet Theatre in the center of the city.

Terekhov<sup>2</sup> constantly screamed that he was a White Guardsman.<sup>3</sup> I think that he really was a White Guardsman. When he was about to enter, we had to get up and stand at attention. As he entered, we had to raise our hand and hold it until he sat. If you turned wrong, a week's penalty.<sup>4</sup> If you smiled wrong, a week's penalty. He always screamed: "This isn't the Bolsheviks for you. Go complain to the Communists." Terekhov was the ballet master before the Romanian occupation too. He was quiet then. I know that he was not worth a damn in the pre-war time. Suddenly he became such a famous ballet master. He would take others' productions. He would accept bribes.<sup>5</sup> If you bribe him, you'll dance. If you don't, you'll sit. He was a terrible bribe-taker.

More than twenty of our people left. There had been 95 people at the ballet. Thirty men, the rest women. Now they took many for military service. Some left for Romania.

When the Romanians arrived, we did not have a leading prima ballerina. Terekhov took his relative from Kaluga.<sup>6</sup> She was a very weak dancer. For money, he made her prima ballerina. [L. 2 reverse]. Her husband had been a chauffeur in the Soviet time. Then he became one of the biggest speculators. He made three thousand marks. Of course, he could help Terekhov, and Terekhov made his wife *prima* for this. She left [with the Romanians]. From among the corps de ballet, some had pretty faces and were of loose morals. They also fled.

There were no new productions. They put on "Le Corsaire," "Fadeta,"<sup>7</sup> "Swan Lake." Terekhov staged "Le Carillon." In two days they canceled all of this. The Romanian ballet "Nunta in Carpad" was showing.

A ballet master came from Romania. We learned this ballet "Nunta in Carpad" in two months. A very primitive ballet. We always laughed at it. They even ascribed sabotage to us. The Germans would leave this ballet in bunches. They did not watch it. Even the Romanians would leave. They specially brought their own costumes. They took these costumes back.

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2 Anatoly Ivanovich Terekhov was appointed the ballet master of the Odesa Opera and Ballet Theater in October 1941 by the Romanian occupying administration. He was arrested after the war by the Soviet authorities. [БАЛЕТМЕЙСТЕР ОДЕССКОГО ОПЕРНОГО ТЕАТРА - АНАТОЛИЙ ТЕРЕХОВ | ОДЕССА ДЛЯ ВСЕХ \(odessakraeved.blogspot.com\)](http://odessakraeved.blogspot.com)

3 That is, a person militarily involved in support of the anti-Bolshevik White Movement during the Civil War in the former Russian Empire.

4 This likely refers to docking of a week's pay.

5 The witnesses uses "khabar", the Ukrainian word for bribe.

6 Kaluga is a city about 150 kilometers southwest of Moscow. Terekhov was born there in 1897.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaluga>; [БАЛЕТМЕЙСТЕР ОДЕССКОГО ОПЕРНОГО ТЕАТРА - АНАТОЛИЙ ТЕРЕХОВ | ОДЕССА ДЛЯ ВСЕХ \(odessakraeved.blogspot.com\)](http://odessakraeved.blogspot.com)

7 Proper spelling: Fadetta.

I cannot say anything bad about Selyavin.<sup>8</sup> Selyavin did not have real power. He was like a mock-up. The real director was Russu.<sup>9</sup>

Concerts were put on. One time there was a concert at the House of the Red Army<sup>10</sup> for Romanian soldiers. The management assigned us. Various music halls<sup>11</sup> would come from Germany.

The Germans treated the population horrifically. If a woman is walking down the street, he will push her and make sure to push her off the sidewalk. Such things were carried out at the beach: children are sitting. A German is walking with a shepherd dog. He'll release this dog. The dog jumps over the children. In this way, they purged the beach of children.

The Romanians were thievish. If they come for a search, they will steal something, whatever they come across, whether it is valuable or not.

Everybody went voluntarily, of course. If I don't want to go, nobody will force me.

We had a Pershova - a Komsomol<sup>12</sup> member. At first, they would call her up to the police. She had big connections and money. She bribed her way out and they stopped calling her up to the police. As prima ballerina, she had a lot of money and knew a lot of people.

Verner was an [ethnic] German, also a Komsomol member. She also, in some way, arranged for herself that they stopped calling her up. Verner left, as a German. Pershova also left. Despite the fact that they were Komsomol members, the Romanians still took them.

I had an acquaintance, Lev Solomonovich Kalika. He had a camera. As a Jew, they dragged him to the ghetto<sup>13</sup> about twenty times. He had a Russian wife. One day

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8 Viktor Alekseevich Selyavin was appointed the director and artistic director of the Odesa Opera and Ballet Theater in October 1941 by the Romanian occupying administration. He was an opera singer and conservatory professor. He is considered to have saved many Jews during the war. He was roughly questioned by the NKVD after the war for over a year and died of a heart attack soon after that, in late 1945. [БАЛЕТМЕЙСТЕР ОДЕССКОГО ОПЕРНОГО ТЕАТРА - АНАТОЛИЙ ТЕРЕХОВ | ОДЕССА ДЛЯ ВСЕХ \(odessakraeved.blogspot.com\)](http://odessakraeved.blogspot.com)

9 Russu appears to have been director of the arts department, possibly not of the theater but perhaps of the entire administrative subdivision that occupied Odessa fell into under Romanian rule. His first name may have been Levko. [БАЛЕТМЕЙСТЕР ОДЕССКОГО ОПЕРНОГО ТЕАТРА - АНАТОЛИЙ ТЕРЕХОВ | ОДЕССА ДЛЯ ВСЕХ \(odessakraeved.blogspot.com\)](http://odessakraeved.blogspot.com)

10 Houses of the Red Army were cultural centers for Red Army personnel located in different places all over the Soviet Union and beyond where Red Army troops were stationed.

11 Music hall was a popular entertainment genre consisting of a mixture of popular song, variety acts, comedy, and more that originated in Britain and was popular from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s. The interview may be referring to this term to mean variety shows broadly.

12 The Komsomol was the Soviet communist youth organization.

13 There were two ghettos in Odesa, Dalnik and Slobodka, into which surviving Jews (most of the Jews in Odesa when the Romanians captured the city were killed in the first month of occupation)

he says to me: “Sell the camera to the prosecutor and I will be freed.” I sold the camera to the prosecutor for one hundred marks. The camera was gone and they took him two weeks later and now it is unknown where he is.

At one point, Romanian soldiers with rifles come for me at six o’clock in the morning and escort me like an arrestee. They brought me to Kanatnaya.<sup>14</sup> I sit there for half a day. There, one says in Russian: “take a seat” . I took a seat. Then a Romanian officer, how he started screaming at me in Romanian. I don’t understand anything. He translates for me:

-”Stand up.”

-Where did you get the camera?

I say that I bought it at the GUM.<sup>15</sup>

-When did you buy it, how much did you pay, do you have a receipt?

I say that the receipt was somewhere, but I could not find it.

It turns out, that this prosecutor was a speculator.

-Come at four o’clock in the evening.

I came at four o’clock. They held me until eight. They put many cameras onto a desk.

[L. 3] - Which is yours?

I made a guess pointing and exactly at mine. They released me.

There was a Ukrainian and a Russian opera here. Now the opera is in the Ukrainian language.

In the final days we would hide in the theater. You are walking down the street and some guard warns: “Don’t go there, round-up.” In the last days it was also dangerous to walk outside. They grabbed people.

After that an order came out: close window shutters in your apartments, leave apartment doors open.

Every day I worked with kids at the conservatory. At the head of the conservatory were our conductor Chernyatinskii<sup>16</sup> and Markov, his assistant. The conservatory operated as normal. The vocal department, the ballet, and the drama department were functional.

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were ordered in November 1941. The Jews there were deported to other ghettos, outside Odesa, in January and February 1942. [Odessa | Holocaust Encyclopedia \(ushmm.org\)](https://ushmm.org/odessa)

14 Kanatnaya refers to the name of a street in the historic center of Odesa, with one end at the port.

15 GUM stands for State Universal Store. During the Soviet era, GUM would be the main department store in many Soviet cities.

16 Nikolai Nikolaevich Chernyatinskii was one of Odesa’s leading conductors before the war. He became the director of the conservatory after the evacuation of the previous director in August 1941, while remaining conductor at the Odesa Opera and Ballet Theatre. [ДИРИЖЕР НИКОЛАЙ ЧЕРНЯТИНСКИЙ И КОМПОЗИТОР ГЕОРГИЙ ФОМЕНКО | ОДЕССА ДЛЯ ВСЕХ \(odessakraeved.blogspot.com\)](https://odessakraeved.blogspot.com)

The Stolyarskii school<sup>17</sup> burned down.

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17 The Stolyarsky school was the first specialized school in the USSR for musically gifted children, opened by Soviet violin pedagogue Pyotr/Petro Stolyarskii in 1933.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School\\_of\\_Stolyarsky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_of_Stolyarsky)