

[L.19]

Stenogram of conversation with senior foreman for electrical equipment for crane installation of the Stalin plant¹ comrade Daniil Vasilyevich Zalmaev.

20/II-44. City of Stalino,² Stalin plant

Conversation conducted by comrade N. S. Volkov

A. I. Shamshina stenographs.

I was born in 1882 in Mogilev.³ My father was a peasant, and in recent times a worker. I came here in 1893. My father worked at this plant as a blast furnace loader. He caught a cold and died. I finished 3 grades of school in Mogilev. I was brought here at 12 years old. I began to work from 1897, at the plant. I was 14 years old. I began working as a boy. I was a courier at the brick shop and the electric shop. I worked as a machinist on an electric crane. Since 1919, I have been working at the open hearth furnace. I became a fitter, then an electrical fitter. I was on call. Since 1935 I am a senior foreman for electrical equipment.

I did not have a chance to evacuate, because they did not give me a car. Actually, I had everything packed up and ready and when I went for the car, they said: "drag your things yourself." The last echelon left, the fourth. My wife was ill, and my son had been taken into the army. I grew weak. I had been carrying the things. I became exhausted. As it happened, this was at night and it was pouring rain when the last echelon was leaving, so I stayed behind.

Under the Germans I worked as a brigadier in the electric shop. It was not preferable for me to do this work, but one had to eat something. In about ten days I went to look at the open hearth furnace, to see what's going on with it. I ran into S. I. Trukhmanov. I ask him how the work is.

-Come, -he says, -we'll work.

I was a brigadier of electrical installation work. They give me an assignment, do this and that. And that is what I did, I fulfilled orders. I also made lighters, but the work proceeded with difficulty. Trukhmanov was in the electric shop, but later they fired him for some reason. A young Trukhmanov took his place, an unrelated person with the same last name. Kalashnikov, from the college, was the head of the shop. He still goes to the college now. To be fair, people did not work with motivation, because they were hungry. We would receive 300 grams of bread, and that's how we worked.

They gave provisions, I think 120 grams of meat. We received 300 grams of oil per week. We would go to the countryside and barter things. I went, my daughter went. You'd take leave for about 5-6 days. You'd take a handcart and you'd go. I went to Staro-Beshevo,⁴ to the Roy. There were vegetable gardens. At the plant, they

¹ This likely refers to the metallurgical plant in what is today Donetsk.

² Stalino was the name of what is now Donetsk from 1929 to 1961.

³ Mogilev is a city in current-day eastern Belarus. In Belarusian, it is Mahilyow.

⁴ Staro-Beshevo is a town in current-day Ukraine about 35 kilometers southeast of Donetsk/Stalino.

gave land. It was bad. At that time my beard was overgrown, so I looked about 80 years old. I had lost weight. Now, thank you. We're supported a little.

Most of the people speculated. Say, if a woman doesn't work and is healthy, she'll go to the village to barter, and sell it here. I myself made lighters at home. All the turbines were torn here. Pipes were lying around. People would take them. They made buckets. You have to live off something. You'd go to the market. People are carrying metal around. You'd buy it, make a bucket. And this is what people lived off of.

The Germans did not bother us as much as our Russian police did. For example, I had a vegetable garden on the third pond. I'm going from the vegetable garden with my daughter, and we are running late. We are taking potato, sunflower, and corn by cart. As it happened, there was a prisoner camp there. If we pass by near it, the city is closer than going around, in the gullies. So we are going. A policeman is standing there:

-You are not allowed to walk here.

We stopped. I say:

-Can we go to the commandant, so that he will let us pass.

[L.19 reverse] -Well, come here.

I say:

-Allow me to ask for permission, because I have a load of 4 sacks.

He takes me and reports to the commandant:

-So, -he says, -He did not fulfill my order. He came onto our territory.

The translator passes this on to the German commandant. The way that he looked at me, I thought he would eat me alive. I address the translator and I say that I was going with my cart, with a heavy load, and I asked the policeman to let me through, and stopped, not reaching this territory. I don't know what he passed on. In any case, the German gave me a savage look. I'm thinking: he will thrash me now. And there is a whip in his hands. Then the translator says to the policeman:

-Let him go.

The other signals to come here. I say:

-But what about our cart?

-You are being ordered!

He pushed me hard:

-I'm going to shoot now. Quickly.

I say:

-You can shoot, -and I went. My daughter started to turn the cart, and it turned over. We set it aright and went. This was in 1942.

We had a brigade. Sometimes there were 3 people, sometimes 4. They gave leave to go to the countryside. He is going for bread, they would write. The head of the shop would give the leave. Trukhmanov's name was Sergey Ivanovich. When

they fired him, he went to work at the trolley park. I had a wage-rate of 650 rubles.⁵ They gave 30 grams of meat per week. You bring a piece home and you don't know whether to make soup or give it to the cat. My family is my wife and daughter, and my two sons are in the army. One worked as an engineer at the Bose.⁶ He is a lieutenant now. The other worked in Tula,⁷ also an engineer-builder. He had sent me a letter before the war, saying that he was being taken to go to the front. Both are now at the Leningrad front.

Fillipov installed the plant station. He is here. While our job is to fit the electric cranes. We fitted one in the foundry, and it works even now. They call it the seven-tonner, and the small crane.

Before the retreat of the Germans I took leave to harvest pumpkins. It was very early, but people started to harvest their vegetable gardens. Only mine was left and in any case, it turned out that the Germans were retreating. If we didn't harvest the vegetable garden, people could have taken it. I asked for three days of leave. They gave it to me thanks to Kalashnikov, the head of the shop. When the leave ended, I was going to the plant, and they didn't let me in. An announcement: you will get shot for walking around the plant. My leave ended on Friday. On the next day there was an announcement: all men under 65 are to evacuate. I had anticipated this earlier. I had an overgrown beard. I was afraid, because my brothers were once well-known people. My brother Yakov Zalmaev⁸ last worked as the director of a nature preserve in Kazakhstan. Here he was the boss of the city in the days of the revolution, the chairman of the soviet of deputies.⁹ One brother died, a Red Guard.¹⁰ My sister was cut down by Cossacks back during the civil war. Under the Germans I tried to be out and about less, fearing that they would point out that this the brother of so and so. I had to tuck my tail and hold my tongue.

When the Red Army arrived, I went to the plant right away. They told me that they were calling me up to the open hearth furnace.

We have now fitted a 175-ton crane, a 12-tonner, and two loading ones. I had the No. 4 5-ton crane. It had a motor. The rest of the 5-ton cranes were all evacuated

⁵ The wage-rate in this context is likely the rate for a month.

⁶ This likely refers to the Donetshirmash/Donetsgormash enterprise, located in this area, which before 1920 carried the name "Mechanical engineering and iron foundry plant of the engineers E. T. Bosse and R. G. Gennefel'd". The plant was named after its founders, the Baltic German engineers Eduard Teodor Bosse and Rudolf Gennefel'd.

⁷ Tula is a city in the current-day Russian Federation, about 800 kilometers north of Donetsk.

⁸ Yakov Zalmaev was a member of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party from 1906 and active functionary in many Soviet organs, both in Soviet Ukraine and other parts of the Soviet Union. He died in 1939.

⁹ Zalmaev was indeed the chairman of the Yuzovka (old name of Stalino/Donetsk) soviet and was also the chairman of the Yuzovka military-revolutionary committee in parts of the revolutionary period.

¹⁰ The Red Guards were volunteer paramilitary formations supportive of Soviet power in the early parts of the civil war in the former Russian Empire. They eventually became integrated into the (at the time) new Red Army.

by us back then. We had to sort through, clean out, and approve all the materials. We had to restore the 175-ton crane. In 1919, we had a 12-ton crane and a 90-tonner, but there wasn't a 175-tonner. The crane that collapsed now - that's the 90-tonner. It was adjusted to lift 75-ton buckets. It always ran on electricity. This 175-ton electric crane was installed in 1935-36. There were three of these cranes. One collapsed, one had its motors removed. A part was evacuated, a part remained here. The Germans ruined them. They ruined the open hearth furnace columns and spoiled the reds.¹¹ [L.20] We had to fit the cranes, the ones that work now. Everything was torn, and someone else, I don't know, tore up all the connections. I had to work on this. I had to restore one big 175-ton crane, then a 12-ton cleaner crane. Two fans are working. The forced blowing fans were restored. The grog mill was restored.

¹¹ It is unclear what the phrase used here refers to.