

Translation: Galyna Lavrova

[L.16] Transcript of an interview with Semyon Pavlovich Shmadchenko, a worker of the Sevastopol Shipyard

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Sevastopol.

The interview was conducted by Captain Z.I. Fazin.
Transcribed by A.I. Shamshina

I have worked at the plant for 40 years, since 1903. I went to the reserve in the service and started working. I served in the army. It was in the Belostotsky regiment stationed in Sevastopol. As the service ended, I started working as a blacksmith at the Sevastopol Shipyard. I graduated from the Zemstvo industrial school. I was born in 1878 in a peasant family at the Lozovaya station, Dobrovolcheskaya volost, Jakobtsovka village. I'm non-partisan.

We worked at the shipyard until the last days. I worked both here and in the adit. It was a week here and a week in the adit. We worked a little here, and there more. We worked until the point when it was impossible to work any more. The Germans stormed in and began to shoot so that it was impossible to get out to the bathroom and go out into the yard. They put a lavatory in the adit. It was very difficult. There was nowhere to spend the night there, so we went home. As you ran home, there was a bomb behind, then there was a bomb in front. Then we looked, 2 or 3 people had been killed in the adit.

We fixed tools and made some small forgings. There were passages from the tunnel and into the adit, so we passed. Once or twice we have already walked home through the tunnel. The steps were just not finished. We armed an armored train, did all the forging.

I left a week before the Germans arrived. Because of the bombs, it was impossible to walk, it was impossible to work at the factory. The Germans entered from Inkerman. They called to go to work. Some drove us with a rifle, while others did not. 3 or 4 people came to me, they were driving me to work. Here you had to go, because they would force you with a rifle, it was no joke. He acted strictly. I did not go as soon as they entered, only two weeks later. I worked under a mine tower. There were some operational workshops of the fleet. The boats were fixed there, they brought them from there, and they made a patch for a ship. All the time I worked in these workshops as a blacksmith. They fed us only water, it was bad. They gave us 300 grams of bread. The dinner was bad, it was skilly. I had to go through this situation. It was a difficult situation. They would make small dumplings from bran, they crumbled in water.

They paid us 1.70-2 rubles. Our money was more in use. The director of the workshop was Russian, but he came with them from France, he was a count. He is in Simferopol now, in captivity. He's a good guy. In France he was a gardener, here he

taught our children how to equip a vegetable garden. As he was saying, “our family,” he said, “is of workers.”

I happened to see how people were beaten, but mostly the ones who were not artisans. As we went through the plant, laborers, prisoners were working, and they were kicked. I haven't seen the artisans being beaten.

[L.16 the reverse side] We had no means for living. I had an old wife. My children were in the Caucasus, 8 souls, they were evacuated with the plant, a mechanic and a foreman are still writing letters to me that they are alive and healthy. My old wife went to the gorge to see another old woman, and I was at home. We exchanged everything we had. They didn't need money, but they took our stuff. My old wife went there with a wheelbarrow. 2-3 women would get together and go away for a week, then they brought a pood or two of corn. They received 300 grams of bread and divided it so that it would last for today and tomorrow. I gave my shoes to some Romanians for 2 pounds of barley, but he, son of a bitch, gave only a pound of barley. It was a military boatswain from a ship.

Ships came here, but not so many, more went to Kamyshevaya Bay. Now I have no shoes for the winter. The factory used to make shoes for me, because I wore size 45-46 and my bone stuck out.

We didn't have anything like that with the Germans, the Germans didn't exchange things. I have not seen Italians. For more than 2 years we had a hard time living like this. They did not come to me. They went where women and girls were. So all the time I worked in these workshops. I left two weeks before our troops arrived. I got my passport. At first they did not give passports, and then they started giving passports back to old people. I took my passport and left.

When our troops arrived, I myself went to the plant to register at the recruitment department in 3-4 days. We found out that director Surguchev had arrived. The recruitment department signed me up. They asked, “What do you want to work with?” I said, “I have worked as a blacksmith all the time.” “No, old man, you are not suitable for blacksmiths, become a guard.”

I started working as a guard, it didn't work out. They transferred me to Korabelnaya. I stayed there for two nights, then the engineer Kuznetsov took me to his workshop. I can still work. A young man won't do what I can do. I have been a blacksmith from an early age. Now there are no good young blacksmiths. Now there are no good jobs. I did big jobs, good ones, and this job now is about fixing tools for the shipyard. Now we are setting up a boat to transport artisans to the shipyard, since it takes too long to walk there.

I can work quite well, and there is still work to do. They say to me, “Old man, you need to stay at home,” but I think: no, there's no use in me staying at home. I will be useful for the state and earn a piece of bread, but what will I do at home? My children may be coming soon.