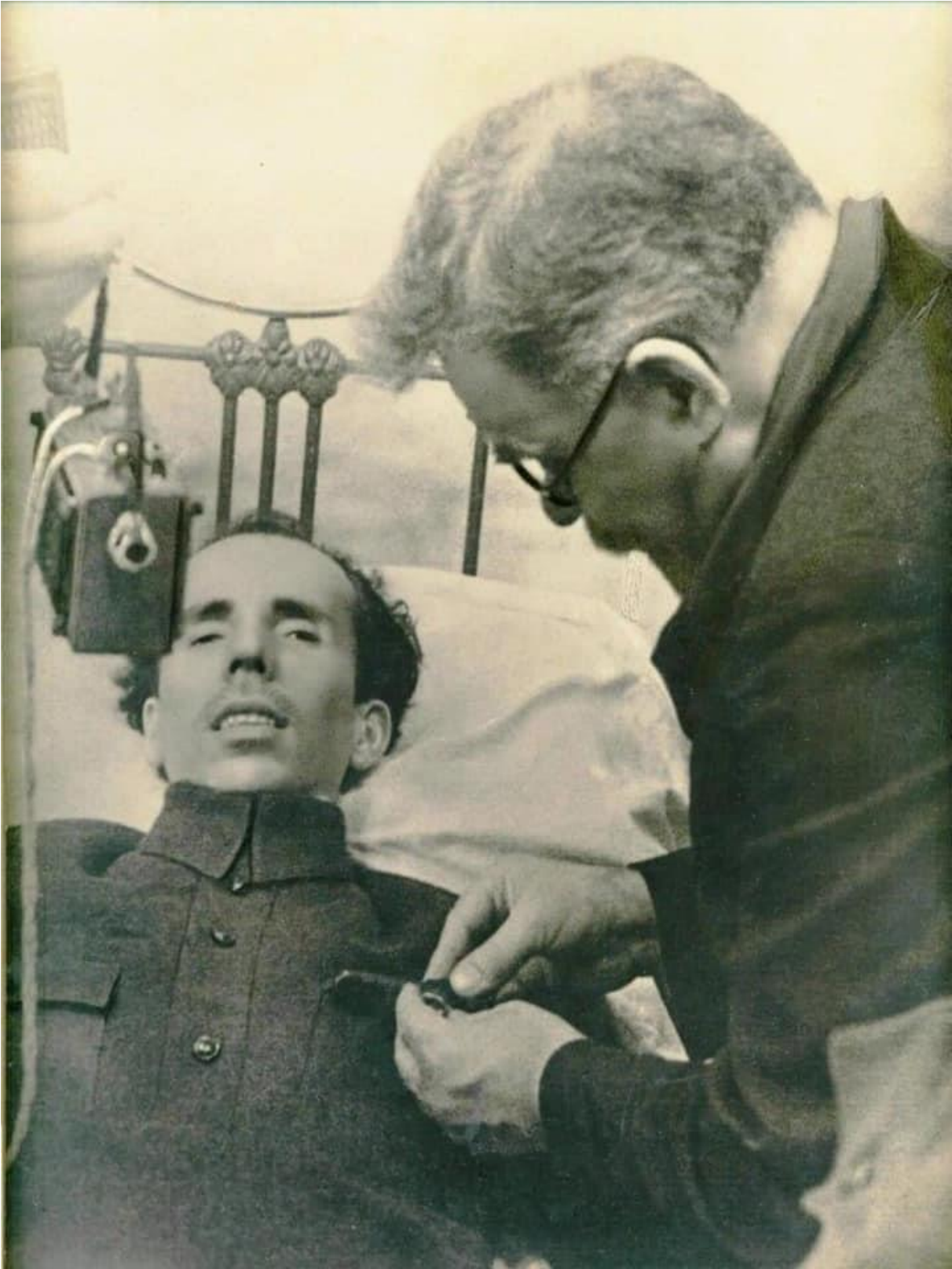


Nicolai Ostrovsky

HOW THE STEEL WAS TEMPERED

A REVOLUTIONARY NOVEL















On September 29, 1904, the outstanding Soviet writer Nikolai Alekseevich Ostrovsky was born, whose personal feat and imperishable works became guidelines in choosing a life path for millions ...

N. Ostrovsky's books were published in 75 languages more than 770 times with a total circulation of 57 million copies. In Soviet times, there were three film adaptations of *How the Steel Was Tempered*.

The first cosmonaut Yu. A. Gagarin commented on the novel "How the Steel Was Tempered":

"A simple working lad, Pavka Korchagin, who fought for Soviet power, for the future of the Soviet Motherland, is close and understandable to millions of people ... Korchaginians of my generation, who matured in the post-war years, developed virgin lands, built Bratsk, paved the way to the stars ... As for me, then in the most difficult moments, I remembered the iron stubbornness and unbending will of Pavka Korchagin.

We were led by youth

On a saber hike

We were abandoned by youth

On the Kronstadt ice.

War horses

They took us away

On a wide area

They killed us.

But in feverish blood

We were rising

But the eyes are blind

We opened...

Nikolai Ostrovsky and his novel *How the Steel Was Tempered* played an outstanding role in educating the generation that grew up, hardened in the 1920s and 1930s and made a major contribution to our Victory over Nazism. For my generation, Ostrovsky and Pavel Korchagin became a particularly attractive moral model.

Nikolai Alekseevich Ostrovsky was born on September 29, 1904 in the village of Viliya, Volyn province (now Rivne region of Ukraine). His grandfather, Ivan Vasilyevich Ostrovsky, with the rank of non-commissioned officer, fought on the Malakhov Kurgan during the defense of Sevastopol during the Crimean War (1853-1855). Father, Alexei Ivanovich, in the rank of non-commissioned officer, participated in the Balkan War of 1877-1878, was awarded two St. George Crosses for military exploits.

Nikolai Ostrovsky loved his father and was proud of him. According to Ekaterina Alekseevna, the writer's sister, their father told them about the courage and heroic deeds of Russian soldiers in Bulgaria "during the defense of Shipka and Plevna, in which he himself was a participant. These stories had, no doubt, a great influence on the impressionable boy.

The fact that from an early age Ostrovsky was proud of his grandfather and father, hereditary military men, may explain his craving for military service. As a boy, he ran away to the front twice. "After all, I am a military man by vocation," he admitted to the writer V. Dmitrieva. And he added that if this "damned disease" had not happened to him, he would not have become a writer, but a military man. Ostrovsky was delighted when in 1936 he was enrolled in the Political Directorate of the Red Army with the rank of brigade commissar. Putting on a commissar's gymnast, he said: "Now I have returned to duty along this line, which is very important for a citizen of the Republic."

Komsomol and labor

In 1919, N. Ostrovsky joined the Komsomol, volunteered for the front, in 1920 he was seriously wounded near Lvov. After demobilization from the army, he became an assistant electrician in the Kyiv railway workshops. In the autumn of 1921, he worked on the construction of a narrow-gauge branch for the delivery of firewood to Kyiv. Here, saving the rafting, Nikolai threw himself into the cold water, caught a bad cold, caught rheumatism, fell ill with typhus

In 1922, the eighteen-year-old Ostrovsky was sent into retirement. In 1923-1924 he was the military commissar of Vsevobuch. Later he became the secretary of the district committee of the Komsomol in Berezdovo and Izyaslav, the secretary of the district committee of the Komsomol in Shepetovka. This work required a good understanding of the urgent needs of people, the ability to influence their mood in word and deed. With complete dedication and youthful maximalism, he devoted himself entirely to working with young people.

Ostrovsky became an exemplary leader and organizer of the first Komsomol cells in the villages of the then border regions of Ukraine. Despite his serious illness, he participated in the struggle of the ChON detachments with armed gangs.

Here is his confession: "I have never been lazy." Laziness in his mind is a terrible disease that needs to be treated. He was convinced that it was possible to work in the most difficult, most disgusting conditions: "Not only is it possible, but also necessary, if there is no other situation." He thought so: "The happiest person is the one who, falling asleep, can say that the day has not been lived in vain, that he is justified by work." Ostrovsky stated: "Labor is a wonderful thing. In work, all sorrows, sadness about unfulfilled hopes and much more are forgotten, which cannot be given free rein to a person of our time. He said: "Work is the noblest healer of all ills. There is nothing more joyful than work."

How did Nikolai Ostrovsky study

Even before school, Nikolai learned to read and write. He had an excellent memory, he graduated from the parochial school with a certificate of merit at the beginning of 1913, when he was not yet nine years old. In Shepetivka in 1917, he entered the second grade of an elementary school, renamed a two-year public school, and graduated from it in 1918. On his initiative, a literary circle was created here, and a handwritten magazine "Flowers of Youth" was published. In the autumn of 1918, Nikolai entered the higher primary school, which was transformed into a unified labor school, and graduated from it in 1921. He was a member of the editorial board of the wall newspaper, he was very fond of music, loved to sing.

Director of the higher primary school V.K. Rozhanovsky wrote:

"Performances were put on by the students. Ostrovsky sang in the choir and took part in productions ... Kolya was an excellent student in all subjects. Very capable, serious, a favorite of the entire school team, both teachers and students. He enjoyed great prestige among the students. Kolya is a permanent member of the editorial board of the wall newspaper. Most of the newspaper was filled with articles by Kolya Ostrovsky.

Nikolai's classmate at the higher elementary school, M. Nizhnyaya, recalled: "I have known Ostrovsky since 1918. ... He seemed older than his years, he was developed, inquisitive, he knew how to ask teachers very serious questions. ... In general, he stood head and shoulders above everyone. School friend of Ostrovsky L.A. Borisovich (the prototype of Tonya Tumanova), a teacher in the Khmelnytsky region, recalled: "All the girls in the class just loved Kolya. He didn't hurt anyone. The day of graduation of our class has come... Teachers wrote us characteristics. Kolya Ostrovsky was prophesied a certain future. Borisovich admitted: "In the life of such a dear friend as Nikolai

Ostrovsky was for me, I never had to meet again. In 1935, N. Ostrovsky sent me a work with the inscription: "To my beloved friend of my youth."

Nikolay became a member of the party in 1924, in 1927 he entered the correspondence department of the Communist University. Having become an invalid, Ostrovsky especially read a lot, got acquainted with many outstanding works of art. He stubbornly prepared for writing, knowing full well that without high culture, without proper mastery of the secrets of literary art, one cannot create a work that deserves the attention of readers. Truly heroic efforts helped him achieve what, in his most difficult position, seemed impossible.

Mikhail Isakovsky wrote:

"Nikolai Ostrovsky became a famous writer not at all because he was disabled, but because he turned out to be a very talented person. ... Ostrovsky found the strength to study, improve his knowledge, his cultural level. He became an educated person and, in particular, understood well what literature is and what he himself can give to it. If none of this happened, Ostrovsky would not have written his books, even though he really wanted to write.

The history of the creation of the novel "How the Steel Was Tempered"

M.Ya. Purin, an employee of the Pravda newspaper, reported: "At the end of 1926 ... Nikolai had to solve a complex and difficult question: how to live in order to be useful to society?" She "remembered how colorfully he told combat episodes from his life. Why shouldn't he write about it? Nicholas agreed with my proposal.

In 1927, Ostrovsky lost the ability to move, at the beginning of 1929 he went blind. He strove in this seemingly hopeless state to make life useful to others. In the autumn of 1927, Ostrovsky began writing his autobiographical Tale of the Cats. Subsequently, he called it "the very first version of the future book" How the Steel Was Tempered".

To alleviate the tragic fate of Ostrovsky, the communists I. Fedenev, A. Zhigireva, P. Novikov and others did a lot in solving everyday problems and publishing concerns - people of high morality, unbending fighters for social justice. Khrisanf Chernokozov, a member of the bureau of the regional committee of the party, and A. Zhigireva will become especially dear people for him, in the years of a serious illness they will truly be his support.

Zhigireva was sentenced to permanent settlement in Siberia for revolutionary work, she was released after the overthrow of the autocracy. She met Ostrovsky in 1928 and became a loyal friend until his death. He gave her a copy of the book "How the Steel Was Tempered" with the inscription: "To my dear, dear, beloved Shurochka from my "younger brother" and friend." Noticing the brilliant abilities of Ostrovsky as a storyteller, Zhigireva "advised him to take up literary work."

In 1930, the blind, motionless Ostrovsky began to work on the novel How the Steel Was Tempered. He dictated the text of the book to many "voluntary secretaries".

Zhigireva in 1931 received chapters of the novel from Ostrovsky, retyped on a typewriter. She recalled: "I read the manuscript and cried. I wrote to Kolya: "I am not a writer, but your novel reaches the soul."

Fedenev said: "The novel made a huge impression on me. After reading the manuscript, I took it to the Young Guard publishing house. In it, the manuscript received a devastating review: the author "did not cope with his task", "the types he derived are unrealistic, the manuscript cannot be accepted for publication." Fedenev insisted on a second review.

M. Kolosov, deputy editor-in-chief of the Young Guard magazine, wrote: "Disagreeing with the negative review received from the Young Guard publishing house, Fedenev said that the publishing

house decided to send the manuscript to me for a second review and they ask me to give my opinion. ...I read the manuscript without stopping. From the first pages, I was captivated by the power of the truth of life, which in art is achieved not by a chaotic heap of facts, but by the ability to tell a story and accurately reproduce the dialectic of the hero's spiritual life. ... That same evening, I called Anna Karavaeva, the editor-in-chief of the magazine, and wrote a review for the publisher."

The first part of the novel *How the Steel Was Tempered* was published by the *Young Guard* magazine in 1932, and the second part was completed in 1934. In October 1936, Ostrovsky shared his plans in an interview with a *Pravda* correspondent: "I want to write a book for children. Then a fantasy novel. And then the last volume of *How the Steel Was Tempered*, entitled *Korchagin's Happiness*."

Who wrote "How the Steel Was Tempered"

The authors of a number of publications, seeking to compromise Ostrovsky in any way, inspire a lie that he did not write the novel himself. English journalists at first did not believe in his real life and stated that the book "How the Steel Was Tempered" was written by a team of experienced writers for propaganda purposes. When they met the writer, they admitted their mistake, writing: "Poor Ostrovsky had something more than just skill. He was, in a way, a genius."

But Russian liberals do not admit to their mistake - of course, because it was not a mistake, but the result of malicious intent. Professor V. Musatov in the textbook "History of Russian Literature of the First Half of the 20th Century (Soviet Period)" (2001) writes that the book "How the Steel Was Tempered" "became a kind of hallmark of the Idea, capable of miraculously organizing the human personality, and received huge reader success. Ostrovsky has turned into a personality as legendary as his hero. And then Musatov announced that "the very process of creating the text of the novel was precisely of a collective nature."

Where does this come from? The story of M. Kuprina-Lordanskaya is cited: "The writer Lenoble Heinrich ... told me that the novel "How the Steel Was Tempered" was made by seven people. The author's version of the novel was completely unreadable. I asked Lenoble: "Why did you go for this deception?" He replied, "If it wasn't for me, someone else would have done it." So Lenoble was a co-author of the novel? But how can one believe this if he, the critic, has not created a single work of art of his own?

Viktor Astafiev wrote that Karavaeva and Kolosov "went to Sochi to see Nikolai Ostrovsky on an assignment from the Central Committee of the Komsomol on a creative business trip, helped the sick and blind author to finalize the manuscript of the future famous book." But during the life of Ostrovsky Kolosov had never been to Sochi, and Karavaeva - only once, in 1934, on his way to the Gagrinsky House of Creativity. The novel "How the Steel Was Tempered" at that time was completed in manuscript. There are no chapters, pages, even paragraphs written by the hand of A. Karavaeva or M. Kolosov.

When the literary critic B. Dayrejiev urged the writer Vsevolod Ivanov to take over the "instrumentation", "technical polishing and sounding" of the book, after which "it will become on a par with the best examples of the socialist epic", Ostrovsky wrote on May 11, 1935: "We, the young writers who have just entered literature are eagerly learning from the masters of world and Soviet literature. We take the best from their experience. They teach us. A.S. Serafimovich gave me whole days of his rest. The great master passed on his experience to the young apprentice. And I remember these meetings with Serafimovich with great satisfaction. Anna Karavaeva, being ill, read my manuscript, made her own instructions and corrections. ... From their instructions, I drew conclusions and threw away everything unnecessary with my own hand. With your own hand! ... The book has many shortcomings. She is far from perfect. But if the respected Vsevolod Ivanov writes it again, then whose work will it be - his or mine? I am ready to learn from Vsevolod Ivanov. But he must remake

his book himself, having thought through and generalized the instructions of the masters of literature.