

THE MYTH OF THE WOMAN WARRIOR AND WORLD WAR II
IN SOVIET CULTURE

By

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Abstract

“The Myth of the Woman Warrior and World War II in Soviet Culture” defines, analyzes, and explains the figure of the Soviet “woman warrior” who participated in World War II, asking the questions: what is the nature of the woman warrior in works about World War II and what does her portrayal tell us about Soviet culture and memory? Although the woman warrior has deep roots in Russian culture, this topic has received almost no attention from a cultural perspective. After a discussion of the 1930s militarization, this study turns to works depicting women who participated in WWII and argues that these depictions fall into three types based on deep archetypes: the martyr, handmaiden, and the “*polianitsa*,” or knight. This dissertation elucidates essentialist and constructivist intersections by investigating why certain images of women motivated Soviet citizens during the war and then became powerful myths that shaped national consciousness.

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On Translation and Transliteration

Unless otherwise noted, the translations are the author's. This dissertation uses Library of Congress transcription, except in cases in which the name is widely recognized in another system, for example, Tolstoy.

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Introduction

И [Зина Радина] никогда не забудет, какой ценой нам досталась светлая жизнь, не забудет своей прекрасной боевой юности. Я видела, как она рассказывала сыну о войне: Серьезно и настороженно, словно прислушиваясь к далекому-далекому грому. Наверное, все мы, бывшие фронтовики, так вспоминаем свою юность, прошедшую в огне Великой отечественной войны.¹

(And [Zina Radina] will never forget at what cost we came into possession of our bright life, will never forget her beautiful military youth. I saw how she told her son about the war. Seriously and warily, as though listening to the distant thunder of battle. Surely, that is how all of us former frontline soldiers remember our youth, the youth that passed in the fire of the Great Patriotic War.)

With this excerpt, we glimpse a woman veteran's effort to convey her experience as a fighter pilot in World War II to a younger person. Hero of the Soviet Union Marina Chechneva captures Zina Radina's pride in her military service. Years after the war, Radina still hears the thunder of battle and she describes the youth she spent at war as "splendid." This dissertation examines the figure of the Soviet woman warrior of World War II, as represented by writers, artists, filmmakers, and the women veterans themselves as makers of cultural memory. Its goal is to imprint upon the reader how thoroughly these myths have penetrated Soviet culture.

"The Myth of the Woman Warrior and World War II in Soviet Culture" addresses one of the less appreciated aspects of Russian culture as a whole: the perception of women at war. Most Russians who acknowledge women's participation in the war assume that, like much else, women who fought were simply following state policy and were motivated by a sense of patriotic duty. This

¹ Марина Чечнева, *Боевые подруги мои* (Москва: ДОСААФ, 1975), 430.

dissertation shows that there was a considerable dialogue between the state and its citizens across many cultural forms about women's motivations to fight. It examines the place of the archetype of the fighting woman in the war and Soviet culture in general. This study asks broad questions about the construction of gender, women's agency, and the fight over a nation's cultural memory. It investigates how women who fought in World War II are represented in texts, official and unofficial, public and private.

This dissertation employs the term "woman warrior" popularized in the title of Maxine Hong Kingston's 1976 novel. In many cultures, the woman warrior is a deep-seated cultural pattern or archetype. She is a strong, courageous leader. Unlike the word "Amazon," the woman warrior does not exist in a historical moment or a physical location. Her presence across cultures and through the centuries shows that she is one of the basic patterns in the human psyche. In Soviet culture, a woman warrior manifests herself as a soldier who participates in a combat situation either as a uniformed member of the armed services on the front or a woman waging war in the underground as a partisan.

The mother remains by far the dominant female archetype in Russian culture. In contrast to Western cultures, where until recently women have debated taking up arms rather than actually doing it, the Russians have a long tradition of women going onto the battlefield and fighting alongside male soldiers. The acceptance of women in combat has waxed and waned throughout the ages, but during the militarization campaigns of the 1930s, the media bombarded women and girls with images that

encouraged them to prepare for an impending war by learning how to handle weaponry, fly planes, nurse wounded, and conduct chemical warfare. These militarized women were hailed as “patriotic daughters of the Motherland” in popular magazines, and upon the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union June 22, 1941 many of them became snipers, pilots, doctors, nurses, medics, radio operators, and translators.

Shortly after the beginning of the war, keepers of cultural memory—journalists, poets, fiction-writers—began writing about women soldiers. Some developed into vastly popular myths that shaped national consciousness and, indeed, continue to be recognized and embraced even after the end of the Soviet Union. Other female soldiers were forgotten shortly after the war. Why should this heroization of some and forgetting of others be the case?

In this period, images of women warriors fall into three types based on deep cultural archetypes: the martyr, the handmaiden, and the knight (*polianitsa*). The Soviet woman warrior, of course, existed in the mass culture of a totalitarian regime and her image was strongly shaped by those in power. During the Stalinist period, in particular, there was little space for alternate voices. Against expectations, however, this dissertation finds that the portrayal of women warriors depends very much upon who is speaking, photographing, or painting and when he or she created the work.

Why did women wage war on such a grand scale during the Soviet period, and what does the figure of the woman in combat mean in Soviet culture? Although there is little discourse related to women in combat, Soviet women inherited a deep tradition of women fighting on the battlefield. In July 1926, Commissar for Military

Affairs Kliment Voroshilov and Chief of Staff Mikhail Tukhachevskii determined in July, 1926 that the Red Army was unprepared for war.² In response, the Soviet Union began the militarization campaign that led to the arming of hundreds of thousands of women. Prior militarization, Russian women had already long proven that they were suited for combat. This history, combined with propaganda and a state policy of preparing all citizens for war, set the stage for the mass entry of women into the military. This dissertation studies the manipulation of words and images used to inspire women to prepare for war and then the arguments made afterward about the meaning of women at arms.

Cultural representations of East Slavic women fighting date back to pre-Christian time. In the magic tale “Mar’ia Morevna,” Prince Ivan encounters a field of warriors, reportedly slain by a warrior queen: “Собрался в дорогу, шел-шел и видит—лежит в поле рать-сила побитая. Спрашивает Иван-царевич: ‘Коли есть тут жив человек—отзовися! Кто побил это войско великое?’ Отозвался ему жив человек: ‘Все это войско великое побила Марья Моревна, прекрасная королева’”³ (“He made ready, walked and walked, and one day beheld a host of troops lying slain on the field. Prince Ivan said: ‘If any man is alive here, let him answer me. Who slew this great army?’ One man answered him: ‘All this great army was slain by Maria Morevna, the beautiful queen’”).⁴ Women warriors also

² David R. Stone, *Hammer and Rifle: The Militarization of the Soviet Union, 1926-1933* (Lawrence: The University of Kansas, 2000), 22.

³ “Марья Моревна,” in *Библиолетка Русского Фольклора: Сказки кн. I*, ред. Л. М. Леонов (Москва: Советская Россия, 1988), 392.

⁴ Aleksandr Afanas’ev, *Russian Fairy Tales*, trans. Norbert Guterman (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), 554.

play prominent roles in the heroic, epic, poems of the medieval period, *byliny*. In *byliny*, armed women, *polianitsy*, disguised as male knights, ride out onto the battlefield and challenge male warriors.

In the *bylina* “Stavr Godinovich,” Vasilisa Nikulichna, Stavr’s wife rescues her husband from Prince Vladimir’s prison by assuming a male identity and proving to Vladimir (through archery, wrestling, and *gusli* playing) that she is a better warrior than any of Vladimir’s retinue:

Скорешенько бежала она к фельдшерам,
Подрубила волоса по-молодецки-де,
Накрутилася Васильем Микуличем [the masculine version of her name],
Брала дружинушки хоробрыя,
Сорок молодцов удалых стрельцов,
Сорок молодцов удалых борцов,
Поехала ко-о граду ко Киеву.⁵

(She quickly ran to the barbers [sic],
She trimmed her hair like a youth’s,
She dressed herself like Vasily Nikulich [the masculine version of her name],
She took along a brave *druzhina*,
Forty youths who were daring archers,
Forty youths who were also daring wrestlers,
She set off riding to the city of Kiev).⁶

Polianitsy (female knights), like Vasilisa Nikulichna, are agents of their own fate.

They do not think about the right to bear arms. They simply dress as male knights, and, as such, join the male establishment.

These women are often motivated by a love for their homeland and a need to defend their father.⁷ They ride and fight as well as, if not better than, male knights

⁵ “Ставр Годинович,” in *Былины в двух томах, том второй* (Москва: Государственное Издательство Художественной Литературы, 1958), 121-22.

⁶ “Stavgor Godinovich,” in *An Anthology of Russian Folk Epics*, trans. by James Bailey and Tatyana Ivanova (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998) 268-69.

and are usually indistinguishable from them, until a key moment when the male knight bears his adversary's breast. In a striking parallel with the demobilized World War II veterans, these women are eventually compelled to stop waging war after marrying, Stavr Godinovich's wife being an exception. Even in the epic past, maternity and the military were considered to be incompatible.

One also finds historical examples of women warriors, such as those that participated in Stepan Razin's uprising. One of them, Alena Arzamasskaia (Temnikovskaia) passed herself off as a Cossack leader and formed a detachment of men, which eventually grew to six thousand. After being captured and tortured, she was executed for refusing to name rebel leaders.⁸ Although Catherine the Great's close advisor Grigorii Potemkin formed a women's military company for the empress's amusement, they had no permanent place in Russian cultural memory.⁹ Nadezhda Durova (1783-1866), the first Russian woman to serve as an officer in battle, was the first woman warrior to achieve national, lasting fame for her military exploits, after she published fictionalized memoirs about her experiences in the Napoleonic wars. Andreas Schnole argues that during Durova's service in the military, she creates an alternate gender identity, combining characteristics that

⁷ Vasilisa Nikulichna is motivated to action by love for her husband, who was imprisoned as a result of his boasting that she is a more skilled warrior than Vladimir's male subjects.

⁸ Natalia Pushkareva, *Women in Russian History*, trans. and ed. Eve Levin (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 82-83.

⁹ Alfred G. Meyer, "The Impact of World War I on Russian Women's Lives," in *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, eds. Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel, and Christine D. Worobec (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 219.

qualified her as female while playing a male role.¹⁰ Russian women reportedly served in the Crimean War (1853-56) and participated in World War I in mixed-gender military units, after passing themselves off as men.¹¹ Many women served in Iasha Bochkareva's famed "women's death battalion" without disguising their gender identity. In the Civil War, women fought on every front in all capacities, in both women's segregated detachments and alongside men in mixed units, most notably as partisans and political commissars.¹² These mythical and historical precedents supported the Soviet state's official position on gender equality and its need for trained combatants, leading to the mass influx of women into civil defense organizations in the decade and a half that preceded World War II. The massive inclusion of women in military life could not have happened at any time in Russian history other than in the late 1920s and 1930s when the fear of war overlapped with the expansion of opportunities for women.

My study of the myth of the woman warrior is part of a larger discussion, which has captivated writers and scholars in various disciplines, as the image of the woman warrior has gained international prominence. Much recent interest in the image of the woman warrior has followed the reconfiguration of the Chinese folkloric figure of Mulan in Kingston's novel, *The Woman Warrior*. Kingston reworks the Mulan myth, merging maternity and warfare, so that Mulan marries and

¹⁰ Andreas Schönle, "Gender Trial and Gothic Thrill: Nadezhda Durova's Subversive Self-Exploration," *Gender and Sexuality in Russian Civilisation*, ed. Peter I. Barta (Guildford: University of Surrey Press, 2001), 66.

¹¹ Alfred G. Meyer, "The Impact of World War I on Russian Women's Lives," in *Russia's Women*, 219.

¹² Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism 1860-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 318-22.

bears a child while still in warrior's armor. Literary scholars have explored women warriors in Greek folk songs, in late medieval Italian prose epics, in the Amadis cycle, in seventeenth-century French fiction, in eighteenth-century Anglo-American ballads, in Italian and English Renaissance epics, and in nineteenth-century Bengali fiction.¹³ In 1991, Jessica Amanda Salmonson published an international compilation of both historical and mythological women warriors.¹⁴ Books about the most famous woman warrior, Joan of Arc, continue to appear. One finds evidence of the appeal of the woman warrior in anthropologist Jeannine Davis-Kimball's *Warrior Women: An Archaeologist's Search for History's Hidden Heroines* (2002), more an autobiography than a scholarly text.¹⁵ She directs her book toward a general audience as she details her research on nomads of the steppe, Caucasus, and Mongolia and introduces these nomads to the reader through the image of the Amazon, who, according to archeological evidence, roamed the steppes centuries ago.

¹³ Gloria Allaire, "The Warrior Woman in Late Medieval Prose Epics," *Italian Culture* 12 (1994): 33-43; Merlinda Bobis, "Re-inventing the epic: notes on adapting a traditional genre," *Australasian Drama Studies* 25 (1994): 117-29; Dianne Dugaw, "Balladry's Female Warriors: Women, Warfare, and Disguise in the Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth Century Life* 9, no. 2 (1985): 1-20; Diana Macintyre DeLuca, "Forgetful of Her Yoke: The Woman Warrior in Three Renaissance Epics" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1981); Marlies Mueller, "The Taming of the Amazon: the Changing Image of the Woman Warrior in *Ancien Régime* Fiction," *Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature* 22, no. 42 (1995): 199-232; Sangeeta Ray, "Nationalism in Drag: The Woman Warrior in Anandamath," *Contributions to Bengal Studies: An Interdisciplinary and International Approach*, ed. Enayetur Rahim and Henry Schwarz (Pustaka: Dhaka, 1998); Thomas P. Roche, Jr., "Ariosto's Marfisa: Or, Camilla Domesticated," *Modern Language Notes* 103, no. 1 (1988): 113-33; Alison Taufer, "The Only Good Amazon is a Converted Amazon: The Woman Warrior and Christianity in the *Amadis Cycle*," in *Playing with Gender: A Renaissance Pursuit*, ed. Jean R. Brink, Maryanne C. Horowitz, and Allison P. Coudert (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 35-48.

¹⁴ Jessica Amanda Salmonson, *The Encyclopedia of Amazons: Women Warriors from Antiquity to the Modern Era* (New York: Paragon House, 1991).

¹⁵ Jeannine Davis-Kimball with Mona Behan, *Warrior Women: An Archeologist's Search for History's Hidden Heroines* (New York: Warner Books, 2003).

The presence of women warriors across cultural, linguistic, and genre boundaries shows the controversial character of the armed woman in culture. This dissertation contributes to the international scholarly discussion the first lengthy study of the woman warrior in Soviet culture. Originally, I had conceived of this study as an analysis of the archetype of the Russian woman warrior in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, but after discovering the multitude of works in various genres related to women soldiers in World War II, I decided to focus the dissertation on that period. Since official propaganda in the 1930s and World War II exploited this deep tradition, women volunteers were aware of their forebears.

This dissertation relies on theoretical tools from disparate disciplines: literary studies, cultural studies, gender studies, history, anthropology, and folklore. The centuries-long phenomenon of women appearing as warriors led me first to approach primary texts from the point of view of Jungian psychological-archetypal criticism, as formulated by Jung, analyzing the woman warrior as an archetype. Carl Jung's definition of archetypes as instincts or physiological urges that manifest themselves in fantasies as symbolic images was particularly helpful, especially if one considers works of art or literature to be fantastic in nature, regardless of their grounding in so-called truth.¹⁶

Several literary critics have employed Jungian archetypal theory in the study of literary works. Annis Pratt applies archetypal approaches to New Feminist Criticism to explore the relationship between archetypal and feminist theories while

¹⁶ Carl Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1964), 69.

classifying and analyzing novels written by women.¹⁷ Estella Lauter and Carol Schreier Rupprecht define terms and outline the relationship of archetypal and feminist theories in order to recast Jungian concepts to reflect women's experiences.¹⁸ Lauter deals with the Amazon type and asks how to apply an archetypal approach to a work of art. Since, she argues, one must regard each work of art as part of a larger pattern, one must analyze other manifestations of the images, in addition to the artist's work, life, and society.¹⁹ An archetypal approach has helped me conceptualize typologies of the three kinds of woman warrior and has made me aware of similarities in the most diverse of cultural texts.

Although several scholars, among them Adele Marie Barker and Johanna Hubbs, have applied archetypal approaches to Russian culture, they have primarily focused on the archetype of the mother. Barker approaches byliny and some nineteenth-century literary works from a psychoanalytic perspective and analyzes feminine roles in byliny.²⁰ Hubbs examines the prevalence of the Mother myth in Russian (and Soviet) culture—in folkloric agricultural representations (Moist Mother Earth) and in descriptions of the land (Russia).²¹ She traces the myth of maternity

¹⁷ Annis Pratt, "Archetypal Approaches to the New Feminist Criticism," *Bucknell Review* 21, no. 1, (1973): 2-14; Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).

¹⁸ Lauter, Estella and Carol Schreier Rupprecht, eds. *Feminist Archetypal Theory: Interdisciplinary Re-Visions of Jungian Thought* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 3.

¹⁹ Estella Lauter, "Visual Images by Women: A Test Case for the Theory of Archetypes," *Feminist Archetypal Theory*, 43-83.

²⁰ Adele Marie Barker, *The Mother Syndrome in the Russian Folk Imagination* (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, 1986).

²¹ Joanna Hubbs, *Mother Russia: The Feminine Myth in Russian Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

and fertility through prehistoric artifacts, archaic myths, folktales, epics, and rituals of the East Slavs.

While scholars have virtually ignored the archetype of the woman warrior, some work has been done on the figure of the so-called “strong woman.” Joan Delaney Grossman examines portrayals of women in Russian literature and art from the tenth through the early seventeenth centuries, including the folkloric genres of *byliny*, *skazki*, bridal songs, and concludes that Russians view the strong woman as dangerous.²²

Beyond archetypal theory, gender and sexual criticism provide tools for understanding a culture. Simone de Beauvoir was among the first philosophers to argue that gender is a cultural construction. She also argues that some women achieve independence and liberation through taking action.²³ Her approach to gender as a construction helped me understand the Soviet redefinition of gender roles in the 1930s as well as the gender disputes in texts by and about women warriors. Furthermore, in my examination of the warrior-martyr, I found help in de Beauvoir’s psychology of martyrdom, focusing on the satisfaction martyrs experience in mutilation of their flesh when dedicated to a higher ideal or belief system.²⁴

In *Terrible Perfection* (1987), perhaps the most influential feminist treatment of Russian literature, Barbara Heldt applies an “American” feminist approach. She explores the observations that most memorable heroines in Russian literature appear

²² Joan Delaney Grossman, “Feminine Images in Old Russian Literature and Art,” *California Slavic Studies*, 11 (1980): 33-70.

²³ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Alfred A Knopf: 1952), 678.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 675.

in socially conservative works penned by men and that most feminist novels also were written by men. She argues that the seemingly established canon of Russian classics is actually a “densely woven web of conventional expectations.”²⁵ Despite expectations in this canon, one finds a strong heroine who contrasts with the weak masculine type of the “superfluous man.” Heldt further shows that works written by women provide alternate voices to those found in male-authored works. She finds that Russian women typically express themselves in genres in which the feminine has not already been defined by men, in autobiographical and lyrical genres, rather than novels.²⁶ Although Heldt limits her study to the nineteenth century, she provides a framework for considering women in Russian literature. She examines the differences between women’s and men’s voices, as I will in this study. I find that the body of works about World War II produced by women warriors reinforces Heldt’s pattern as most women represented themselves in memoirs and lyric poetry.

Russians themselves have written almost nothing about women at war, neither women contemplating a role in combat, nor critics writing about the topic. In contrast, women in the West have long written about combat, associating the right to bear arms with power. In contrast to Russian women, although they have fought much less often in war, English and French women have been writing about gender and combat for roughly three hundred years. Early women’s rights advocate Mary Astell argues in “The Worth and Excellency of the Superior Sex” (1700) that men’s

²⁵ Barbara Heldt, *Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

exclusivity of warfare gives evidence only of their dominance, rather than their superiority. In “Sophia, a Person of Quality” (1739), Lady Mary Wortley Montague writes that there are no physical, emotional, moral, or intellectual reasons to exclude women from war; she maintains, rather, that women’s exclusion from the military can be attributed to their abhorrence of slaughter and value of peace. Mary Wollstonecraft, in her “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” (1792), opposed women bearing arms, but advocated that men’s military service and women’s maternity should be equally valued in society. In 1791, Pauline Leon, the future leader of the French Society of Revolutionary Republican Women, submitted a petition carrying three hundred signatures demanding the right to form a women’s militia on the basis that a woman, like a man, has the right to defend herself and the Revolution. During World War I, some suffragettes argued for the right to fight on the battlefield, while others opposed the war entirely. Virginia Woolf eventually advocated for women’s inclusion in combat as a way to undermine men’s power (1966). In 1982, Mary Wechsler Segal posited that the military would lose its function as an arena in which a man could prove masculinity if young women were included.²⁷

Although the vast majority of Soviet women who participated in World War II could not have been aware of Western discourse related to women in combat, this tradition is not irrelevant, as this dissertation is informed by Western cultural values.

²⁷ Ruth Roach, “‘Did Your Mother Wear Army Boots?’ Feminist Theory and Women’s Relation to War, Peace and Revolution,” in *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, Sharon Macdonald, Pat Holden and Shirley Ardener, ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 205-27.

Women in the West have defined themselves as potential warriors, in contrast to Russia, in which one does not find much evidence of women thinking of themselves as such. Even in medieval folk accounts, although women would not engage in any discussion about war, they would fight heroically on the battlefield, as illustrated in the example of Vasilisa Nikulichna.

Although historical and literary/folklore examples of women warriors abound, one knows nearly nothing about Russian women's thoughts about warfare before the publication of Nadezhda Durova's *The Cavalry Maiden* (*Кавалеруцм-девица*, 1836), a fictionalized account of a noble-woman's adventures as an officer in the Russian cavalry. Durova writes only about her own experience, attributing her flight from home and assumption of a male identity to a personal need for freedom and a rejection of strict gender roles, writing nothing about a woman's right to wage war.

The next women to engage in armed combat did so for ideological purposes. During the second half of the 19th century, some women radicals took up weapons, but rather than self-liberation and freedom, these women were motivated by the goal of liberating the peasants. Vera Zasulich, who attempted to assassinate the governor of St. Petersburg, became the first woman to use arms in the struggle for liberation. Early in her life, she envisioned herself as a type of Joan of Arc, leading a partisan horse brigade to liberate the peasants, but later disapproved of personal violence and

terrorist tactics.²⁸ Radicals were most concerned with the issues of using violence in the fight for revolution, rather than a woman's right to engage in combat.

In spite of this lack of discourse, one finds grass roots action in World War I and the Civil War, followed by the propaganda campaign that led to participation in World War II. This 1930s state-controlled discourse reconciled in the Soviet Union the incompatibility between motherhood and the military, so commonly discussed in the West.

In light of the controversial nature of the contemporary debate about armed women in combat, social anthropologists, like Sharon MacDonald, edited of a volume of articles on the topic. Contributors to MacDonald's book analyze the construction of images women in war and the broader question of their place in society. They use sexual imagery to explore women's relationship to warfare, a traditionally male sphere and conclude that even when women and men are supposedly equal, gender remains an issue, often demonstrated on a symbolic level, rather than explicitly.²⁹

In recent years, scholars have increasingly applied a semiotic approach to culture, reading the body as text. In *Sexuality and the Body* (1993) Jane Costlow, Stephanie Sandler, and Judith Vowles explore Russian ideas about the body in relation to their ideas about sexuality. The editors note the conspicuous absence of Russian discourse related to sexuality and the body, in comparison to the tradition to

²⁸ Richard Stites quotes Zasluch's memoirs in *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism 1880-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 143.

²⁹ Sharon MacDonald, Pat Holden, and Shirley Ardener, eds., *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 4.

the West. This discursive paucity extends to the topic of this dissertation, a woman's right, desire, and suitability to wage war. Contributors question the uses of the woman's body in Russian culture, focusing on maternal and erotic female bodies. Although this dissertation examines the woman's body as an erotic object of the male gaze, it also treats muscular, androgynous bodies and mutilated, martyred bodies, which both represent strength, albeit in very different ways.

Sexuality and the Body set the stage for several cultural histories of the 1920s and 1930s. Eric Naiman, Lilya Kaganovsky, and Pat Simpson all study the construction of gender, in the media, literature and in film, to understand the Stalinist period. They pay special attention to complicated and often contradictory representations of the body in various "texts." Naiman analyzes public discourse as represented in NEP-era works, found in urban areas, tracing the treatment of men's and women's bodies and attitudes toward sexuality in state policy.³⁰ He uses a culture-studies approach to analyze a variety of texts—speeches, court documents, literary works, and articles in the media. In his view, although the years immediately preceding the Revolution saw the creation of a "collective body" in cultural documents, attention to physical differences returned in the late NEP period, as the "collective body" began to fragment.³¹ He discusses the skinny, androgynous woman's body glorified during the NEP period, before turning to the reemergence of "Gothic" writing and its emphasis on morbid images in the late-NEP period. He

³⁰ Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 62-65, 83.

aims to elucidate “the narrative of early Soviet ideology,” and thus provides insight into the period in which the militarization movement stems.

Simpson explores the woman’s body as a locus of Soviet “political physiology” in her study of the *fizkul’tura* movement.³² She juxtaposes two images that appeared in the July, 1944, number of the journal, *Red Sports (Красный спорт)* and reconciles the simultaneous presence of two very different women’s bodies in Soviet media: the teenager’s muscular, androgynous body and the more voluptuous, woman’s body. She concludes that this complexity represented both a hope in the New Soviet Person and the greater emphasis on the maternal that followed the turning point of World War II. She reads the body of the *fizkul’turist* as a metaphor for everything the state considered to be good, triumphant, victorious, strong, healthy, and beautiful. These bodies called for readers to participate in and affirm the collective identity. Beyond contributing to an understanding of the woman’s body, her work offers a method for reading media images as texts. The *Fizkul’tura* movement is part of the larger militarization movement of the late 1920s-early war period, an epoch in which the Soviet state reevaluated and redefined desired physical characteristics, as visual representations of a underlying political ideology. My research on images in the media relates complements Simpson’s work as the *Fizkul’tura* and the militarization movements are part of the same redefinition of beauty and gender. My dissertation continues Simpson’s reading media images as

³² Pat Simpson, “Parading Myths: Imaging New Soviet Woman on *Fizkul’turnik*’s Day, July 1944,” *Russian Review* 63 (April 2004): 187-211.

texts to understand Soviet messages about the body and by, extension, gender roles, but it also analyses the public's spontaneous reactions to these various bodies.

Thomas G. Schrand discusses the shift in gender divisions and the masculinization of the Soviet Union in the 1930s.³³ He explores the meaning of the disassembly of the Department of Women's Affairs (*Zhenotdel*) and relates its dissolution to Eric Naiman's findings on the erasure of the "feminine" that marks the late 1920s. Schrand posits that the "wartime" culture of the 1930s narrowed the gap between male and female and privileged masculinity, as the country prepared itself for war.

Anna Krylova studies the 1930s militarization, asking how a generation of women came to wage war.³⁴ She rejects the commonly held notion that the 1930s was a conservative reversal of 1920s gender roles and uses the term "alternative gender personality" to describe the construction of a gender that embodies qualities both traditionally and nontraditionally feminine. She argues that the right to wage war marked a major challenge to surviving traditional ideas of femininity and masculinity, although this broadening of gender roles proved to be short-lived.

Kaganovsky has contributed much to the recent scholarship on the male body. In her article "How the Soviet Man was (Un) Made," Kaganovsky explores, using the example of Nikolai Ostrovskii, the sacrifice expected of the New Soviet

³³ Thomas G. Schrand, "Socialism in One Gender: Masculine Values in the Stalin Revolution," in *Russian Masculinities in History and Culture*, Barbara Evans Clements, Rebecca Friedman, and Dan Healey, eds. (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 194-209.

³⁴ Anna Krylova. "Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender: Rearing a Generation of Professionally Violent Women Soldiers in 1930s Stalinist Russia," *Gender and History* 16, no. 3 (November, 2004): 626-653.

Man, whose dedication to the Soviet cause eclipses his physical existence and basic human needs.³⁵ Throughout his suffering, Ostrovskii dreams of achieving Soviet subjectivity. Kaganovsky also defines 1930s notions of Soviet masculinity, concluding that masculinity is a state-sanctioned construction. The state can transform both wild children and female collective farm workers into Soviet men, manipulating them into subordinate subjects while purging those who do not conform to the collective.³⁶ This 1930s demand of physical sacrifice is realized on a national scale in World War II. It sets the stage for Zoia Kosmodemian'skaia's martyrdom, which will form an important part of my dissertation.

In this study, I treat a variety of materials as cultural texts: articles and images in the media, propaganda posters, novels, films, novellas, narrative and lyric poems, memoirs, biographies, paintings, sculptures, and songs. This analysis of them relies heavily on the "cultural studies" approach, pioneered in the Russian area by Richard Stites, which examines broad patterns of signification in a range of cultural texts. Stites studies entertainment and its consumers, mass culture and its erosion after Stalin's death, and argues for the value of studying cultural documents that fall beyond the realm of high culture. Likewise, Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd defend cultural studies for opening the way for the study of previously undervalued cultural documents and identities. Emphasizing the relationship

³⁵ Lilya Kaganovsky, "How the Soviet Man was Un (Made)," *Slavic Review* 63, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 577-596.

³⁶ Lilya Kaganovsky, "Forging Soviet Masculinity in Nikolai Ekk's *The Road to Life*, in *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*, Helena Goscilo and Andrea Lanoux, ed. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 93-114; Lilia Kaganovsky, "Men Wanted: Female Masculinity in Sergei Livnev's *Hammer and Sickle*," *SEEJ* 51, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 229-46.

between the political and the cultural, cultural studies define the political as part of culture.³⁷ Cultural studies adopt a “broad, inclusive approach,” rather than privileging high culture, unique and original, over mass culture, which is often repetitive and ritualistic. Kelly and Shepherd undertake to study various cultural documents in order to isolate aspects of Russian culture that are rarely considered together. They analyze cultural production and consumption and the construction of both individual and national identities.

Mark D. Steinberg examines the link between early Soviet literature and Christianity by exploring religious imagery in workers’ writing in the years prior to and after the 1917 revolution. He demonstrates the importance in early Soviet literature of the religious symbolism that later dominates works about women warrior-martyrs.³⁸ Nina Tumarkin’s *The Living and the Dead* (1994) provides a helpful example of how to approach a variety of texts to understand Soviet mythologization of World War II. She has started the discussion of the warrior-martyr, Zoia Kosmodem’ianskaia as a Soviet saint.

Beyond archetypal, cultural, and gender studies, this dissertation is indebted to Katerina Clark’s structuralist/historical approach to Soviet literature in *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*.³⁹ Arguing that socialist realist literature is formulaic and employing Vladimir Propp’s formalist study of the magic tale as a model, Katerina

³⁷ Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, eds., *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 12.

³⁸ Mark. D. Steinberg, “Workers on the Cross: Religious Imagination in the Writings of Russian Workers, 1910-1924,” *The Russian Review* 53 (April 1994): 231-39.

³⁹ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985).

Clark outlines a morphology of the Soviet novel. She traces precedents of the Soviet novel, defines key terms, and identifies characteristic features. In addition to formulating a master plot of the Soviet novel, she supercedes traditional structuralist methodology in order to detail a “dynamic account” of the novel’s evolution within the Soviet context.⁴⁰ She discusses the novel’s relationship to ideological, political, and social factors. Clearly, Clark’s technique of combining anthropological and historical approaches with structuralism and her study of the martyr as hero are particularly helpful to a dissertation that aims not only to distill a masterplot of the woman warrior-martyr narrative, but also to understand the role the state played in shaping its creation.

In crafting my approach to the archetype of the woman warrior and her myths, I have had to learn how to interpret visual, as well as, verbal images. Of help in this endeavor has been the concept of “iconography” used in Elizabeth Waters’s “The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography, 1917-32.”⁴¹ Waters discusses women in Soviet “iconography,” represented in stamps, coins, propaganda posters, and other visual texts. This dissertation aims to analyze official visual images of the woman warrior martyrs so as to understand the state’s shaping of their myths.

Victoria E. Bonnell studies Soviet political posters through Stalin’s death with the aim of understanding how the state created a “Homo Sovieticus,” or Soviet man.⁴² She examines the images, considering historical and mythological context,

⁴⁰ Ibid, xii.

⁴¹ Elizabeth Waters, “The Female Form in Soviet Political Iconography, 1917-32,” in *Russia’s Women*, 225.

⁴² Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xix.

treating the images as part of visual language and studies their reception, attempting to determine their effectiveness as propaganda tools. Bonnell argues that the purpose of political art was to “provide a visual script” to conjure up new modes of thinking and conduct.⁴³ Lynne Attwood studies women in film, another visual propaganda tool.⁴⁴ As part of her history of Soviet cinema, she discusses both the employment of film as a medium for creating visual symbols and rituals and the historical role of Soviet women in cinema.

The first chapter, “‘И я хочу стать летчицей’: Soviet Women and the Militarization of the 1930s,” analyzes various texts (novels, films, articles, and images in the media) throughout the late 1920s and the 1930s to determine what cultural prompts appealed to such a wide array of women, transforming them into soldiers. I examine the propaganda messages in the media, building on the mythology of the Soviet “great family.”

In the three following chapters, I build typologies of the three kinds of woman warriors and summarize the master plot for each, paying close attention to the semiotics of the female body in the context of Stalinist and post-Stalinist cultural codes. I examine crucial verbal and visual texts and finish by summarizing the place each type of woman warrior currently occupies in cultural memory. Chapter Two, “‘Молчать, как Партизанка:’ The Woman Warrior-Martyr,” treats the role of this martyr-heroine in Soviet mass culture. The discussion focuses largely on legendary

⁴³ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁴ Lynne Attwood, *Red Women on the Silver Screen: Soviet Women and Cinema from the Beginning to the End of the Communist Era* (London: Pandora Press, 1993).

figure Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia. The chapter addresses the reasons that the warrior-martyr gained the status as the heroine of a national myth in Stalinist culture.

Chapter Three, “The Gendered Gaze: Disarming the Woman Warrior,” examines the image of the woman warrior as represented in male-authored texts: novels, novellas, short stories, and films. I approach these male writers’ works as a form of resistance to the militarization of women and as part of a postwar policy of returning women to their traditional roles as mother and wife. Against all expectation, I discovered at least one major Soviet woman poet, Iuliia Drunina, who rejects this “refeminization.”

Chapter Four, “Пишущие Поляницы: Women Warriors and Their Epic Battle for Soviet Cultural Memory,” explores women warriors’ heroic self-representations, also part of women’s efforts to secure a place for themselves in Russian cultural memory. This chapter relies heavily on memoirs and biographies written by women veterans.

By analyzing the Soviet images of woman warriors this dissertation contributes to the international discussion of the archetype of what. In terms of Russian studies, it elucidates the shaping of national myths and the preservation of cultural memory, as well as the responses of the general public, writers and artists, and women who themselves waged war to the portrayal of Soviet women soldiers. It adds to the growing discourse on the body in Russian culture and contributes to the understanding of gender roles and expectations throughout the Soviet period.

Chapter 1

‘И Я Хочу Стать Летчицей’: Soviet Women and the Militarization of the 1930s

Iu. Chudov’s propaganda poster “We Will Be Pilots, Too” (“И мы будем летчиками,” 1951) featuring two young boys holding a model airplane and looking to the sky, remains one of the most recognizable propaganda posters depicting young people dreaming about flying.⁴⁵ This poster, published in the postwar period, directly targets boys through the two obviously male subjects of the poster and the word choice *letchikami*, specifically ‘male pilots.’⁴⁶ It contrasts dramatically with posters and magazine covers targeting youth in the prewar period, when women and girls were included in militarization campaigns and encouraged to look to the skies. This inclusiveness is apparent in G. Klutsis’s poster, “Young people, to your planes!” (“Молодежь, на Самолеты,” 1934) and P. Karachentsov’s “Every Collective Farm, Every Factory” (“Каждый колхоз, каждый завод,” 1936).⁴⁷ Magazines published articles and poems showing the point of view of women who dreamed of flight and expressed a hope that we might articulate as: “Я хочу стать летчицей.”

When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union June 22, 1941, hundreds of thousands of Soviet women had been trained to handle the most modern weapons of

⁴⁵ Александр Снопков, Павел Снопков, and Александр Шклярчук, *600 Шестьсот плакатов* (Москва: Контакт-Культура, 2004), 80.

⁴⁶ Although some women used the words “летчик” and “пилот” interchangeably with the female-specific “letchitsa” during the 1930s, it does signify a male aviator and authors of 1930s propaganda posters usually avoided the term altogether, opting instead for gender-neutral language. See, for example, Nina Shtol’knina, “Я хочу стать хорошим летчиком,” *Работница* 23 (August 1939): 8

⁴⁷ Снопков, *600 Шестьсот плакатов*, 82.

warfare and were eager to defend their homeland against the invaders. Throughout the 1930s the media had prepared Soviet citizens to expect war and the generation of women that had come of age in the 1930s participated in the militarization of the country. This chapter examines the images in mass culture and the media that conveyed the expectation that women could become warriors—pilots, parachutists, or sharpshooters—and that there was room in Soviet life for such dreams.

In *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat*, Reina Pennington argues that the existence of a folkloric tradition of fighting women contributed to women's participation in front-line combat. In her view, although women were rarely encouraged to fight prior to the 1930s, there were historical precedents that made it easier for Soviet women to fight than for their sisters in other countries. Pennington writes, the folkloric heritage, "combined with a general belief that Russian women were physically strong, made it thinkable for women en masse to engage in combat in the Second World War."⁴⁸

Although Russian women had not been encouraged to fight in previous wars, the Soviet press testifies, as Anna Krylova argues, that the Party encouraged and public opinion embraced the image of the militarized woman in the years leading up to World War II.⁴⁹ This chapter will examine how the women who fought in the war

⁴⁸ Reina Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat* (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 2001), 4.

⁴⁹ There were women's units in World War I and women had served as nurses in the Russo-Japanese war, but during these wars, the media did not encourage women to take up weapons. Much of the argument and material in this chapter corroborates Anna Krylova's excellent article, "Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender: Rearing a Generation of Professionally Violent Women-Fighters in 1930s Stalinist Russia" *Gender and History* 16, no. 3 (November, 2004): 626-653. In her article, Krylova analyzes memoirs, diaries, and the newspaper *Komsomolskaia Pravda* and concludes that by

became hardened “warriors” and will further develop Anna Krylova’s argument by examining the hundreds of images of fighting women in popular magazines, such as *Osoaviakhim/ Voroshilovskii strelok* (*Osoaviakhim/ Voroshilov’s Shot*), *Samolet* (*Airplane*), and the most widely read women’s magazine, *Rabotnitsa* (*Woman Worker*). In addition, this chapter analyzes official rhetoric, crafted both to encourage women to participate in paramilitary activities and force the public to rethink a woman’s role and responsibility in warfare.

Militarization of women was the result of the Soviet Union’s mass mobilization of all citizens, beginning in July 1926, after Commissar for Military Affairs Kliment Voroshilov and Chief of Staff Mikhail Tukhachevskii began pressing for a stronger, better funded Soviet army, one prepared for war.⁵⁰ In 1927, in an open letter to readers “Women Workers, Prepare the Country for Defense!” (“Работницы, готовьте страну к обороне!”), *Rabotnitsa* published the following communication from the Party: “Подтянуться и готовиться к обороне страны, готовиться по-настоящему, по-большевистски, твердо и уверенно, не поддаваясь панике,—такова задача дня. ... Быть на-чеку, смотреть прямо в глаза опасности, быть готовым к отпору,— такова первейшая обязанность рабочих и крестьян нашей страны” (“Today’s task is to catch up with and to prepare for the defense of the country, to prepare in earnest, in a Bolshevik manner, firmly and confidently, not yielding to panic. ...To be watchful, to look right in the

the late 1930s, that the official party line and the Soviet populace had accepted the idea of the women in combat.

⁵⁰ David R. Stone, *Hammer and Rifle: The Militarization of the Soviet Union, 1926-1933* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2000), 21-22.

eyes of danger, to be ready for rebuff, that is the primary duty of the workers and peasants of our country”).⁵¹ Journalists and writers anticipated war, in the media and as well as popular literature, and called upon the entire population, especially young people, to be prepared to defend the nation: “Какова будет будущая война? Прежде всего, в будущей войне не будет деления между фронтом и тылом. Война будет вестись не только армиями, но в ней должна будет участвовать вся страна” (“What will the coming war be like? First and foremost, there will not be a division between the front and the rear in the future. Not only the army will fight the war, but the entire country will have to participate in it”).⁵² Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, Komsomol leaders presented the coming war as the younger generation’s “test,” the equivalent of their parents’ Civil War and encouraged women to look to women who fought in the Civil War as examples:

Работница в тяжелые годы гражданской войны была и бойцом с винтовкой, и работницей у станка. И в будущей войне она будет не только бойцом, не только организатором обороны города, но на нее же ляжет обязанность замещать у станка ушедших на фронт рабочих.

(In the difficult years of the Civil War the woman worker was both a warrior with a rifle and a worker at the machine. And in the coming war, she will be not only a warrior, not only an organizer of urban defense, but she will have to replace workers who go off to war.)⁵³

The Komsomol received support in preparation efforts by the government-supported civil defense organization Osoaviakhim, the Society for Promotion of Defense, Aviation, and Chemical Development, formed in 1927. Osoaviakhim provided

⁵¹ Р. Лиздин, “Работницы, готовьте страну к обороне!” *Работница* 19 (1927): 4.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 4.

instruction in shooting, parachuting, and aviation.⁵⁴ By July 1929, it claimed 700,000 women as its members, having acquired 100,000 new women members since March of the same year.⁵⁵ In 1931, it claimed 11 million members overall. By the late 1930s, 1.7 million young people had earned Rifleman badges under the direction of Osoaviakhim.⁵⁶

Buttressing the efforts of the Komsomol and Osoaviakhim, mass culture of the late 1920s and 1930s produced a number of images of armed women: Anna, the first major woman warrior character in a widely read novel, Mikhail Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don* (*Тихий Дон*, 1928), Anka in Georgii and Sergei Vasil'ev's film *Chapaev* (1934), Zhenia Garasenkova from Petr Pavelnko's novel *In the East* (*Na vostoke*, 1936), and Agrippina Chebrets in Aleksei Tolstoi's *Bread* (*Khleb*, 1937).⁵⁷ Sholokhov's Anna, a machine-gunner in the Civil War, possesses many of the traits of the 1930s armed woman. She is confident, able, aggressive, and dedicated to the cause. She initially encounters old-fashioned attitudes toward women soldiers such as Bunchuk's exclamation upon learning that Anna would be joining his detachment: "Что они там—с ума спятили: Женский батальон у меня, что ли? ... Вы простите, но для вас это неподходящее дело: работа тяжелая, необходимо наличие мужской силы ... Ведь это что же?"⁵⁸ ("Have they gone out of their minds? Is it a woman's battalion I've got to organize? Excuse me, but

⁵⁴ Krylova, "Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender," 630-32.

⁵⁵ "А. Богат, "Женщины в Осоавиахиме," 5 *Осоавиахим* (Mar 1929): 5.; "О Работе среди женщин," *Осоавиахим* 13 (July 1929): 23.

⁵⁶ Krylova, "Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender," 630-632.

⁵⁷ Krylova examines *Chapaev* and *Na Voskoke* in "Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender."

⁵⁸ Михаил Шолохов, *Тихий Дон* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1969), 2-197.

this isn't fit work for you; the work is heavy and needs a man's strength. What kind of nonsense is this?")⁵⁹ Through her perseverance, Anna overcomes these attitudes and changes the minds of her comrades. Anna is the first in a series of women warriors to show unusual loyalty to her weapon, transferring her affection from a man to a machine gun:

С острой любознательностью вникала во все Анна Погудко. Она назойливо приставала к Бунчуку, хватала его за рукава неуклюжего демисезона, неотступно торчала около пулемета.
--А если вода замерзнет в кожухе—тогда что: А при большем ветре какое отклонение? А это как, товарищ Бунчук?—осаждала она вопросами и выжидающе поднимала на Бунчука большие с неверным и теплым блеском черные глаза.⁶⁰

(Anna Pogudko inquired about everything with keen curiosity. She pestered Banchuk, plucked at his sleeve, and could not be displaced from the machine gun.

“And what would happen if the water were to freeze in the water-jacket?...What deviation has to be allowed for in a strong wind?” She plied him with questions, expectantly raising her warmly gleaming black eyes to his).⁶¹

In spite of this attention to her gun and the fact that Anna fights in battles and presumably shoots, the reader never sees her killing someone. During her first battle, she is overcome with fear after seeing death up close.

Sholokhov prefigures the tendency of male authors in the decades to come by disarming Anna after she develops romantic feelings toward her commanding officer, Bunchuk. First, when Bunchuk falls ill with typhus, he transforms her into a nurse, when Bunchuk falls ill with typhus. Later, Anna is reassigned to agitation

⁵⁹ Mikhail Sholokhov, *And Quiet Flows the Don, Book Two* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.) 333.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 336.

work, which she claims is better suited to her character. She is never merely a comrade, like Pavlenko's Zhenia eight years later. Rather she is also lover and mother, almost from her initial appearance in the novel. The narrator writes, "Бунчук долго ощущал на себе не только ласку любимой, но и ее теплую, налитую вровень с краями, материнскую заботливость" ("Bunchuk long felt on himself not only the caress of his beloved, but also her warm, overflowing motherly care").⁶² Anna dies in the field during an attack on the enemy, partly because she makes a bad choice, charging before the rest of the detachment is ready to charge.⁶³ Sholokhov sends the message that women are able fighters, but their "feminine" nature makes them better suited to nurturing roles. Regardless of this conservative attitude toward women soldiers, the inclusion of Anna in a realist novel showed that women in combat were a reality both historically and in the cultural imagination. The novel raised many of the questions that occupied Party officials and the Soviet public in the 1930s: questions of women's right to fight, their abilities, and their integration into predominantly male military organizations.

The 1934 film version about legendary Civil War commander Vasiliï Chapaev differs markedly from the 1924 Furmanov novel, *Chapaev*, by creating the familiar female soldier character, Anka the Machine-Gunner. Unlike Sholokhov's Anna, Anka is a fighter, and her addition to the film serves as an important revolutionary precedent for the militarized women of the 1930s.⁶⁴ She is enthusiastic

⁶² Шолохов, "Тихий Дон," 296.

⁶³ Ibid., 329.

⁶⁴ Krylova, "Stalinist Identity From the Viewpoint of Gender," 630-31, 637.

and intelligent, eagerly and quickly learning how to use a machine gun. Anka is serious and angrily repels her male machine-gun instructor's advances. Krylova points out that the inclusion of Anka allowed artists to consider competition between the sexes. When male comrades-in-arms encourage her to shoot prematurely in a battle, Anka dismisses them, refusing to rush and shooting only at the right moment, successfully stopping the advancing line of White troops. She demonstrates calmness and skill her fellow soldiers lack.⁶⁵

The inclusion of Anka in this popular film shows that already in 1934, official policy advocated a woman gunner who could be trusted to handle one of the technically advanced machines of contemporary warfare, the machine gun, and that she could be integrated into a male regiment. A review in *Rabotnitsa* shows that the actress who played Anka, Varvara Miasnikova, intended the character to serve as an example for Soviet women: “И я буду считать свою задачу выполненной, если картина убедит хотя бы нескольких женщин пойти на фронт, когда будет война ... Я не только играю пулеметчицу, —говорит тов. Мясникова, —я и сама умею стрелять из пулемета по-настоящему!” (““And I would consider my task fulfilled, if the picture were to persuade even a few women to go to the front if there were to be a war. Not only do I play a machine-gunner,’ says Comrade Miasnikova, ‘but I myself can actually shoot a machine gun!’”).⁶⁶ Shchelkanova mentions several actual women machine-gunners who had fought in the Civil War and notes that they sent letters to the Vasil'ev brothers through *Pravda*, expressing their gratitude that

⁶⁵ Ibid., 637.

⁶⁶ М. Щелканова, “Фильм *Чапаяв*—Замечательное произведение,” *Работница* 35 (1934): 14.

the directors had included the image of a woman warrior.⁶⁷ The article conveys the message that readers should look to Civil War women machine-gunners like Anka as role models.

The year 1936 saw the appearance of another woman warrior: Zhenia Garasenkova in Petr Pavlenko's novel *In the East (На востоке)*, a novel about a fictional war with Japan in the near future (in "193_"). Garasenkova skillfully handles arguably the most sophisticated machine, the airplane, while serving among men.⁶⁸ Garasenkova, a female pilot and Komsomol member, actively participates in combat after Russia and Japan declare war, even enthusiastically bombing the enemy. Garasenkova is a fearless aviator. When we meet her, she is returning from the taiga, where she has undertaken dangerous, long-distance flights in adverse conditions.⁶⁹ After encountering mechanical problems resulting from the loss of two engines, she successfully parachutes from her plane.

Like the "female Komsomol patriots" ("патриотки-комсомолки") pictured in popular journals, Garasenkova flies for patriotic reasons. We know nothing of Garasenkova's education and profession before aviation. Like Raskova, she does not herself choose to become a pilot, but is chosen by an aviator, a party member, who wants to train her. Her entrance into aviation, not by her own personal desire, but at the prompting of an experienced pilot, suggests that women must be active in defense primarily because they are vital to the state. Upon completion of training,

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Krylova, "Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender," 637.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 319.

love for the Motherland motivates Garasenkova to fly and eventually to fight. In a pivotal scene at the start of the war, Garasenkova is moved by the “Internationale” and proclaims: “Спасибо партии, спасибо командованию, что посылаете меня на большое дело, —крикнула Евгения. —Иду за всех девушек союза. Драться буду, как старшие дрались в октябре, как испанки дрались, как китайские женщины дрались в Фушуне” (““Thank you to the Party, thank you to the commanding officers, for sending me on this great mission,” —cried Evgeniia. ‘— I’m going for all women of our union. I will fight, as our elders fought in October, as the Spanish fought, as Chinese women fought in Fushun.’”⁷⁰ While flying on her first combat mission, she enthusiastically exclaims to her airplane: ““Вперед, Самолет! Комсомолец, вперед!’ Весело запела она в нервной радости” (“Forward, Airplane! Komsomol member, forward!” she sang cheerfully in nervous joy”).⁷¹

Pavlenko’s portrayal of Garasenkova not only reflects the celebration of women in aviation and in traditionally male-dominated fields, but also resolves some of the questions party officials were asking about women’s participation in civil defense: Should the new woman hero have a family? Should regiments be separated by gender? Krylova argues that Soviet military officials hesitated to put women in men’s regiments, and at the time of the Nazi invasion, were still deciding where women belonged: in segregated women’s regiments or in mixed regiments. Garasenkova flies as the only explicitly mentioned woman in an all-male regiment.

⁷⁰ П. Павленко, *На востоке* (Москва: Художественная литература, 1937), 393.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 387.

She encounters no discrimination or disrespect in Pavlenko's idealized world. Unlike many of the prominent women pilots in the late 1930s, Garasenkova is single and childless and, since she has decided to forego family life in favor of a military career, "судьбу свою одиноко вела дальше, вперед" ("she led her fate alone farther, forward"), regardless of men's romantic interest in her, unlike Sholokhov's Anna, she does not become distracted.⁷² Pavlenko implies that as long as men and women put the state before their personal interests, as positive heroes in socialist realist novels do, they can work and live together. Garasenkova's character embodies key traits of the new militarized woman hero of the 1930s: skill, strength, intelligence, patriotism, love for aviation, independence, toughness, and dedication to the state.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, popular magazines published short stories and poems featuring women warriors, such as the "рослая, красивая, нахмуренная девка" ("tall, beautiful, frowning girl") in "Agrippina Chebrets," an excerpt from Aleksei Tolstoi's 1937 novella "Хлеб," a riflewoman in the Civil War.⁷³ As in Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don*, although the commander, Parkhomenko, initially resists the integration of a woman into the all-male detachment, he accepts Agrippina after she persistently and angrily demands a rifle: "дайте винтовку, — хриповато, молодым голосом, мрачно сказала девушка и подняла на него красивые, сердитые глаза под темными бровями" ("give me a rifle,' morosely said the young woman in a young, rather hoarse, voice as she raised to him her

⁷² Ibid., 391.

⁷³ Алексей Толстой, "Агриппина Чебрец," *Работница* 8 (1938): 16-19.

beautiful, angry eyes under dark brows”).⁷⁴ Parkhomenko good-naturedly admits her to the ranks. Agrippina is not fighting out of an individual desire, because she believes she must fight, but to serve her country. Tolstoi describes her difficulty walking, carrying heavy equipment: “Агриппина, как птица, вертела головой: она не решалась стрелять по-пустому, как другие, —зря тратить патроны...Стрелять она умела” (“Like a bird, Agrippina cocked her head: she decided not to shoot blindly, like the others, —wasting bullets in vain ... she knew how to shoot”).⁷⁵ Although patient and calm, Agrippina fights aggressively in battle, engaging in one-on-one combat with a Cossack. Tolstoi portrays a tough warrior who introduces herself by saying “Я казака убила” (“I killed a Cossack”) and details her performance in battle.⁷⁶ Like Anna, Agrippina sets herself apart from her male comrades, by not acting hastily. She is the antithesis of Sholokhov’s Anna, who is naturally drawn to roles involving nurturing and spreading propaganda and is less aggressive than her male comrades. Agrippina loves to fight, and she differs from her comrades only in her heightened seriousness and calmness in battle.

In addition to giving political guidance to writers, the policy decision to militarize women also gave thematic fodder to visual artists. In 1939, *Voroshilovskii strelok* reported that Leningrad artist N. M. Kochergin had finished a series of sketches on the theme, “The Armed Komsomol” (“Вооруженный комсомол”). The magazine reproduced one of these sketches, “Voroshilov’s shots” (“Ворошиловские

⁷⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 16.

стрелки”) which features two women aiming pistols into the distance, while a male comrade lies on the ground, looking through binoculars. Like Bograd’s Sanit poster, the women’s depiction breathes youth, strength, and beauty.⁷⁷ Kochergin’s sketch of three young people also captures the camaraderie of the militarization movement (figure 1).⁷⁸

The years 1936-1938 proved to be pivotal in the militarization propaganda campaign. In August 1937, *Komsomolskaia Pravda* reported receiving letters from young women who hoped to pursue military careers and were determined to contribute to the defense of their country. This article officially opened a public debate about the women’s role in the military.⁷⁹ During these three years, women officers entered the public sphere as newspapers and magazines began to publicize their accomplishments.⁸⁰ Women had been generally prohibited from serving in the military, but some women, Marina Nesterenko, Tamara and Marina Kazarinova, Vera Lomako, Polina Osipenko, Marina Raskova, Klavdia Urazova, and Nina Rusakova, had all entered army service, in violation of official military rules. The male army officers who bent the rules and encouraged certain women to become officers paved the way for what would become the single most influential event in the militarization of Soviet women: the 1938 flight of the airplane Rodina.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Ворошиловский стрелок 1 (1939): 5.

⁷⁸ Figures are located in the appendix.

⁷⁹ Krylova, “Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender,” 639.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 641. Although Krylova notes that female officers were not prominently featured in mass media until 1937, *Работница* began publishing articles on individual female officers as early as 1936.

⁸¹ Ibid., 641-42.

In September 1938, upon completion of a world-record-breaking, long-distance flight from Moscow to the Far East, pilots Polina Osipenko, Valentina Grizodubova, and Marina Raskova became the first women to be named Heroes of the Soviet Union.⁸² These three pilots were celebrated throughout the nation, and Stalin and Voroshilov themselves congratulated the women upon their return to Moscow.⁸³ A junior political leader or “politruk,” Ia. Chapichev, celebrated their heroism and hailed them as “warriors and heroes” (“бойцы и герои”) in his poem, “Three Friends: To the Proud Falcons of Our Motherland, Grizodubova, Osipenko, Raskova” (“Три подруги: Гордым соколам нашей родины, Гризодубовой, Осипенко, Расковой”)⁸⁴ In his poem, Chapichev transforms the three women into legendary folk heroes: “Three pilots on a fairy tale bird” (“Три пилота на сказочной птице.”) At the height of their popularity, the influential Raskova and Osipenko published widely-read memoirs that inspired women across the nation.

In contrast to the heroine in Pavlenko’s novel, the women of the Rodina showed that being a pilot and hero was not incompatible with motherhood. Raskova’s telephone conversation with her daughter, from the Far East to Moscow, was broadcast across Soviet airwaves. The 1940 radio play “Tania’s Mom and Tania Raskova” (“Танина Мама и Таня Раскова”),” intended for preschool children, commences with Raskova’s daughter asking the whereabouts of her mother, as her

⁸² Having flown from Moscow to the far east, the three women had broke a women’s long-distance world record. They were publicly recognized and journalists called upon young people to look to these women as role models. Krylova, 646.

⁸³ М. Раскова, *Записки штурмана* (Moscow: Издательство ЦК ВЛКСМ “Молодая гвардия,” 1939).

⁸⁴ Я. Чапичев, “Три подруги: Гордым соколам нашей родины Гризодубовой, Осипенко, Расковой,” *Работница* 31 (1938): 2.

mother flies the Rodina across the Soviet Union. The narrator explains why Tania misses her mother: “Почему? Потому, что эти три женщины взялись доказать, что советские летчицы могут лететь дальше и быстрее всех женщин в мире и что советские самолеты—крепче и лучше всех. Они хотят без посадки пролететь из Москвы на Дальний Восток. И будут лететь, пока не исполнят своего обещания” (“Why? Because these three women took it upon themselves to prove that Soviet female pilots could fly farther and faster than all women in the world and that Soviet airplanes are the strongest and best of all. They want to fly from Moscow to the Far East without landing. And they will fly, until they have fulfilled their promise”).⁸⁵ The radio play teaches children about the Rodina’s victory, while holding Tania’s bravery and patience during her mother’s absence as an example for all children. This play, written just one year before the beginning of World War II, gives evidence that an armed woman’s military endeavors takeover her maternal role.

As Krylova shows, memoirs and letters indicate that Soviet women’s conceptions of themselves had changed. Through their writing, women claimed the right and accepted responsibility to participate in a future war. For these women, military service had ceased to be solely a male occupation, and was open to all Soviet citizens.⁸⁶ Both *Rabotnitsa* and *Osoaviakhim/Voroshilovskii strelok* published numerous personal accounts such as A Vavilova’s narrative in “It is Not Only a

⁸⁵ И. Гарнет and Таня Раскова, *Танина Мама и Таня Раскова* (Москва: Макрофонные материалы Всесоюзного Радиокomiteта Москва, 1940), 1-2

⁸⁶ Krylova, “Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender,” 638.

Sport—It is Military Preparation” (“Это не только спорт—это боевая подготовка”)⁸⁷ in which an “ordinary woman” describes how she had transformed herself into a flight instructor or a champion shooter.

The Role of Popular Magazines

Militarized woman appeared prominently in such daily newspapers as *Komsomolskaia Pravda*.⁸⁸ Militarized women also appeared in magazines that targeted the general public, such as the women’s magazines, *Rabotnitsa* and *The Women’s Journal (Zhenskii zhurnal)*, and more specialized magazines that addressed hobbyists, *Samolet* and *Osoaviakhim*, and on occasion, *At the Wheel (Za rulem)*.

Throughout the history of the Soviet Union, *Rabotnitsa*, perhaps the most prominent women’s journal, addressed women’s concerns, both public and private, and represented the official party position toward Soviet women.⁸⁹ From its inception the journal was intended for the working woman. After several lapses in publication, the journal reappeared in 1923 as a party-initiated response to numerous popular, non-Party journals, which had appeared in 1922.⁹⁰ Although the number of issues ranged from twelve annually (1923, 1943-1991) to sixty (1931), the journal never ceased publication during the Soviet period, regardless of war, the Thaw,

⁸⁷ А. Вавилова, “Это не только спорт—это боевая подготовка,” *Работница* 30 (1934): 16.

⁸⁸ Krylova, “Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender,” 633.

⁸⁹ Cathy Porter, *Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography* (London: Virago, 1980), 192-3, 255, 309. The journal predates the Soviet Union, having first appeared in March of 1914, only to be shut down by censors in June of the same year. It was an instant success, with all 12,000 copies bought up almost immediately. A committee of prominent Communist women, Praskovia Kudelli, Konkordia Samoilova, Liudmila Menzhinskaia, Anna Elizarova, Inessa Armand, Nadezhda Krupskaiia, Lilina Zinovieva, Liudmila Stal’, served on its editorial board. The journal was reissued shortly after the February revolution, in May of 1917, and proved to be so popular, its print run was increased from 40,000 to 50,000 copies until it ceased publication in January, 1918, due to a paper shortage, and was replaced by women’s pages in party newspapers.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 412.

stagnation, and perestroika.⁹¹ Its content reflected the state's position toward gender roles and by examining *Rabotnitsa*, one understands the message projected toward the average Soviet woman. It is highly likely that images of militarized women featured in the journal encouraged women of all ages to prepare themselves for a war in the near future.

Samolet and *Osoaviakhim*, both organs of the Osoaviakhim civil defense organization, attracted a readership of both professionals and amateurs who were interested in aviation and weaponry. *Samolet* was published semi-monthly, with some irregularities, especially toward the commencement of World War II, from 1923 until 1941.⁹² *Osoaviakhim*, which was renamed *Voroshilovskii strelok* in 1934, appeared biweekly between 1929 and 1940, except for the years 1930 and 1931, in which thirty-six issues appeared each year. Neither journal resumed publication after the war.⁹³

The role of the militarized woman in the “great family”

Throughout the 1930s journalists repeatedly described women who participated in military activities as patriotic, “loyal daughters” of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party, and Stalin. The metaphor of the “great family” was a characteristic part of Soviet national mythology in the 1930s and both provided the state a new set of symbols to replace 1920s machine symbols as well as supported

⁹¹ Rudolf Smits, comp. *Half a Century of Soviet Serials 1917-1968*. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1968), 985.

⁹² Rudolf Smits, comp. *Half a Century of Soviet Serials 1917-1968* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1968): 1094.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 901.

the hierarchical structure of society.⁹⁴ These daughters were not unlike the “sons,” a cadre of extraordinary people who achieved great victories and completed record-breaking feats, such as mountain-climbing or long-distance flight.⁹⁵ The younger generation of “children,” regardless of their sex, were motivated by a desire to prepare to defend their nation, ambition to achieve new victories, and love for their Motherland. An obituary of Hero of the Soviet Union Polina Osipenko concludes with the following paragraph, which includes many of the propagandistic clichés of the 1930s: “Горячо любила свою родину Полина Осипенко. И родина никогда не забудет ее—свою верную дочь, героическую летчицу, совершавшую подвиг за подвигом во славу великого советского народа, во славу великой социалистической страны” (“Polina Osipenko ardently loved her Motherland. And the Motherland will never forget her—a loyal daughter, a heroic pilot, who completed victory after victory in glory of the great Soviet people, in the name of the great socialist country”).⁹⁶ Through such obituaries and articles, women were led to conclude that by transcending traditional boundaries of domestic space, they were behaving patriotically and lovingly toward the “great family.” Although the 1930s saw a conservative return to the nuclear family, when interests collided, the “great family,” based on political ties, retained a much higher place in the hierarchy than the family based on blood kinship.⁹⁷ This dominance of the “great family” over the individual nuclear family explains why not having children or leaving children with

⁹⁴ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 114.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁹⁶ ТАСС, “Герой Советского Союза Полина Осипенко,” *Самолет* 10 (May 1939): 3.

⁹⁷ Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 115.

relatives while fulfilling the military missions became an accepted woman's choice by the end of the 1930s. Although motherhood was revered, "true daughters" put their service to the state above their personal, familial happiness, just as Raskova and Grizodubova had.

Party officials, according to Krylova, assigned national roles to different generations and the young generation had been allocated the military, protective role.⁹⁸ In an article explaining her participation in civil defense, pilot and Voroshilov sharpshooter, Stakhanovka Lankova, argues that each young man and woman must give his or her "burning energy" to the homeland, or "great family," since the Communist Party and Stalin have given them such happy lives.⁹⁹ Lankova's article shows that the "great family's" daughters were just as responsible for defense of the homeland as the sons were and that all children should be prepared to pick up arms to defend the homeland, explicitly stating that sex should not affect the manner in which they contribute to the "great family."

The title of a *Rabotnitsa* article about one of Polina Osipenko's, Vera Lomako's, and Marina Raskova's non-stop flight of 2,416 kilometers, explicitly identifies the three women's positions within the "great family:" "Heroic Daughters of a Heroic People" ("Героические дочери героического народа"). Following the article, an open letter from the editorial board congratulated the three women them on "блестяще выполнивших задание великого вождя народов Иосифа

⁹⁸ Krylova, "Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender," 630-631.

⁹⁹ Стахановка Павкова, "Готовы к обороне: Ворошиловский стрелок и летчик," *Работница* 4 (Feb. 1938): 12.

Виссарионовича Сталина” (“having brilliantly fulfilled the task of the great leader of nations Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin”).¹⁰⁰ The daughters fulfill the father’s command. The editors continue: “Советский народ гордится своими отважными дочерьми, совершившими замечательный перелет” (“The Soviet people are proud of their courageous daughters, who completed a remarkable flight”).¹⁰¹ The “great family” is proud of its warrior daughters, and their heroic victories.

Soviet rhetoric supported women’s training in the arts of war and legitimized participation in traditionally male activities by incorporating the image of the woman warrior into the greater mythology of the 1930s. Through rhetoric related to the “great family,” journalists counteracted conservative tendencies to doubt armed women and reject them as “other.” By emphasizing the fact that women took up arms and completed great feats solely as “patriotic daughters who loved their country,” they recalled the traditional loyalty Russian women were expected to show to their families as dutiful, loving daughters.

Messages in Popular Magazines

From the first years of publication, prominent journals of civil defense organizations (*Samolet*, *Osoaviakhim*) and women’s journals featured images of armed women and articles supporting women’s participation in civil defense. Between the start of Voroshilov’s nation-wide militarization campaign in 1926 and the beginning of the war, *Rabotnitsa*, *Osoaviakhim*, and *Samolet* printed hundreds of images of women who either participated in civil defense or were soldiers. Between

¹⁰⁰ “Героические дочери героического народа,” *Работница* 19 (July 1938): 3.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

1927 and June of 1941, *Rabotnitsa* depicted militarized women in 18 sketches, 354 photos, and on 22 covers. Between 1929 and 1940, *Samolet* printed 57 photos and 4 sketches and *Osoaviakhim/ Voroshilovskii strelok* printed 2 sketches, 187 photos, 26 front covers, and 10 back covers featuring women soldiers.

Photographs in the media often included young men and women together, either as snipers or in classrooms, learning the basics of aviation and mechanics. As Krylova argues, these images demonstrated men's and women's equal ability to wage war.¹⁰² Furthermore, by including groups of volunteers, editors showed that engagement in military training was more than a solitary pastime, it was a collective activity, part of the arming of the state as a whole. In 1927, E. Demezer even argued that a mixed gender military would be stronger than an all-male military: “Нам же нет надобности организовать женщин отдельно от мужчин. Мы будем сильнее, работая сплоченной массой, все вместе—рабочие и работницы, мужчины и женщины” (“There is no need for us to organize women separately from men. We will be stronger, working as a united mass, all together, male and female workers, men and women”).¹⁰³ Through photographs and articles, editors presented armed women in a manner that conveyed not only equality of sexes on the battlefield and the collective nature of militarization, but also the compatibility of women and warfare.

¹⁰² Krylova, “Stalinist Identity from the Viewpoint of Gender,” 633.

¹⁰³ E. Демезер, “Роль женщины в обороне нашей страны,” *Женский журнал* 10 (October 1927): 2.

A February 1938 issue of *Rabotnitsa* featured a pictorial spread of twelve youthful, smiling women pilots. This image expresses the collective nature of military activities, while deconstructing traditional gender divisions with its title. The title “Proud Falcons of Our Motherland” (“Гордые соколы нашей родины”) encourages women to participate in traditional men’s spheres. Meanwhile the editor chose the image of the falcon, a bird that in folklore traditionally represents male fighters. A short paragraph informs the reader that the Great October Revolution had given women equal rights and these patriotic women have chosen to exercise their equal rights in defending their homeland. The pictorial spread, accompanied by title and a paragraph explaining women’s rights, shows that some members of the “new” society—presumably women, since they comprised *Rabotnitsa*’s intended audience—needed convincing that women belonged in civil defense, in particular, in aviation.¹⁰⁴

One finds a progression from the late 1920s into the early 1940s in *Rabotnitsa*, as the Soviet press and military eventually accepted what Krylova calls an “alternative gender personality.”¹⁰⁵ This newly constructed gender identity combined traditionally feminine and masculine qualities. For instance, in a 1927 issue of *Rabotnitsa*, E. Chernyshova describes armed feminine bodies: “Были стройны, молодые, ловкие,/ А глаза синели, как ручей,/ Но глядели строгие винтовки/ Из-за тонких девичьих плечей” (“They were slender, young, and adroit,/ Although their eyes shone blue like a stream,/ Their stern rifles glared/ From

¹⁰⁴ “Гордые соколы нашей родины,” *Работница* 4 (Feb, 1938): 10-11.

¹⁰⁵ Krylova, 628.

beyond narrow maidenly shoulders”).¹⁰⁶ Clearly, the narrator must have felt as though there was something contradictory about armed women and felt the need to validate them.

By the end of the 1930s, Chapichev presents a different portrait of the woman warrior:

Нет лучше и краше
Чем девушки наши!
Геройства, отваги полны,
Спокойно и гордо
Рекорд за рекордом
Берут для Советской страны!

(There is nothing better or more beautiful
Than our young women!
Full of heroism and courage,
Calm and proud
Record after record
They break for the Soviet country!)¹⁰⁷

Chapichev summarizes the desired characteristics in the new Soviet young woman: heroism, steadiness, pride, endurance, and skill on an international, rather than domestic, scale. Suddenly, there was no contradiction between women and the military. Within the span of a decade, authors and the media had fully embraced the idea of the woman warrior as natural and patriotic. The propagandization, development, and eventual acceptance of an alternative gender personality are apparent in visual representations throughout the militarization period.

¹⁰⁶ Е. Чернышова, “Девушки--стрелки,” *Работница* 18 (1927): 3.

¹⁰⁷ Чапичев, “Три подруги: Гордым соколам нашей родины Гризодубовой, Осипенко, Расковой,” 2.

Some women might have initially been reluctant to enter military training, thinking that to engage in combat is unbecoming to a woman. Through images, the journals conveyed the important message that beauty and weaponry were not incompatible. While women pilots were usually photographed in requisite flight suits, women pictured with guns were almost always wearing dresses and looking traditionally “feminine.” The first *Rabotnitsa* cover to feature armed women, in July 1927, features a photograph of three women and one man, almost cut out of the picture.¹⁰⁸ The three women are shooting from different positions, but all are wearing skirts and have uncovered, chin-length hair. There is nothing manly in their appearance. The magazine emphasizes the message that the acquisition of a rifle and shooting skills does not make a woman less of a woman. (figure 2)

Journal editors also included sketches that illustrated fictional works about armed women. The sketch that accompanies Aleksei Tolstoi’s 1938 excerpt, “Agrippina Chebrets,” shows a shapely young woman, striding forward, staring through the target finder of a rifle. The literary portrayal and visual depiction of the young woman, Agrippina Chebrets, creates the image of an able, strong, determined, yet beautiful and graceful woman (figure 3).¹⁰⁹

One can find extreme examples of the combination of weaponry and traditional constructs of femininity in images of armed mothers. Throughout the prewar militarization period *Voroshilovskii strel'ok* had published several photographs of these mothers. For example, an October 1939 issue of the magazine

¹⁰⁸ *Работница* 18 (July 1927): cover.

¹⁰⁹ Толстой, “Агриппина Чебрец,” 16.

published the photo of E. M. Ivanchik, who had taken second place in the men's [sic] group in a Tashkent shooting competition.¹¹⁰ She is wearing a woman's blouse, resting a rifle against her shoulder with her muscular, right hand, holding a smiling infant in her left arm. Another smiling child stands next to Ivanchik. The mother's military activities clearly do not interfere with her role as a mother. Perhaps, her children are happy and secure in the knowledge that their mother loves her country and them enough to prepare to protect them in the impending war (figure 4).

Similarly, the back cover of a 1940 issue of *Voroshilovskii strelok* depicts a smiling, middle-aged mother in women's clothes, standing to the right of her happy, well-dressed, son, roughly twelve years old. The woman holds a rifle in her left arm, again indicating that the art of shooting is not only an appropriate pastime of young women, but that it is compatible with motherhood. This cover, like the other, shows that an armed woman can also be a loving and attentive mother (figure 5).¹¹¹

These images illustrate a narrative, imposed from above, that argued throughout the years that women and war were compatible and that dedicated daughters of the state should arm themselves, regardless of their stations in life. The magazines published photos and articles in celebration of armed schoolteachers, housewives, factory workers, and students, reiterating that the state's position on military preparedness meant that every able adult should be able to fight.

Some photographers emphasized women's formidability and their threat to a potential enemy, prepared for any armed conflict. Such was the cover of the fifth

¹¹⁰ М. Неисова, *Ворошиловский стрелок* 19-20 (October 1939): 16.

¹¹¹ *Ворошиловский стрелок* 8 (April 1940): back cover.

issue of the inaugural 1929 year of *Osoaviakhim*, the first issue of that magazine to feature an armed woman on its cover, in honor of March 8, International Women's Day. The woman warrior narrows her eyes and slightly purses her lips, focusing her gaze on the near distance to the left of the viewer. Her right hand grasps the strap of her rifle and a small bag, presumably holding ammunition, hangs around her neck. Her hair is tied back under a scarf, so it does not distract her from her task at hand. Her jacket is rather unisex, reminding one of a military uniform. The woman stands in front of a factory, perhaps her workplace, showing that she will fiercely defend her nation and its industries, if attacked (figure 6).¹¹²

A 1936 photograph, above an article "The Women Team's Prize-pennant" ("Приз-вымпел женских команд") features a line of six crouching women, participants in the Central Sharp-shooting School in Kuskov. The women are dressed in Red Army trousers, although it is unlikely they would have been official soldiers. All six aim their bayoneted guns into the distance and squint into their viewfinders. Although the women are crouching in snow, their right hands are bare, with fingers on the triggers. The women appear calm and ready for an attacking line of soldiers (figure 7).¹¹³

While images and articles in the press often emphasized the collectivity and camaraderie of military service, editors sometimes attempted to motivate women by drawing attention to the individual experience of military training, especially aviation and parachuting. Although militarization was a top-down, state-mandated

¹¹² *Osoaviakhim*, 5 (1 Mar 1929): cover.

¹¹³ М. Николаев, "Приз-вымпел женских команд," *Ворошиловский стрелок* 7 (May 1936): 5.

policy, in some images, symbols of the state are noticeably absent. Perhaps editors realized that different women were motivated through different means. Images, such as the cover of *Flame (Ogonek)*, September 10, 1936, emphasized personal ambition and passion for flying.¹¹⁴ On this cover, E. Kurasova, a factory worker and flight club participant, stands alone before a plane, and looks to the distance.¹¹⁵ Kurasova appears self-assured, independent, and strong. She stands alone with her plane (figure 8).

Kheleva's poem "Female Pilot" ("Летчица," 1939) mirrors this emphasis on individual pilots' prowess. The first twenty-one verses of twenty-five describe the pilot's experience of flight. Written from the first-person perspective, the narrator emphasizes the isolation of the pilot in the sky and her individual actions: "Я провела/ Сквозь сотни километров/ Свой легкий серебристый самолет" ("I flew/ My light, silver plane/ Over hundred of kilometers").¹¹⁶ The poem describes the pilot's sense of excitement: "Но с новым чувством/ В новую дорогу/ Я ухожу,/ Волнуюсь каждый раз" ("I leave on a new path,/ With a new feeling,/ I worry every time").¹¹⁷ However, despite her interest in the pilot's private experience, Kheleva, aware of the purpose of literature, includes the state in her conclusion and reminds the reader that the pilot never flies alone, but always with the Motherland: "Со мной

¹¹⁴ *Работница* 27 (1939): cover.

¹¹⁵ *Огонек* 25 (10 September 1936): cover.

¹¹⁶ Хмелева, "Летчица," *Работница* 23 (1939): 2.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

ты, страна моя родная,/ Твоя земля,/ Твой ветер,/ Твой простор!” (“You are with me, my native country/ Your earth,/ Your wind, / Your space”).¹¹⁸

Journalists not only celebrated women warriors for their individual accomplishments, but, as mentioned before, they emphasized the collective nature of military activities. A 1930 *Osoaviakhim* cover stresses the camaraderie of civil defense participants.¹¹⁹ The cover depicts teamwork, showing a sketch of two women, dressed in identical women’s uniforms, pulling a machine gun. The women are smiling, obviously enjoying each other’s company as well as their work. The foreground of a 1935 cover of *Voroshilovskii strelok* depicts a robust, smiling woman, wearing a fitted women’s short-sleeved sweater, grasping a bayoneted rifle in her right hand. A demonstration of military and athletic prowess on Red Square fills the background of the cover. Hundreds of citizens organized into formations are taking part in the demonstration. The young woman appears happy and proud to be a part of the greater militarization of her country (figure 9).¹²⁰ The message conveyed by the March 1931 cover of *Hygiene and Health of the Worker and Peasant Family* (*Гигиена и здоровье рабочей и крестьянской семьи*), a journal of hygiene and popular medicine, is even more explicit: a radiant woman holding a bayoneted rifle close to her face stands in front of buildings bearing the sign “USSR.”¹²¹ The message is that the Soviet woman is an armed woman. She is not only a part of the Soviet state, but is defined by it. These covers drive home the

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ *Osoaviakhim* 25 (September 1930): cover.

¹²⁰ *Voroshilovskii strelok* 14 (1935): front cover.

¹²¹ *Гигиена и здоровье рабочей и крестьянской семьи* 7 (March 1931): cover.

message that those participating in military activities were part of a larger movement of like-minded patriots (figure 10).

An examination of printed materials shows us that during the 1920s and 1930s, popular magazines participated in the nation-wide redefinition of beauty. Traditionally, Russians prized plump women with exaggerated maternal features: large breasts and broad hips.¹²² After the revolution, the creators of mass culture reevaluated beauty and began celebrating a new body type: the young woman who is strong, robust, athletic, slim, agile, and tough. Large breasts suddenly became passé, even pornographic. As an example of the new aesthetic, Mikhail and August Stern use Ilf and Petrov's portrayal of the Soviet attitude toward women's bodies in a fictional conversation between a poster artist and an art editor in a 1932 short story, "Саванарыло" (Savanarylo):¹²³

Редактор: А вот это что, вы мне скажете?

Художник: Офицантка.

Редактор: Нет, вот это! Вот! (Показывает пальцем.)

Художник: Кофточка.

Редактор: (проверяет, хорошо ли закрыта дверь). Вы не виляйте. Вы мне скажите, что под кофточкой?

Художник: Грудь.

Редактор: Вот видите. Хорошо, что я сразу заметил. Эту грудь надо свести на нет.

Художник: Я не понимаю. Почему?

Редактор: (застенчиво). Велика. Я бы даже сказал—громадна, товарищ, громадна.

Художник: Совсем не громадная. Маленькая, классическая грудь (....)

Редактор: Ну и что из того, что больше? Нельзя отдаваться во власть

¹²² Pat Simpson, "Parading Myths: Imaging New Soviet Woman on *Fizkul'turnik's* Day, July 1944," *Russian Review* 63 (April 2004): 187-211.

¹²³ Mikhail and August Stern, *Sex in the Soviet Union*, trans. Marc E. Heine. (London: W. H. Allen, 1981), 151.

подобного самотека. Грудь надо организовать. Не забывайте, что плакат будут смотреть женщины и дети. Даже взрослые мужчины (...).

Художник: (утомленно). Какой же величины, по-вашему, должна быть грудь официантки?

Редактор. Как можно меньше (...). Хорошо, если бы совсем не было.¹²⁴

(Editor: Tell me, what's that?)

Artist: A waitress.

Editor: No that! Right there! Look! (*He points his finger.*)

Artist: A blouse.

Editor: (*He checks to see that the door is definitely shut.*) Don't pretend you don't understand. What I want to know is, what's under the blouse?

Artist: A bosom.

Editor: Exactly. It's lucky I noticed it. It's got to go.

Artist: I don't understand. Why?

Editor: (*Embarrassed*) It's too prominent. I would even say—enormous, dear comrade.

Artist: Not at all. It couldn't be more ordinary.

Editor: So what? We must not lose our self-control, as you are doing. A bosom, that's no problem. Don't forget that your poster will be seen by women and children. And even by grown men. (...)

Artist: (*wearily*) So in your opinion, what size should a waitress's bosom be?

Editor: As small as possible. (...) If only there needn't be one at all!¹²⁵

A poet summarizes her self-image of her generation: E. Stefutina writes: “Наша радость горит, как звезды./ Мы сильны,/ Молоды и ловки” (“Our joy burns, like stars/ We are strong,/ Young and agile”) in *Rabotnitsa*, showing that aesthetic views had changed.¹²⁶ Editors included a variety of body types in their magazines, but often women either looked androgynous or their breasts and hips were deemphasized by women's clothing or their positions. For example, in honor of International Women's Day 1930, the editors of *Osoaviakhim* chose a sketch of an armed woman for the cover. The larger-than-life figure in a skirt and jacket, her hair mostly

¹²⁴ Илья Ильф и Евгений Петров, “Саванарыло” in *Собрание сочинений*, vol. 3 (Москва: Художественная литература, 1996), 138-139.

¹²⁵ Ilf and Petrov, “Savanarylo” in Mikhail and August Stern, *Sex in the Soviet Union*, 151.

¹²⁶ Е. Стефутина, “Я знаю винтовку,” *Работница* 20 (1933): 15.

covered, firmly grips her rifle. Her feet are firmly planted in the industrial town, her body towering above the factory. Armed, ready for combat, this superhero embodies strength. Her lean body shows that she is likely a worker, the ideal New Soviet Woman. Her larger than life depiction shows that her military training has allowed her to achieve new heights in Soviet Society, to become a better Soviet citizen (figure 11).¹²⁷

In actuality, the new Soviet ideal of beauty had less to do with a woman's physical attributes and was much more closely related to the combination of national spirit (*народность*) and "party-mindedness" (*партийность*) that were part of the new socialist realist recipe for Soviet art and literature. Young women demonstrated their party-mindedness by arming themselves in preparation for the impending great battle for communism, proving that they were loyal daughters of their Soviet fatherland. Simultaneously, they were driven by a spontaneity which motivated them to take to the sky or strive for near perfection at the shooting range. Images, such as the cover of *Rabotnitsa*, no. 27, 1939, emphasized personal ambition and passion for flying.¹²⁸ On this cover, Veronika Struchko, a flight instructor in a Leningrad flight club, wearing a flight suit and parachute, stands in front of a plane, looking up at the sky. Struchko appears self-assured, independent, and strong. There are no symbols of the state, no factories, no mausoleum. Struchko herself represents *partiinnost'* and *narodnost'* characteristic of the New Soviet Person (figure 12).

¹²⁷ *Осоавиахим* 7/8 (5 Mar 1930): cover.

¹²⁸ *Работница* 27 (1939): cover.

Beauty was newly defined by accomplishments and courage. In a 1934 poem, Iaroslav Mukhin describes a woman's transformation when she pulls on a flight suit:

Мир—просторнее с каждым годом.
Ты идешь, молода, смугла.
Над страной стоит погода
Первой свежести и тепла.
Ты еще красивее стала,
Как надела очки и шлем,
Дорогой костюм из металла,
Сшитый родиной на земле.

(The world is wider with every year.
You go, young, tanned.
The weather in the country
Is of first freshness and warmth.
You became even more beautiful
When you donned glasses and your helmet,
And an expensive costume of metal
Sewn by the Motherland on the earth.)¹²⁹

The author associates her beauty with her flight suit, which marks her as a parachutist. In this transfigurative moment, a young woman becomes a full-fledged “woman warrior.” In his collection of propaganda posters Aleksandr Snopkov (2004) describes 1930s interest in aviation: “Тысячи юношей и девушек отдавали все свое свободное время обучению летному мастерству и прыжкам с парашютом: профессия пилота была престижной, а значок парашютиста на груди девушки привлекал к ней всеобщее внимание” (“Thousands of young men and women have given all of their free time to the study of flight and parachuting: the pilot's profession was prestigious, but a parachutist's pin on a young woman's

¹²⁹ Ярослав Мухин, “Девушка в шлеме,” *Работница* 27 (1934): 13.

chest drew all the more attention”).¹³⁰ Authors also linked beauty with courage and battle-ready firmness of mind. Leonid Ambakh concludes his poem “The Female Parachutist” (“Парашютистка”) with the lines: “Я снова заглянул в твои глаза./ Но в них сверкает яркой новизною/ Упорство, мужество и красота!” (“Again I looked in your eyes/ But in them shine bright innovation/ Persistence, courage and beauty!”)¹³¹

By 1938, the public admired the militarized woman to the extent that she became a celebrity. Her image was so recognizable that she was even used to sell beauty products. For example, in his advertisement, I. Bograd featured a female pilot to sell Sanit brand toothpaste.¹³² The poster features a pilot, who resembles Grizodubova, smiling a bright smile, her teeth the same shade of white as her plane’s exhaust. She exudes health, youth, joy for life, and personal accomplishment. Clearly, a woman pilot is a happy, beautiful woman, and those selling Sanit believed that women would buy their toothpaste in the hopes of looking look like her. Bograd’s poster shows us that by 1938, the woman warrior had not only become a role model to be imitated, but had redefined standards of beauty.

Editorial boards actively portrayed armed women in a manner that would inspire other women, as an open letter to women aviators from the editors of *Rabotnitsa* shows: “Ваш героизм еще больше вдохновляет работниц и всех советских женщин на борьбу за новые победы социалистической родины”

¹³⁰ Снопков, *600 Шестьсот плакатов*, 81.

¹³¹ Леонид Амбах, “Парашютистка,” *Работница* 31 (1938): 2.

¹³² И. Боград, “Санит,” in *600 Шестьсот плакатов*, Снопков, 170.

(“Your heroism inspires women workers and all Soviet women even more to the battle for new victories of the socialist Motherland”).¹³³ Upon the completion of aviation records, women pilots were often featured on the covers of *Rabotnitsa*, as they became exemplary women (figures 13 and 14).¹³⁴

Editors also included stories about individual women’s journeys toward militarization, showing that an average woman could become a warrior. In these vignettes, journalists would describe the experience of typical women, for example: “В 20 лет Аня Баранова ничем не отличалась от тысяч других советских девушек. Энергичная и жизнерадостная, она стыдила тех из своих подруг, кто не знал, куда деть свободное время” (“At 20 years of age Ania Baranova was no different from thousands of other young Soviet women. Energetic and life-loving, she shamed her friends who did not know what to do with their spare time”).¹³⁵ The author then proceeds to describe Baranova’s path from fear of touching a rifle to becoming a “passionate shot” (“страстный стрелок”), instructor, and a master of shooting in three years. The article discounts those who initially doubted Baran and concludes with an image of Baranova as a true fighter, after her transformation: “Сильная, кряжистая, в военной форме, она производит впечатление настоящего бойца, который не растеряется при внезапной встрече с врагом и постоит за себя и свою родину. Мечта Ани—стать снайпером и доказать это на деле, если грянет война” (“Strong, sturdy in her military uniform, she the gives

¹³³ “Героические дочери героического народа,” *Работница* 19 (1938): 3.

¹³⁴ *Работница* 29 (October 1938): 3; *Самолет* 18 (September 1939), 5.

¹³⁵ П. Я., “Мечта Ани Барановой,” *Ворошиловский стрелок* 5 (1937): 10.

the impression of a real fighter, who will not lose her head during a sudden meeting with the enemy, someone who will stand for herself and her Motherland. Ania's dream is to become a sniper and to prove herself in action, if war were to erupt").¹³⁶ The author of the article obviously intends for it to be read by an ordinary woman looking for a hobby, and much like the personal testimonies, this article shows women how to become fighters.

Throughout the militarization period, magazines warned readers about women's military preparations in capitalist countries. In 1928, the "Abroad" ("За рубежом") section of *Rabotnitsa* featured pictures of riflemen in the United States and England and a report of women's military activities in several European countries. Levakova reminded her readers: "Вот об этой-то военной подготовке женщин за рубежом надо крепко помнить нашим работницам и крестьянкам, перед которыми стоят огромные задачи в деле обороны своего рабочего государства" ("Our female workers and peasants must remember the military preparation of women going on abroad. Our female citizens face huge tasks in defending our country in their workplaces").¹³⁷ As capitalist women in potentially hostile countries were preparing themselves for war, Soviet women also needed to match and outdo their efforts.

While publications addressing primarily female readers emphasized a woman's right and duty to fly or bear weapons and encouraged her participation in military training, some articles in journals read mostly by men, like *Samolet*,

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Е. Левакова, "За рубежом: Военная подготовка женщин." *Работница* 25 (1928): 5.

addressed men and argued for women's inclusion in the civil defense organizations. These articles indicate, and postwar pilots' memoirs confirm, that, in spite of the government's official position, in reality, many men continued to view aviation as a man's realm and tried hard to exclude women. As a result, many female pilots were forced to overcome opposition and serious gender-based discrimination on the part of aviation officials. Since the inclusion of women in the 1920s-1930s militarization was a top-down decision and policies were often contradictory, conservative reluctance to accept women as equals is not surprising.¹³⁸ Regardless of images of smiling women in flight suits, the vast majority of women pilots needed to show stubborn determination in order to learn how to fly.

Some of the articles and letters from editorial boards in popular magazines such as *Samolet*, whose intended audience included both men and women, show that discrimination existed on every level of society, including civilian organizations. Although the official position deemed these individuals "old-fashioned thinkers," the military also did not recognize a woman's equal right to participate in aviation alongside men.

Women encountered much less discrimination when learning to shoot or handle large weapons, like machine guns, perhaps because weapons were not as expensive or complicated as planes. It is also likely that they did not encounter as

¹³⁸ P. E. Аронова, *Ночные ведьмы*, 1st. edition (Москва: Издательство "Советская Россия," 1969), 8. For instance, women were officially banned from the Air Force Academy. Aronova refers to her 1938 rejection from the military flight school as disappointment in life "разочарование в жизни" and the tragic destruction of a dream, "Надежды рухнули, мечта гибла" After this rejection, she chose the path many of her future women comrades would choose: studies aviation in her spare time, in a flight club.

much opposition as the pilots did, since being a pilot was much more prestigious than a rifleman or riflewoman. Not surprisingly, *Osoaviakhim/ Voroshilovskii Strelok* rarely included articles or editorials, addressed toward men, reiterating a woman's right and duty to participate in defense and demanding her inclusion in military activities. These articles were likely not needed.

Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, magazines published photographs that featured young women, looking happy and confident, proud of their accomplishments. Media images advocated strong, able, confident women who took full advantage of the equal rights supposedly afforded to them by their Soviet Motherland, women who were not afraid to venture into a world previously the domain of men. Editors hailed these women as true daughters of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party.

Positive images and celebratory articles of militarized women encouraged girls and young women growing up in the 1930s Soviet Union to engage in military activities. Nadezhda Kravtsova's description of Olga Iamshchika's experience of 1930s militarization gives evidence of the influence media images had on the generation of women that would become fighter pilots in World War II.¹³⁹ In Kravstova's biography, Iamshchika is inspired by media images of pilots, cuts out their photos, thus in a sense transforming these heroes into icons. She dreams of becoming a pilot:

Задумавшись, Лелька смотрела в окно и грызла кончик ручки. Дома у нее хранились вырезки из газет со снимками Самолетов, с сообщениями

¹³⁹ Н. Кравцова, *За облаками солнца* (Москва: Советская Россия, 1982), 36.

о дальних полетах летчиков Громова, Моисеева. Дядя Миша, единственный человек, которому Лелька сказала о своей мечте, принес ей несколько старых журналов “Самолет”, и теперь она знала всю историю авиации. Знала и то, что в 1911 году, когда ее и на свете еще не было, в Гатчинской авиашколе, под Петербургом, научились летать три русские женщины. Первой получила диплом пилота Лидия Зверева, дочь русского генерала. Она стала инструктором в Рижской авиашколе, но спустя несколько лет умерла от тифа. Почти одновременно с ней окончила Гатчинскую авиашколу артистка Любовь Галанчикова. Через год она уехала с авиаконструктором Фоккером в Германию, там продолжала летать на его самолет и даже установила рекорд высоты. ...Это были первые русские летчицы. А совсем недавно Лелька вырезала из газеты “Красная Звезда” за 1925 год заметку о Зинаиде Кокориной, первой женщине-военлете, с портретом летчицы. Кокорина в буденовке со звездой, приятное лицо, смотрит серьезно... Всю статью Лелька выучила наизусть, и особенно запомнились заключительные слова: “В день своего Международного дня работницы и крестьянки нашего Союза должны твердо уяснить себе, что Кокорина только первая, но не последняя. Кокорина доказала, что женщина может быть летчиком” ... Вспомнив все это, Лелька в который раз уже подумала, что если Зинаида Кокорина смогла окончить военное летное училище, стать инструктором, учить других, то разве не сможет то же самое она, Лелька?”

(Lost in thought, Lel'ka looked through the window and nibbled on the tip of her pen. At home she kept newspaper clippings with pictures of airplanes, and news about the long-distance flights of pilots Gromov, Moiseev. Uncle Misha, the one person, whom Lel'ka had told about her dream, had brought her several old issues of *Samolet*, and now she knew the entire history of aviation. She know that in 1911, before she was even alive, in the Gatchino flight school, outside of Petersburg, three Russian women learned how to fly. The first to receive her diploma was the pilot Lidiia Zvereva, the daughter of a Russian general. She became an instructor in the Riga flight school, but after several years, she died of typhus. Almost at the same time, the actress Liubov' Galanchikova finished the flight school. A year later, she went with the flight aircraft designer Fokker to Germany, where she continued to fly on his plane and even set a altitude record ... These were the first Russian women pilots. And not long ago at all, Lel'ka cut out from the newspaper *Krasnaia gazeta* a 1925 notice, with a portrait, about Zinaida Kokorina, the first woman military pilot. Kokorina in a helmet with a star, a pretty face, looks serious. Lel'ka learned the entire article by heart, and especially remembered the concluding words: “On the international day of the worker and peasant of our Union, we must fimly understand for ourselves that Kokorina was only the first, but not the last. She proved that a woman could

be a pilot”... Remembering all this, Lel’ka had already several times thought that if Zinaida Kokorina was able to finish a military aviation academy, become an instructor, teach others, then surely, she, Lel’ka would be able to do the same?)¹⁴⁰

In this excerpt, assuming that Iamshchikova’s experience was typical and that thousands of women reacted in similar manners to the state-wide militarization campaign, Kravtsova shows the role the media played. Examples of pilots, first male and then female, inspired Iamshchika to the extent that she canonized them, cutting out their pictures and transforming them into icons.¹⁴¹ Photographs showed the nation that the women pilots were pleasant, serious professionals to be admired. Aviation magazines like *Samolet* taught novices about the history and mechanics of aviation before they entered flight clubs. From articles and images in the media women learned that not only was an aviation career a possibility but that women before them had set precedents and proven that women could fly. These women concluded that armed women warriors were patriotic daughters in a “great family,” ready and eager to wage war in the next great battle for communism.

When Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union June 22, 1941, the Soviet Union’s contradictory position toward armed women and rejection of their demands to go to the front led to frustration and confusion. For over a decade, the Soviet state had urged women to prepare for a foreign invasion, yet, hundreds of thousands of militarized women, fully prepared and eager to defend their Motherland were sent

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 35-36.

¹⁴¹ Into the Brezhnev period, Soviet children cut out pictures of Heroes of the Soviet Union and hung them in their rooms. Elena Koshkarova, in discussion with the author, 13 July 2007; Vera Novitskaia, in discussion with the author, 12 July 2007.

home to await mobilization while their male comrades, with whom they had studied aviation and weaponry, were accepted into the Red Army immediately.

The first women to be accepted by the military were those in noncombat roles—nurses, reconnaissance scouts, radio operators, and translators. Eventually the military mobilized snipers, machine gunners, and pilots. Throughout the war, journals continued to feature images of armed women, but only months into the war it became clear that the most celebrated women warriors would be those who had not distinguished themselves through skilled fighting, but by sacrificing themselves for the homeland.

Chapter 2: Молчать, как Партизанка: The Woman Warrior-Martyr

“Эй, товарищи! Чего смотрите невесело? Будьте смелее, боритесь, бейте фашистов, жгите, травите!..Мне не страшно умирать, товарищи! Это счастье—умереть за свой народ!...Вы меня сейчас повесите, но я не одна. Нас двести миллионов, всех не перевешаете. Вам отомстят за меня...Прощайте, товарищи! Боритесь, не бойтесь! С нами Сталин! Сталин придет!”¹⁴²

(“Comrades! Why look so sad? Be braver, fight, kill the Germans, burn them!...I am not afraid to die, comrades! To die for one’s people is happiness... You will hang me in a little while, but I am not alone. There are two hundred million of us, and you can’t hang us all. They will avenge me...Farewell, comrades! Fight on, have no fear! Stalin is with us! Stalin will come!”)¹⁴³

By far, the most widely celebrated Soviet woman warrior remains the martyr.

These words, allegedly proclaimed by Zoia Kosmodemian’skaia as Nazi soldiers were tightening the noose around her neck, illustrate crucial aspects of the woman warrior-martyr myth in Stalinist culture. It focuses on bravery in death: a warrior’s farewell to comrades-in-arms who will avenge her, a martyr’s willingness to die for the Soviet people, a demand that Soviets mobilize and avenge her death, and a reference to Stalin, the spiritual father, at the moment of her death. The title of this chapter and the epigraph seemingly comprise a contradiction: the partisan is famous both for her stoic silence in the face of torture and for her stirring final speech to her comrades. This chapter aims to resolve this contradiction and explain how it functions in the warrior-martyr myth.

¹⁴² П. Лидов, “Таня.” *Правда* (27 January 1942).

¹⁴³ P. Lidov, “Таня,” *International Literature* 3-4 (1942): 68.

Who is the woman warrior-martyr in the context of Soviet culture? She is a soldier who is remembered for her inspiring death for the Soviet cause, rather than for heroic deeds. Usually she is a partisan or reconnaissance scout. During World War II, narratives and images of woman warrior-martyrs helped to motivate citizens, bring the Soviet citizenry together, and mold them as a nation. The impact of Zoia on Soviet culture is more obvious than any other martyr. Her death inspired many: Hero of the Soviet Union and pilot Marina Raskova, the partisan Oleg Koshevoi, who later himself was executed as commissar of the Krasnodon underground group “the Young Guard” [*Молодая гвардия*] and the tank driver Mariia Oktiabrskaiia, who later bought a tank to avenge the death of her husband and other Soviet compatriots. Readers cut Zoia’s picture out of *Pravda* and framed it, transforming her image into an icon. To the present day, “To keep quiet, like a partisan” (“Молчать, как партизанка”) is a common idiom conveying resolute silence. It originates particularly from women partisans’ silence in the face of interrogation by the Nazis. One of the main characteristics of the partisan was his or her strong silence in the face of torture.

This chapter will treat the process of and reasons for the creation of the woman warrior-martyr myth in Soviet culture. It also examines the warrior-martyr’s reception by the Soviet public in an attempt to explain why the partisans made such a lasting impression on the Soviet public. It examines the World War II warrior-martyr in terms of character (typical traits, motivation, kinship relations), cultural precursors/mentors and heritage, and settings (nature, village, or city). I outline key

elements of the warrior-martyr master plot and examine the concept of time in this story (epic time, crisis time, mythic timelessness). Further discussion will focus on the most famous example, Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia, and the process of mythmaking. My goal is to explain the powerful impact she had on the Russian collective memory of World War II rather than other women—pilots, snipers, and tank drivers—who accomplished more and died even more heroic deaths.

The woman warrior-martyr may be defined as a hero, either fictional or based on a real-life prototype, who is usually tortured and dies for the Motherland, having fought for Communist “truth” and for the Russian people, against a formidable enemy. She becomes a national hero through death, rather than military deeds. Her death, her sacrifice for the Motherland, for Communism, for Stalin, for the people, for ideological truth, and for the future, overshadows the rest of her biography, including her achievements and military actions. She contributes to the war effort primarily by dying for her nation. Works about women warrior-martyrs typically include lengthy descriptions of the martyr’s last moments, often detailing physical torture, last words, and execution. She is remembered by future generations as a “true daughter of the Motherland” who sacrificed herself for the Soviet Union after living a “moral” life in the Soviet context, which meant believing in Communist doctrine and behaving correctly.¹⁴⁴ Prior to World War II warrior-martyrs in Soviet mythology were those individuals—men or women—who had sacrificed their lives

¹⁴⁴ Women warrior-martyrs are often referred to as “true daughters of the Motherland,” as evident in the title of I. Cherniaeva’s *Дочери России* (Москва: Издательство “Советская Россия,” 1975) and the March 1942 article about Liza Chaikina: “Героическая дочь народа,” *Работница* 6 (March 1942): 2.

for the Communist cause in the war against the tsarist regime: nineteenth-century revolutionaries and heroes of the Civil War.¹⁴⁵

Soviet ideologues transferred religious rituals and types—here the notion of the martyr—in secular form to their new atheist state. In keeping with this transference, the Soviet definition of the martyr is broader than the established definition of martyr as a person who died in imitation of Christ after defending his or her Christian faith when persecuted by Roman authorities.¹⁴⁶ Arthur Droge and James Tabor identify five characteristics of the martyr:

1. The individual reflects situations of opposition and persecution.
2. The choice to die, which this individual makes, is viewed by authors as necessary, noble, and heroic.
3. This individual is often eager to die; indeed, in several cases martyrs end up directly *killing themselves*.
4. There is often the idea of vicarious benefit resulting from their suffering and death.
5. The expectation of vindication and reward beyond death, more often than not, is a prime motivation for the choice of death.¹⁴⁷

One finds examples of all five of these characteristics in the corpus of works about women warrior-martyrs.

I begin my analysis of the woman warrior with the martyr type because this category is the most widespread type of woman warrior in Soviet cultural history related to World War II. The first female Hero of the Soviet Union during the war,

¹⁴⁵ For example, see Catherine Merridale's discussion of the postrevolutionary "pantheon" of new Soviet saints in her book, *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Nineteenth-Century Russia*. (New York: Viking, 2000) and Nina Tumarkin's analysis of veneration of Lenin in *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

¹⁴⁶ Jan Willem van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002), 2.

¹⁴⁷ Arthur Droge and James Tabor, *A Noble Death* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 75.

the school girl and partisan, Zoia Kosmodemian'skaia, was a martyr.¹⁴⁸ The most famous women heroes were martyrs. These women became saints in the Soviet iconostasis that gave Soviets and model into a believe system in which the totalitarian dictator was God. I am going to examine the process by which these martyrs became saints and then discuss in more detail Kosmodem'ianskaia, the most clear-cut example of the construction of a cultural myth.

Although some might question the significance of certain women warrior-martyrs who contributed seemingly little to the Soviet cause, we must pay attention to the martyr texts because of the central role these women play in Russian cultural memory. The number of published works about the martyred schoolgirl Zoia Kosmodemian'skaia far exceeds the number of published works about other famous woman warriors like the pilot Marina Raskova, one of the first Heroes of the Soviet Union and captain and organizer of women's air regiments. The martyr texts are not merely narratives of actions, completed for the war effort; rather, actions are secondary to the message of selfless devotion and boundless love for the homeland. Shortly after the start of the Second World War, the exemplary Soviet woman transmogrified from the strong, active, arms-bearing woman of the 1930s into a martyr.

This chapter hypothesizes that the martyr was a genuinely popular type; Soviet officials at first did not orchestrate the development of the heroic model for women from an armed woman into a martyr. The officials did not anticipate the

¹⁴⁸ Ю. Н. Иванова, *Храбрейшие из прекрасных: Женщины России в войнах* (Москва: Росспен, 2002), 249.

public's response. For example, although journalists did shape the first reports of Zoia's death to elicit widespread public rage, they omitted key facts about Zoia's death. Nonetheless, once they saw the reaction to the report of Zoia Kosmodemian'skaia's torture and death, they manipulated the image of the martyred warrior as a means to motivate the Soviet people. Kosmodem'ianskaia became the first woman Hero of the Soviet Union within a month of the release of her identity. Scholars of Soviet culture have referred to her as the "Joan of Arc of the Great Patriotic War," even if underground leader Liza Chaikina's life bears a more striking resemblance to the French saint's life.¹⁴⁹

The warrior-martyr type is more pervasive, more multifaceted than other types of women who participated in World War II. We find her in literary and visual, narrative and lyrical texts, public and private spheres: documentary novella (документальная повесть), vignette (очерк), diary, memoir, letter, novel, long narrative fiction/prose, narrative poem, lyric poem, *novina*,¹⁵⁰ film, play, sculpture (public and private), historical painting, political poster, and museum displays.

Before building a typology of the warrior-martyr, it will be helpful to summarize the place of the martyr and the female martyr in Russian culture.

Russians have a long tradition of venerating martyrs. One can trace martyrs back to

¹⁴⁹ See Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994), 76; Rosalinde Sartorti, "On the Making of Heroes, Heroines, and Saints," in *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, ed. Richard Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 182; Daniela Rathe, "Soja—eine 'Sowjetische Jeanne d'Arc'? Zur Typologie einer Kriegsheldin" in *Sozialistische Helden: Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR* ed. Silke Satjukow and Rainer Gries (Berlin Ch. Links Verlag, 2002), 45-59.

¹⁵⁰ The *novina* is a faux-folkloric genre, structurally based on the medieval *bylina*, but about Soviet heroes and themes. See Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era* (New York: Armonk, 1990).

the Slavic, pre-Christian, pagan past. As Serge Zenkovsky argues, both native and Byzantine translations of hagiography provided stylistic and spiritual examples well into the nineteenth century.¹⁵¹ In East Slavic folklore, remnants of pagan sacrifice were preserved in calendrical rituals. The first Russian Orthodox patron saints, Boris and Gleb, were martyrs. They died model deaths, submitting to a higher truth, praying as they awaited fratricidal deaths. Female martyr saints figure prominently in pre-modern didactic literature; they are the most common, albeit, least developed, types of women engaged in religious life.¹⁵²

This veneration of the martyr transcended the Christian realm in the early nineteenth century, as the myth of the Decembrists and their wives developed among revolutionaries. The Decembrists' wives sacrificed their social standing and physical comfort in support of their imprisoned and exiled husbands.¹⁵³ As radical revolutionary movements developed in the mid-to-late nineteenth century and radical revolutionaries began to employ terrorist tactics, revolutionaries were inspired by lives of revolutionaries who were either imprisoned or executed for their political deeds. Authors transformed old hagiographical forms into works that would fill a new socialist canon. These nineteenth century radicals not only influenced those who fought in the Civil War but also, women who participated in World War II. Vera Figner, for example, spent twenty-two years in solitary confinement for coordinating a political assassination shortly after the assassination of Alexander II.

¹⁵¹ Serge A. Zenkovsky, *Medieval Russia's Epics* (New York: Penguin, 1974), 7.

¹⁵² Jennifer Lee Anderson, "The Jewel and the Snake: The Image of Women in 16th and 17th Century Russian Didactic Literature" (master's thesis, Ohio State University, 1995), 79.

¹⁵³ Natalia Pushkareva, *Women in Russian History: From the Tenth to the Twentieth Century*, trans. Eve Levin (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 197.

During World War II, Zoia Rukhadze invoked Figner's name as she stood before German firing squad.¹⁵⁴ Sofiia Perovskaia, the first female radical to be hanged, Zina Konopliankova, and Lidiia Sture, the inspiration for Leonid Andreev's Musia, all willingly sacrificed themselves for the Communist cause and inspired subsequent generations of woman warriors.¹⁵⁵ Clark notes that the revolutionaries aimed to be what N. K. Mikhailovskii termed "martyrs of history": "Prison and exile, death from tuberculosis or some other debilitating disease, brought on by sacrificing one's health to the cause, separation of lovers and families—all became not traumatic limitations but opportunities for election" into the pantheon of Communist saints.¹⁵⁶

Soviet propagandists transformed into martyrs the unarmed workers who were killed on Bloody Sunday during the 1905 Revolution. In 1929, the Soviets exhumed the demonstrators' remains from a mass grave, placed them in coffins draped in red and reburied them in marked graves in a formal ceremony.¹⁵⁷ Lunacharskii articulated the Soviets' need to recapture the power of myth.¹⁵⁸ In the 1930s, the State published ritualized biographies of the Bolshevik elite, all of whom had suffered for the cause. Mark D. Steinberg notes that early Bolshevik writers often employed Christian imagery in narratives of violent struggles of the Civil

¹⁵⁴ Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 146, 412.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 147, 272.

¹⁵⁶ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 177.

¹⁵⁷ Merridale, *Night of Stone*, 71.

¹⁵⁸ Mark D. Steinberg, "Workers on the Cross: Religious Imagination in the Writings of Russian Workers, 1910-1924," *The Russian Review* 53 (April 1994): 215.

War.¹⁵⁹ He maintains that authors portrayed proletarians as saints and as “crucified martyrs,” whose suffering would redeem humanity.¹⁶⁰ Clearly, the martyr occupied a central position in Soviet culture even before the war.

The direct precursors to the woman warrior-martyrs of World War II are women who participated in revolutionary movements and the Civil War. World War II warrior-martyrs often viewed these women as role models and imitated them. In particular, revolutionary martyrs’ resolute silence in the face of torture particularly left an impact on the women of the next generation. Tat’iana Solomakha, a schoolteacher and Civil War commissar, was imprisoned, tortured, and killed by White soldiers, all the while remaining fiercely silent. She reportedly impressed Zoia to the extent that Zoia assumed Solomakha’s identity when she was interrogated by Nazis. When asked her name, Zoia only responded that her name was “Tania.” Zoia’s mother, Liubov’ Kosmodemian’skaia, later wrote in her biography of Zoia *The Tale of Zoia and Shura* (*Повесть о Зое и Шуре*, 1950), that Zoia cried when she read how the Whites beat Tania when she would not cry and how she did not ask them for mercy, all the while bravely looking them in their eyes.¹⁶¹

These revolutionary predecessors proclaim inspiring words prior to their executions, as in the examples of Sonia Fadeeva and Kseniia Ge, whose last words prior before execution were “Да здравствует Советская власть!” (“Long live

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 222-3.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 223.

¹⁶¹ Любовь Космодемьянская, “Повесть о Зое и Шуре,” in Библиотека пионера: Избранные повесть и рассказы, vol. 2 (Moscow: Detskaia literatura, 1972), 107.

Soviet power!’”)¹⁶² These warrior-martyrs for the bright Communist future, as well as women like Liusik Lisinova, hit by an enemy bullet in the Moscow Uprising of 1917, provided examples and inspired the children who would become World War II warrior-martyrs.¹⁶³ Because the type of warrior-martyr was strongly shaped by Soviet and Soviet-approved male heroes and historical figures, it is worth taking a moment to discuss these influences. Zoia, Liza Chaikina, and the two Young Guards, Ulia Gromova and Ina Konstantinova, all were well-read in Russian and Soviet literature and authors often portrayed them reading. Liubov’ Kosmodem’ianskaia describes the role of the book in her daughter’s life: “Книга давно уже не просто отдых или развлечение. Нет она—друг, советчик, руководитель. ‘То, что в книгах, то всегда Правда,’--говорила Зоя, когда была маленькая. Теперь она подолгу думает над книгой, спорит с ней, ищет в книге ответа на то, что ее волнует” (“For quite a while, the book had not been simply a means of relaxation or entertainment. No, it was a friend, advisor, leader. ‘What is in books is always Truth.’—said Zoia when she was young. Now she would long think over a book, argue with it, find in the book an answer to that which disturbed her”).¹⁶⁴

Both Liza and Zoia aspired to be like Pavel Korchagin, the protagonist who sacrifices his health for the Soviet cause until his death, in Nikolai Ostrovskii’s *How the Steel Was Tempered* (*Как закалялась сталь*, 1932, 1934), a novel which was

¹⁶² А. Богат, *Работница и крестьянка в красной армии* (Москва: Государственное издательство, 1928), 34, 89.

¹⁶³ Stites, *Women’s Liberation Movement*, 306.

¹⁶⁴ Космодемьянская, “Повесть о Зое и Шуре,” 111.

hailed an as example for generations of Soviet children. Liubov' writes about the impact of Ostrovskii on Zoia and her generation: "После очерка о Тане Соломахе была прочитана та незабываемая повесть, что не проходит бесследно ни для одного подростка,—повесть о Павле Корчагине, о его светлой и прекрасной жизни. И она оставила глубокий след в сознании и сердце моих детей" ("After the vignette about Tania Solomakha, that unforgettable story, the one that could not pass by a single teenager without leaving an impression—the story about Pavel Korchagin, about his bright and beautiful life. And it left a deep impression on the consciousness and hearts of my children").¹⁶⁵ Liza views World War II as part of an ongoing single war that began with the 1917 revolution: "Борьба эта, о которой говорит Островский, за освобождение человечества," she says ("The battle, about which Ostrovskii speaks, is for the liberation of humanity").¹⁶⁶ Liza, like Korchagin, struggles to liberate humanity. In Zykov's play, she encourages her loved ones, "Будем драться, как Павка Корчагин ... пока бьется сердце! Клянемся!" ("We will fight, like Pavka Korchagin ... while our hearts beat! We swear").¹⁶⁷

I have already noted the impact of the Civil War commissar Solomakha on Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia. According to Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia, Zoia was also moved by the stories of other patriots, both Soviet and pre-Soviet, such as the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Николай Бирюков, *Чайка: роман* (Москва: Детская литература, 1986), 119.

¹⁶⁷ Н. Зыков, *Предвестница: Героическая драма, в трех действиях, одиннадцати картинах*, РГАЛИ, ф. 2095, опись 8, ед. хр. 301, 33.

stories told by a friend's father, who fought with Chapaev in the Civil War.¹⁶⁸ In Lev Arnshtam's film, Zoia recites a poem about the Russian hero, Ivan Susanin, who battled Polish invaders during the Time of Troubles and whom one might view as a prototype for the twentieth-century partisan. The inclusion of these cultural precursors in the biographies of woman warrior-martyrs indicates the martyr's role in a larger tradition. Her morally correct precursors have shown her how to act and what to believe, just as she will inspire future generations.

As a young girl, Liuba Shevtsova, a member of the Young Guard dreamt of being Chapaev: “Впрочем, она хотела быть и Чапаевым, именно Чапаевым, а не Анкой—пулеметчицей, потому что, как выяснилось, она [Люба] тоже презирала девчонок. Она наводила себе чапаевские усы жженой пробкой и дралась с мальчишками до победного конца” (“However, she wanted to be Chapaev, not Anka the machine-gunner, due to her scorn for girls, but Chapaev. She painted herself a mustache using a burnt cork and fought with the boys until she won”).¹⁶⁹ Liuba envisions herself as a fighter, and when the war begins, she is the only woman in Fadeev's novel who dreams of victorious feats at the front, either as a pilot or doctor, or perhaps behind the lines, as a reconnaissance scout and radio operator. Mythic Chapaev embodies her longing for glory through self-sacrifice. These childhood dreams foreshadow her participation in World War II. Authors seemingly include these sources of inspiration to show that these women started life as patriotic children, who were inspired by the victories that preceded them. The

¹⁶⁸ Космодемьянская, *Повесть о Зое и Шуре*, 85

¹⁶⁹ А. А. Фадеев, *Молодая гвардия* 2nd. ed. (Москва: Художественная литература, 1986), 1-245.

authors want their young readers to draw inspiration from stories of women warrior-martyrs, so that they will be ready to continue the struggle for communism, seeing themselves as the next in a line of brave warriors for communism.

Like her predecessors, the woman warrior-martyr is a model citizen, intensely patriotic, and loyal. Her love for her country and her dedication to the righteous struggle endow her with the strength and eagerness to sacrifice herself for the collective. The warrior-martyr type embodies a combination of the ordinary and the extraordinary. Often the narrator stresses the martyr's ordinariness as a child. She enjoys simple everyday pleasures, such as walking through Russian nature and reading books. And, just like the reader of the text, she is raised in the Soviet "great family" and attends Soviet schools. Ina Konstantinova, a partisan from Kashin, who kept a diary, published posthumously, before sacrificing herself for her comrades during a battle, does not stand out from her peers in photographs:

Ина в классе, Ина в концерте художественной самодеятельности, Ина на прогулке в лесу...Обыкновенная девчонка...Обыкновенные любительские снимки. Но в этой обыкновенности—огромная, гипнотизирующая сила. Стоят перед стендом девчонки, смотрят: она была такой же, как мы. И смогла сделать такое...

(Ina in class, Ina in an amateur concert, Ina on a walk in the forest...an ordinary girl...Ordinary, amateur photos. But in this ordinariness, there exists an enormous, hypnotizing strength. Girls stand before an exhibition stand, looking...she was just like us. And still she managed to do that...)¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Ина Константинова, *Девушка из Кашина: дневник и письма Ины Константиновой* (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1974), 151.

By stressing the average nature of the martyr, these works send the message that there is no reason why the reader of cannot also accomplish great deeds for the nation.

However, as ordinary as she may be, the future warrior, like her forbears of Russian saints lives, almost always has a gift or behaves in a manner that sets her apart from other children. Often the martyr is intelligent or wise beyond her years. In her narrative poem “Liza Chaikina. Poema,” Maria Komissarova portrays Hero of the Soviet Union Liza Chaikina, executed November 23, 1941, as a little girl preferring to read over other childhood pastimes. The narrator emphasizes Liza’s intelligence by contrasting to her with her less serious sister by showing Liza passing her sister a doll and opening a book.¹⁷¹

An inner flame sets Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia apart from her childhood peers: “Так и проходили день за днем./ Жизнь была обычной и похожей./ Только удивительным огнем/ проступала кровь под тонкой кожей.” (“And so, day after day passed./ Her life was ordinary and routine./ Like a surprising flame/ Her passion showed blood red”).¹⁷² Classmates looked askance martyred partisan Mariia “Zoia” Poryvaeva because of her unusual obsession with flight: “Соученики любили Машеньку, да и как ее было не любить—ласковую, отзывчивую. Девочки считали ее немножко чудной” (“Her classmates loved Mashen’ka, and how could

¹⁷¹ Мария Комиссарова, *Лиза Чайкина. Поэма* (Москва: Государственное издательство художественной литературы, 1958), 11.

¹⁷² Маргарита Алигер, “Зоя (Поэма),” *Стихи и поэмы 1935-1943* (Москва: ОГИЗ Государственное издательство художественной литературы, 1944), 133.

one not love her—so loving, responsive. Girls considered her rather odd”).¹⁷³

Although these warrior-martyrs differ from each other, narrators note that they distinguished themselves as special children, pointing to their noteworthy destinies.

The woman warrior-martyr typically possesses all of the characteristics that good Soviet citizens do however, she demonstrates these characteristics to the extreme. For instance, she is so honest that sometimes she crosses the boundaries of polite behavior. When she knows the truth, she must openly proclaim it. Honesty is the dominant trait in Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia's character. In Margarita Aliger's narrative poem, *Zoia, pravda* (ideological truth) becomes Zoia's passion as she grows into an adult. In Aliger's plays and in Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia's biography, Zoia risks social alienation when she informs on misbehaving classmates. She is forgiven only because they recognize her moral superiority that she holds herself to even stricter standards. Zoia tells her peers, “А я не хочу лгать, я—комсомолка, я обязана говорить правду. И буду, и буду” (“But I don't want to lie. I'm a Komsomol member. I am obligated to speak the truth. And I will, I will”).¹⁷⁴ Semen Tutuchenko writes about Ganna Bondarchuk, a peasant scout in Belorus: “Какая-то она слишком открытая, прямая, бесхитростная: что думает, то и говорит. Малейшее волнение, тревога—все по глазам видно” (“She was a little too open, straightforward, unsophisticated: what she thought, she would say.

¹⁷⁴ Margarita Aliger, *Zoia: Драматическое представление в 4-х актах, 7-ми картинах* (1944) РГАЛИ, ф. 2219, опись 2, дело 53, 4.

The smallest emotion, uneasiness—you could see everything in her eyes”).¹⁷⁵

Although an extreme dedication to honesty characterizes warrior-martyrs, they never give up any information to the Germans. They give the expression, “silent as a partisan,” its meaning.

The woman warrior-martyr is unusually self-sacrificing from early childhood. Often, early in the work, the heroine strives to ignore her individual happiness in order to benefit another person or the greater good of the Soviet state. This self-sacrificing trait often manifests itself in oaths when the heroine enters the Komsomol, or Communist Youth League. In Fadeev’s *The Young Guard* (*Молодая гвардия*, 1946, 1951), the narrator describes actress and partisan Liuba: “ее терзали жажда славы и страшная сила самопожертвования. Безумная отвага и чувство детского, озорного, пронзительного счастья—все звали и звало ее вперед, все выше, чтобы всегда было что-то новое и чтобы всегда нужно было к чему-то стремиться” (“A thirst for glory and the terrible strength of self-sacrifice tormented her. Mad courage and a feeling of childish, mischievous, piercing happiness called her forward, all the more higher so that there was always something new and so that there was always something for which to strive”).¹⁷⁶ Several authors describe Zoia’s childhood self-sacrifice, when she sacrifices her own pleasure to give to others: she might help other students with their school work, or baby-sit a neighbor’s child, rather than going to a dance. The warrior-martyr is defined by her dedication to and

¹⁷⁵ Н. Масолов, “Машины Березки,” in *Тайна Зои Кругловой* (Ленинград: Лениздат, 1962), 7. Семен Тутученко, “Русалка,” *Двенадцать березок: рассказы о партизанках* (Киев: Издательство ЛКСМУ “Молод,” 1980), 13.

¹⁷⁶ Фадеев, *Молодая гвардия*, 1-245.

need to sacrifice herself for her nation and the party. When dreaming of the future, she may not know exactly what she wants to become, only that she hopes to accomplish great deeds to benefit the Soviet Union.

One of the primary differences between the woman warrior-martyr and a male martyr, like Oleg Koshevoi, is an emphasis on purity and innocence. In her *novina*, “We Won’t Ever Forget” (“Не забыть нам век-повеки”), E. I. Chichaeva uses the color white to symbolize Zoia’s purity. Zoia has a white body, white hands, and a white face: her white body represents her pure soul.¹⁷⁷ The narrator of *The Young Guard* describes the partisan martyr Ulia Gromova, who seemingly represents Russia herself, as “pure, clean” (*chistaia*), as well as “strong” (*sil’naia*). Innocence adds dimension to the martyr’s sacrifice, just as it added to the value of human sacrifices in the premodern era.

The warrior-martyr is fearless, never afraid of death. Fadeev describes one of the heroines of the Young Guard: “Любка была девушка прямая и бесстрашная” (“Liubka was a straightforward and fearless girl”).¹⁷⁸ She may announce that she is not afraid to die, like Ganna Bondarchuk, who tells her interviewer when demanding transfer to the front, “Я не боюсь смерти, ничего не боюсь” (“I am not afraid of death, I’m not afraid of anything”).¹⁷⁹ She may instruct others not to fear death. All of the works about Zoia detail her strength and bravery as she faces interrogation, torture, and execution. In Arnshtam’s film, the viewer watches as Zoia develops this

¹⁷⁷ Е. И. Чичаева, *Не забыть нам веки-повеки: Светлой памяти Героя Советского Союза, З. А. Космодемьянская* (Красноярск: Красноярскокраевое издательство, 1944), 4-5.

¹⁷⁸ Фадеев, *Молодая гвардия*, 2-45.

¹⁷⁹ Тутученко, “Русалка,” 13.

fearlessness as a child: portrayed as an only child home alone, Zoia forces herself to leave her bed and confront her fear of the dark. In her novina, E. I. Chichaeva includes Zoia's last words, in which Zoia addresses the Soviet people and demands that they also become fearless: "Вы не бойтесь пыток, казни, смертные,/ В их легко так умереть за отечество,/ За народ, за страну, за товарища за Сталина!" ("Do not fear torture, execution./ It is easy to die for the fatherland./ For the people, for the country, for comrade Stalin!").¹⁸⁰

The warrior-martyr type has two sub-types, the simple peasant and the sly rogue. Her eloquence does not mean that the woman warrior-martyr was always portrayed as complex or cultured. Class rarely alters the portrayal of the woman warrior-martyr, but, if the martyr lacked a higher education and almost always if she came from the provinces, the narrator notes her simplicity. All martyrs lack pretension, but simplicity marks the peasant woman's character. She is direct and honest. Regardless of class origins, the warrior-martyrs are always intelligent. Birdiukov portrays Liza Chaikina as an ideal peasant: a woman with nothing more than basic schooling, but self-taught, and endowed with the ability to enlighten her family; she stands apart from other peasant girls in her thirst for knowledge and her understanding of the Party and ideological truth. After becoming a party leader, she maintains her ties to the kolkhoz and becomes the leader of the peasants during the Nazi occupation, precisely because she knows how to speak simply and clearly.

¹⁸⁰ Чичаева, *Не забыть нам веки-повеки*, 6.

The other subtype of the woman warrior-martyr that merits discussion is the martyr-rogue or dissembler. The martyr rogue shares many characteristics with the martyr, but differs from the martyr in several key traits: mobility, cleverness, wit, inner purity, and honesty. She transgresses boundaries of ordinary behavior and uses trickery to accomplish tasks and undermine the enemy.

Slyness sets the rogue apart from other martyrs. She is constantly moving between the Nazis and the Soviets, trying on new identities and deftly stealing things. She moves quickly. She also defies authority to an extent, creating her own rules as she plays a dangerous game of living on the fence. Often these characters move between two roles: the loyal Soviet citizen who hates the Nazis and the fun-loving girl who likes the Nazis because she hates the Soviets who somehow punished her family, usually her father.

The rogue differs from the ordinary martyr because her actions are ambiguous—she is never straightforwardly honest and pure. She must be able to withhold information and lie, not only to Germans but to her Russian neighbors. All warrior-martyrs are smart, but the martyr rogue is unusually crafty.

The rogue particularly uses her sexual desirability to facilitate reconnaissance work. Under normal circumstances, she would not be engaging in inappropriate sexual activities, but as she is willing to do anything to further the Soviet cause and gain valuable information or supplies from the Germans. Stories about rogues describe flirting, euphemistically hinting that the rogue is sleeping with the enemy.

Masha “Zoia” Poryvaeva, a scout in the partisan commander Arbuzov’s brigade, goes on reconnaissance missions, bearing arms.¹⁸¹ She moves between three identities, Zoia the partisan, the peasant Agrafena from a kolkhoz, and the daughter of a formerly rich peasant who had been persecuted by the Soviet regime. When the Germans catch her reading a pamphlet and accuse her of being a partisan, she successfully dupes them into believing that she is sympathetic to the Nazis. Using her physical attractions and plying the German officers with drink, she steals secret documents. When she realizes that the Germans no longer trust her and that she cannot escape, she grabs a gun and shoots a German officer before being shot through the hand and subdued. She is then tortured and executed, dripping blood all the way to her execution site.¹⁸²

Zoia “Baiger” Kruglova of Ostrov, a scout who passed as a German’s mistress, learned how to shoot and played war games before the war. During the war, she helps build fortifications and serves as a nurse. She eventually becomes a reconnaissance scout, and leads a double life, crossing back and forth over enemy lines. Some Russians scorn her, believing her to be a German prostitute, but she gains the trust of Germans and the right to travel freely and gather intelligence that leads to the bombing of a German airfield. Eventually, she is captured, beaten, and transferred to a death camp, from which she escapes and returns to Ostrov, only to be captured, interrogated, beaten, and executed.¹⁸³ Tatiana Bauer Klimantovich, a half-

¹⁸¹ Н. Масолов, “Машины Березкы.”

¹⁸² Н. Масолов, *Баллада о красном десанте* (Москва: Издательство политической литературы, 1967); Н. Масолов, *Тайна Зои Кругловой* (Лениздат, 1962), 7-19.

¹⁸³ Н. Масолов, “Тайна Зои Кругловой” in *Тайна Зои Кругловой* (Лениздат, 1962), 35-55.

Hungarian, half-Russian partisan scout in the Minsk region, and Ina Konstantinova, a partisan scout from the Moscow region, and Liuba Shevtsova, from the Krasnodon “Young Guard” underground movement all cunningly manipulate Nazi occupiers and acquire valuable information or supplies.

With the exception of Liuba Shevtsova, these historical “rogues” were virtually unknown until the Thaw period, well after the death of Stalin. Perhaps their independent thinking or their vacillation between roles initially made them suspect. I include them in this category because they have most of the same characteristics and fit into the same storyline as the typical warrior-martyr. As with the warrior-martyr, narrators treat the reader to graphic descriptions of brutal treatment of their bodies. They, too, are immortalized in visual and verbal monuments.

This typology of the warrior-martyr forms a picture of an ideal Soviet young woman, a representative of the brave, aggressive Soviet people. The warrior-martyr is a version of the socialist realist “positive hero.” She fits Katerina Clark’s description of the positive hero as an “emblem of Bolshevik virtue, someone the reading public might be inspired to emulate.”¹⁸⁴ Like other Soviet positive heroes, the warrior-martyr embody the three pillars of socialist realism: party-mindedness (*partiinnost’*), national patriotism [*narodnost’*], characterized by spontaneity, and correct ideological thinking [*ideinnost’*]. By embodying these three pillars, the warrior-martyr becomes a leader and is able to inspire the masses with her words. She is always smart; she knows when to speak, when to be silent, and when to listen.

¹⁸⁴ Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 46.

She always chooses the precise words and can spontaneously give speeches in order to motivate people. She is energetic and life-loving, the embodiment of 1930s optimism.

The lives of women warrior-martyrs typically conform to a master plot that can be divided into two parts. The first part leads up to the woman's capture, and comprises four major events or "plot functions" that point to her heroic potential: birth, childhood revelation of revolutionary leadership, initiation into Soviet society, and descent into the chaos of war, a period of duties and ordeals. Capture by the Nazis marks the beginning of the second part of the master plot. Four plot functions form this part: capture, torture and interrogation, execution, and achievement of immortality.

Function 1: Birth into a Good Family

Longer narratives usually detail the warrior-martyr's birth into a good, Soviet family. As a child she is raised by her parents and school to revere communism, Lenin, Stalin, and the Soviet state. Shura Lukovina-Gribkova, hanged after participating in a Volokolamsk underground organization, was born into an exemplary family in the Moscow region: her mother, a collective farm worker, had fought on the front lines in the Civil War, while her father was a factory worker.¹⁸⁵ When asked why she became a reconnaissance scout and radio operator, Klara Davidiuk mentions that although she wanted to serve the Soviet Union, she was

¹⁸⁵ Овидий Горчаков, "Они встали на пути "Тайфуна": Повесть о восьми героинях," *Хранить вечно: Рассказы о разведчиках* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1980), 5-36.

probably influenced by her father's example, as he had been a scout and then commissar of an armored train during the Civil War.¹⁸⁶

Function 2: Childhood Revelation of Leadership Potential

In the heroine's childhood there comes a moment when it becomes clear that she understands the importance of the party on a deeper level than her peers and exhibits traits that indicate her future martyrdom. Liza Chaikina brings ideological "truth" to her family, politically re-educating her mother, convincing the older peasant woman to join the kolkhoz. Probably following Gor'kii's and Ostrovskii's models, this revelation of revolutionary leadership occurs in part as a result of difficult circumstances which have "tempered" the future martyrs. Narrators describe the childhood as difficult. For example, the narrator of Margarita Aliger's *Зоя: Поэма* exaggerates the poverty of the Kosmodem'ianskaia family and highlights the death of Zoia's father. These hardships strengthen the warrior-martyr's character. Regardless of challenges, the warrior-martyr becomes an ideological leader amongst her peers at school.

Function 3: Initiation into the Collective and Coming of Age

A proper upbringing prepares the warrior-martyr to assume responsibility as a Soviet citizen. Clark argues that the typical Soviet novel's plot suggests that the most appropriate analogy must be the tribal rite of passage or initiation, in which a

¹⁸⁶ И. Василевич, сопр., *Люди молчаливого подвига: Бессмертные очерки о разведчиках, книга 1* (Москва: Издательство политической литературы, 1987), 314.

young adult undergoes a series of trials and completes appropriate tasks. If successful, the young person becomes a full-fledged member of the society.¹⁸⁷ The initiation as an adult into Soviet society for the future warrior-martyr takes typically two different forms. Sometimes this function takes the form of acceptance into Komsomol after an interview. In some works it occurs when the young woman goes to the recruiting office and demands to enlist. The woman warrior usually takes an oath at one of these two moments. She expresses her desire to submit to the will of the collective. In Aliger's play, Zoia reads and meditates on the Komsomol pledge as a Christian would say a prayer:

Читает сначала про себя, потом громче, но не очень громко и очень взволнованно: быть беззаветно преданным великой социалистической родине и быть готовым отдать за нее все свои силы, а если понадобится—и жизнь. А если понадобится и жизнь...Как страшно...Когда я это в первый раз прочитала, у меня прямо дух захватило,—А если понадобится— жизнь...А вдруг понадобится.

(At the beginning, she read to herself and then louder, but not very loud and quite anxiously: to be wholeheartedly dedicated to the great socialist Motherland and to be ready to give all of one's strength for it—and if necessary, one's life. And if necessary—life...how strange...When I first read this, it took my breath right away--And, if necessary—life...And perhaps it really would become necessary.)¹⁸⁸

For Zoia, joining the Komsomol is tantamount to becoming a soldier; both must be willing to give their lives for the Motherland. Zoia's Komsomol interview comprises one of the key moments in Arnshtam's film, when Zoia, through her thoughtful responses, sets herself apart from her peers and shows her dedication to her country.

¹⁸⁷ Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 167.

¹⁸⁸ Алигер, *Зоя: Драматическое представление*, 11.

When giving an oath during a recruitment interview or upon joining the war effort, the martyr states that she is willing to do anything to help the Motherland. She lacks all individuality, unlike the warrior-knight, who, as we will see, goes to the recruiting center as a trained pilot or a sniper. Ulia Gromova and Liuba Shevtsova, along with all of the other members of Molodaia Gvardiia, take the following oath when the young people form the underground organization:

Я, _____, вступая в ряды членов Молодой гвардии, перед лицом своих друзей по оружию, перед лицом родной многострадальной земли, перед лицом всего народа торжественно клянусь: беспрекословно выполнять любые задания организации; хранить в глубочайшей тайне все, что касается моей работы в Молодой гвардии. Я клянусь мстить беспощадно за сожженные, разоренные города и села, за кровь наших людей, за мученическую смерть героев-шахтеров. И если для этой мести потребуется моя жизнь, я отдам ее без минуты колебаний. Если же я нарушу эту священную клятву под пытками или из-за трусости, то пусть мое имя, мои родные будут навеки прокляты, а меня самого покарает суровая рука моих товарищей. Кровь за кровь, смерть за смерть!

(I, _____, joining the ranks of the Young Guard, before my friends in arms, before my native long-suffering land, before all people, I solemnly swear: unquestioningly to fulfill any task of the organization; to keep in deep secret everything to do with work in the Young Guard. I swear to avenge relentlessly burnt, destroyed cities and villages, the blood of our people, the martyr's death of our heroic miners. And if this revenge requires my death, I will give it without a minute's hesitation. If I violate this sacred oath under torture or through cowardice, then let my name, my family forever be damned, and me myself be punished by the stern hand of my comrades. Blood for blood, death for death!)¹⁸⁹

This oath shows the sacrifice of the individual for the benefit of the collective and the willingness of the martyr to die for the Soviet cause. The last line, "Blood for blood, death for death!" recalls Old Testament justice and reinforces the sanctity of

¹⁸⁹ Фадеев, *Молодая гвардия*, 2-3.

the oath. The peasant Ganna Bondarchuk pledges during her interview, “Клянусь честью, если примете в отряд, доверите оружие, я умру, а приказ выполняю” (I swear on my honor that if you accept me into the brigade and entrust me with a weapon, though I may die, I will fulfill your command”).¹⁹⁰

Often, the woman receives arms at this moment. This act of arming transforms the heroine into a warrior; she has successfully completed the first part of her initiation, as the elders, or military superiors, have deemed her sufficiently prepared and dedicated to join the collective. Although Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia barely mentions Zoia's recruitment interview, she notes that Zoia receives a weapon.¹⁹¹ Ina writes home, “У меня теперь автомат, хожу, как большая” (“I have a rifle now. I'm like a grown-up”).¹⁹² The weapon transforms her into an adult, from a girl into a woman.

Usually, a narrator uses the Komsomol or recruitment interview only as the beginning of the initiation. If one is described in great detail, then the other is often only implied in the narrative. The typical inclusion of only one of the two interviews suggests that the two events are alternates of one and the same function in the text. Both by becoming a Kosomol member and by joining the army, a person becomes a member of the collective and shows total dedication to the nation and a willingness to perform heroic deeds on its behalf. War-time posters, such as one honoring Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia's brother, Aleksander, a tankist and Hero of the Soviet Union,

¹⁹⁰ Тутученко, “Русалка,” 14.

¹⁹¹ Космодемьянская, *Повесть о Зое и Шуре*, 184.

¹⁹² Константинова, *Девушка из Кашина*, 112.

depicts a tank amidst ruins and a picture of Aleksandr in uniform and includes the words, “Hero and Komsomol member” (*Geroi komsomolets*), equating Komsomol membership with heroic deeds.¹⁹³

At the start of the war, Komsomol members immediately began contributing to the war effort. At the beginning of the war, recruiting offices only accepted men as soldiers. Zoia complains to her mother, “‘Мальчики уезжают,’ сказала она мне. ‘Куда и зачем—не говорят. Девочек не берут. Если б ты знала, как я уговаривала их взять меня! Ведь стрелять я умею. И я сильная. Ничего не помогло! Сказали: берут одних мальчиков’” (“‘The boys are leaving,’ she told me. ‘Where and why? They aren’t saying. They don’t take girls. If only you knew how I tried to convince them to take me! You know I can shoot. And I’m strong. Nothing helped! They said: they are accepting only boys’”).¹⁹⁴ Soon thereafter, in fall 1941, presumably after realizing the value of women reconnaissance scouts, recruiters began accepting women like Zoia. Most women, however, were encouraged to serve as nurses, factory workers, or barricade builders. Often a young woman begins contributing to the war effort on the home front until something compels her to leave home. This event functions as a turning point and leads the woman to ask for mobilization as warrior. For instance, Ina Konstantinova joined the war effort after she learned of her boyfriend’s death. Most often, the woman warrior-martyr joins the war effort because she knows she must, as a true Soviet

¹⁹³ *Герой Советского Союза Зоя Космодемьянская* (Москва: Центральный ордена Красной Звезды музей вооруженных сил СССР, 1980).

¹⁹⁴ *Космодемьянская, Девушка из Кашина*, 156.

citizen who possesses all of the characteristics outlined above, because, as Zoia tells her mother in Arnsham's film, she cannot do otherwise: her parents, school, and nation have prepared her. She cannot sit at home. Some women, like Vera Voloshina, had prepared themselves as warriors during militarization and want to serve precisely in combat, as a "warrior" (*boets*): "Надвигалась война. И Вера прекрасно это понимала и даже хотела, страстно хотела стать бойцом. Недаром училась она стрелять из винтовки, револьвера, пулемета "максим," не случайно стала водить мотоцикл." ("War was imminent. Vera understood this very well and even wanted, wanted terribly to become a warrior. It was not in vain that she had learned how to shoot a rifle, revolver, machine gun "Maksim." She had not learned to ride a motorcycle just by accident")¹⁹⁵ Rather than become a nurse, Vera Voloshina enlists as a partisan.

Function 4: Descent into Chaos—Entering Combat

After joining the war effort, the crucial transformation begins as the woman warrior-martyr, now a partisan, goes on missions. Katerina Clark notes that sacrifice is crucial to Stalinist novels as the major act in the process of coming of age. Sacrifice occurs when the character descends into chaos, receives instruction from teachers, undergoes an ordeal, and dies a grizzly death.¹⁹⁶ During this period, the person being initiated receives instruction from elders; warrior-martyrs typically

¹⁹⁵ Овидий Горчаков, "По следам Подвига: Повесть о Вере Волошиной," *Хранить вечно: Рассказы о разведчиках* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1980), 106.

¹⁹⁶ Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 177-178.

receive instruction from more experienced fighters or partisan cell leaders. In Aliger's play about Zoia, in the delirium she experiences after her torture, Zoia receives instruction from Stalin himself.

As Clark puts it, this rite of passage of descent entails the "killing of oneself to give birth to the other."¹⁹⁷ When the heroine descends into chaos, she must leave her former self behind in order to become a warrior. Clark notes that in the Soviet novel, "when the hero sheds his individualistic self at the moment of passage, he dies as an individual and is reborn as a function of the collective."¹⁹⁸ In the case of the warrior-martyr, the heroine's body undergoes physical transformation, changing into the muscular body of the militarized woman. For example, just before leaving home, Arnshtam's Zoia cuts her hair. Sometimes, the warrior-martyr changes her traditional women's clothing for a uniform. After leaving home, the warrior-martyr often becomes leaner and more muscular, living in the forest, surviving with little food and no comfort. This physical transformation symbolizes the heroine's mental and spiritual tempering. The heroine is sometimes unrecognizable to her kinfolk, as is the case with the partisan, Mariia (Zoia) Poryvaeva, when she returns home on leave: "Исхудавшая, почерневшая, переступила Порываева порог родного дома. Не узнали ее поначалу ни брат, ни мать—как-то сразу повзрослела она, посуровела. Видно, пережила и узнала то, чего другие не узнают за целые годы" ("Thinner, darker Poryvaeva stepped over the threshold of her family's house. Neither her brother nor her mother recognized her at first. She had suddenly grown

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 178.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

up, became sterner. It was apparent that she had lived through and learned about things others did find out about in a lifetime”).¹⁹⁹ This transformation or tempering of the hero is typical of socialist realist literature, in which the hero must suffer and transcend his suffering to become fully conscious.²⁰⁰

The partisan typically lives in the forest and carries out orders, for example, going on reconnaissance missions, serving as a messenger, or participating in raids. If the warrior-martyr is working in the underground, rather than as a reconnaissance scout, such as Liza Chaikina, Ulia Gromova of Molodaia Gvardiia, or Anna Morozova, officially a laundress on a Nazi airbase and coordinator of the Seshchinskii underground organization, she may organize partisan activities or write propaganda leaflets. In short, the future warrior-martyr does whatever is needed to aid her comrades. She often assumes a leadership position.

In her work as a partisan, the martyr-rogue assumes different identities and behaves in a manner that would seem anti-Soviet to the uninitiated around her. Other Russians misunderstand her and accuse her being a traitor. She understands her compatriots' feelings, but she so loves the Motherland that she is able to withstand the scorn of her Russian compatriots as well as revolting German sexual advances in order to perform her patriotic duty.

¹⁹⁹ Масолов, “Машины Березки,” 11.

²⁰⁰ Clark, 178.

Function 5: Capture

Comparing Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia to Joan of Arc, Daniela Rathe argues that both women undergo two rites of passage: the transition of girl into warrior followed by the elevation of the warrior into a national hero, a martyr, and a saint. The first four functions of the warrior-martyr master plot comprise the transition from girl into warrior; in the last four functions, the woman warrior transforms into a warrior-martyr and national hero and enters the mythic realm as a Soviet saint. Although the woman warrior has performed dutifully before her capture, her true inner strength and devotion to the Motherland become apparent only after her capture. Her deeds in the second part are truly heroic.

Sometimes narrators barely describe the warrior-martyr's capture. When they do describe the capture, the warrior-martyr is always one against many. For example, the circumstances of Liza Chaikina's capture differ from version to version, but her brave, calm demeanor remains constant throughout the versions. In Biriukov's novel, after a traitor has betrayed her, Nazis capture her in a village in the dead of night. Her captors attempt to lead her to a tank, in order to transport her to another village, but she shrugs them off and walks to the tank herself. In Zykov's play, an alcoholic traitor, Arishka, betrays Liza by telling the Germans where Liza is spending the night. The Nazis storm the hut and grab the defenseless, sleeping woman. She awakes and berates them.²⁰¹ In Komissarova's narrative poem, Liza is sleeping peacefully, dreaming of her beloved, when the Germans burn the hut and

²⁰¹ Н. Зыков, *Предвестница: Героическая драма, в трех действиях* (1956-7), РГАЛИ, ф. 2095, опись 8, ед. хр. 301, 63.

capture her as she leaves. In all three variants, the Nazis capture Liza only because they outnumber and overpower her, making it impossible for her to defend herself. All stories agree that she was captured, not as a result of some incompetence or carelessness on her part, but because of treachery.

A traitor also betrays the members of the Young Guard. In Fadeev's novel, Liuba's and Ulia's arrests mirror different versions of Chaikina's arrest. Like Biriukov's Liza, Ulia approaches the Nazis herself. She knows that since she has been betrayed, there is no use in trying to escape. The German occupiers are simply stronger and more numerous than Molodaia Gvardiia. Like Zykov's Liza, Nazis capture Liuba while she is lying defenseless in bed, in a state of undress.

In all of the Zoia stories Zoia's capture receives little attention, and for good reason. Archival sources indicate that in actuality, the Russian peasants of Petrishchevo, not wanting her to burn down their barns, turned her in to the Nazis.²⁰² Most versions note briefly that she was captured while attempting to burn down peasant huts and barns housing Nazis. For example, in Arnshtam's film, a Nazi soldier grabs her from behind and overpowers her as she is launching a kerosene torch toward a barn. She was captured because she had been preoccupied with fulfilling her mission. E. I. Chichaeva deviates from the canonical version by portraying Zoia's capture metaphorically: "Налетела стая диких коршунов,/ Диких коршунов, черных воронов./ Стали рвать, клевать твое тело белое" ("A flock of wild kites flew up/ Wild kites, black crows./ They began to tear apart, to peck your

²⁰² Rathe, "Soja—eine 'Sowjetische Jeanne d'Arc'?" 45-59.

white body”).²⁰³ In this version, Zoia, a small bird, is at a numerical and physical disadvantage.

Function 6: Interrogation and Torture

While narrators may not dwell on the warrior-martyr’s capture, they spare no words describing her interrogation and torture. Here is her truly heroic moment. During interrogation, the woman warrior-martyr never divulges information that might be useful to Germans, hence the origin of the phrase “Молчать, как партизанка,” or “to remain stoically quiet, like a partisan.” She answers in a manner that only frustrates and infuriates Nazi officers. For example, when asked where partisans were, Liza replies, that they are everywhere the fascists are.²⁰⁴ In his one-page *Pravda* article, “Tania,” which began the Zoia and woman warrior-martyr myth, Petr Lidov includes explicit details of Zoia’s interrogation:

В 10 часов утра пришли офицеры. Старший из них по-русски спросил Татьяну (Zoia’s code name):
--Скажите, кто вы?
Татьяна не ответила.
--Скажите, где находится Сталин?
--Сталин находится на своем посту,--ответила Татьяна.”

(At 10:00 in the morning officers came. The most senior asked Tat’iana in Russian.
“Tell us, who are you?”
Tat’iana did not answer.
“Tell us, where is Stalin?”
“Stalin is at his post,” answered Tat’iana.)²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Чичаева, “Не забыть нам веки-попеки,” 4.

²⁰⁴ Бирюков, *Чайка*, 350.

²⁰⁵ Лидов, “Таня,” 3.

In all versions of the Zoia myth, the Nazis abuse Zoia, as they attempt to force her to answer them, but she never admits anything.

Authors spare no words detailing methods of Nazi torture of warrior-martyrs' bodies. Nazis beat Zoia, burn her with a kerosene lamp, and whip her with belts. They beat Liza, bend her hands back, break her fingers, and torture Liza's mother in front of her. Explicit references to rape and sexual assault are noticeably absent from all Soviet works about warrior-martyrs, but narrators often infer these crimes by describing how Nazi interrogators strip the warrior-martyrs. All accounts of Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia note that Nazis forced Zoia to walk barefoot from hut to hut in Petrishchevo in December, wearing nothing but her underclothes. Zoia's near nakedness and the fact that she was removed to private locations suggest euphemistically that she was raped by Nazis in at least one of the huts housing German officers.

The heroine may be executed rather quickly after capture, as Zoia was, or she may be imprisoned for some time, as the Nazis attempt to wear her down in order to gain information. Fadeev describes the warrior-martyrs' last days in the Krasnodon prison:

С этого дня в жизни “молодогвардейцев” в тюрьме произошел тот перелом, что они перестали скрывать свою принадлежность к организации и вступили в открытую борьбу с их мучителями. Они грубили им, издевались над ними, пели в камерах революционные песни, танцевали, буянили, когда из камеры вытаскивали кого-нибудь на пытку.

И мучения, которым их подвергали теперь, были мучения, уже непредставимые человеческим сознанием, невысказанные с точки зрения человеческого разума и совести.

(From that watershed day in the prison life of the “Young Guard,” they stopped hiding their membership in the organization and entered into an open battle with their tormenters. They were rude to them, mocking them, and sang revolutionary songs in their cells, danced, and made scenes when someone was dragged out of his or her cell for interrogation.

And the torture, to which they were now subjected, was torture unimaginable to the human consciousness, unthinkable from the point of view of human reason and conscience).²⁰⁶

By this point in the novel, the members have already proven their unwavering love for their country and the Nazis can do nothing to make them deny their faith. One can find more evidence of an informal canonization of warrior-martyrs in the transformation of personal effects into relics. These relics often bear testament to the martyr’s last torments. For example, sometimes the imprisoned warrior-martyr manages to send a note to her from prison. The rogue-martyr Liuba writes her mother: “Прощай, мама, твоя дочь Люба уходит в сырую землю” (“Goodbye, Mama, your daughter Liuba is going into the damp earth”)²⁰⁷ These notes become a final testament of the martyr’s last moments and suffering; they usually end up in a museum, with other “relics,” relating to the martyr’s life. Zoia (Baiger) Kruglova’s last letter home, written in blood, not only becomes a relic in a museum, but was distributed to Soviet soldiers who carried her letter and were inspired by reading it. From her prison cell, Kruglova writes,

Жду расстрела, о жизни уже больше не думаю, хотя, милые мои, мне очень хочется немножко пожить ради того, чтобы увидеть вас, крепко обнять и выплакать на твоей груди, мамочка, все свое горе.

Но, видно, такая моя судьба, на которую я нисколько не обижаюсь. Я исполнила свой долг. Милые мои, вы гордитесь тем, что я не запятнала вашей фамилии и своей чести. Умру, но знаю, за что.”

²⁰⁶ Фадеев, *Молодая гвардия*, 2-236-37.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-273.

(I await the firing squad. I'm not thinking about life anymore, even though, my dear ones, I really want to live a bit longer to see you, hug you warmly, and sob out all my grief on your shoulder, Mama.

But this is my fate, at which I am by no means offended. I have done my duty. My dear ones, take pride that I have sullied neither your name nor my honor. I die, and I know for what.)²⁰⁸

Kruglova's last letter emphasizes that she died for a purpose, just as her readers may die in battle. Even after inconceivable physical suffering, she is fiercely loyal to her country and proud of her name. Such gruesome physical evidence shows that brutality and imprisonment have no effect on the warrior-martyr. Her mind and her will are stronger than her body. She will bite through her lip before she betrays her nation. She gives proof of her inner strength and love for the Motherland, for the Russian people, and for the Soviet state during the interrogation function.

Function 7: Execution

Definitions of martyrdom often include aspects of "witnessing" or confessing of one's faith in the martyr's final actions. As the Greek noun *martyros* means "witness," bearing witness to one's convictions is a central aspect of a martyr's death.²⁰⁹ The woman warrior-martyr usually demonstrates her faith by dying a public death before many witnesses. During this public execution, she proclaims moving last words meant to motivate the Soviet people, not merely those who fight in World War II, but those who will continue the epic battle for the Communist cause.

²⁰⁸ Масолов, *Тайна Зои Кругловой*, 54.

²⁰⁹ Jan Willem van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death*, 2.

By staying true to her country and people, by upholding her Communist faith, the warrior-martyr shows that although the Nazis could do anything they wanted to her body, they had no control over her mind and soul. Masolov writes about Mariia “Zoia” Poryvaeva, a martyr-rogue who was executed in August, 1942:

Все устремленная вперед, с пылающим взором, девушка была прекрасна в своем последнем порыве. Измученная пытками, с руками, скрученными колючей проволокой, советская патриотка была сильнее своих врагов. Крезер не выдержал. Выхватив из кармана браунинг, он дважды выстрелил в грудь Порываевой...²¹⁰

(Rushing forward, with a burning gaze, the young woman was beautiful in her last effort. Tormented by torture, her hands, twisted by the barbed wire, the Soviet patriot was stronger than her enemies. Krezer could not bear it. Taking his Browning from his pocket, he fired two times into Poryvaeva’s chest.)

The image of the physically powerless, yet morally and spiritually powerful young woman, outnumbered by Nazis, persists throughout her capture, interrogation and torture, and execution.

In some narratives, Nazis force warrior-martyrs to march to their execution site, recalling Christ’s march to Golgotha. Vera Voloshina reportedly dripped blood as she was led to her execution.²¹¹ Up until this moment, the martyr has been publicly silent, defiantly refusing to answer interrogators’ questions, “Молчит, как партизанка.” Nevertheless, just prior to execution, either on the path to the gallows or already on the scaffolding, the warrior-martyr staves off physical death one last time and begins to speak. Sometimes martyrs sing political songs on their final

²¹⁰ Масолов, *Тайна Зои Кругловой*, 19.

²¹¹ Ovidii Gorchakov, “Po sledam Podviga: Povest’ o Vere Voloshinoi” *Khranit’ vechno: Rasskazy o razvedchikakh* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1980), 126.

march, as do Ulia and other members of the Young Guard: “Подымется мститель суровый, И будет он нас посильней...” (“The severe avenger will rise up, and he will make us stronger”).²¹² Mariia Poryvaeva sings a pioneer song, “Мы шли под грохот канонады, Мы смерти смотрели в лицо” (“We walked under the thunder of cannonades, we looked death in the face”).²¹³

Sometimes, the martyr will address the crowd one last time from the execution site. Although the reality of such a situation is doubtful (what Nazi would simply stand by and let the condemned proclaim inflammatory words?), the final speech is a key moment in the warrior-martyr’s tale. She stands above, looking down at her Nazi executioners and her compatriots. Although the warrior-martyr often addresses the Germans, her inspiring final words are intended for her Russian audience. In Biriukov’s novel, Liza Chaikina addresses “Родные!... Народ!” (“My dear ones! My people!”) and then proclaims “Идет Красная Армия!”; “Помогайте ей всеми силами!”; and “Идет победа!... Прощайте товарищи!” (“The Red Army is coming!”; “Help it will all your strength!”; and “Victory is coming!... Farewell comrades!”).²¹⁴ The martyr addresses not only her audience but the future generations who take inspiration from her sacrifice.

Undeniably, Zoia Kosmodem’ianskaia’s execution inspired writers, artists, and filmmakers to an extent greater than the final moments of other warrior-martyrs.

²¹² Фадеев, 2-271. From G. Machtet’s 1876 song “Замучен тяжелой неволей,” available at <http://sh-kray.narod.ru/archive/2004/44/main.htm> (accessed April 2008).

²¹³ Масолов, *Тайна Зои Кругловой*, 19.

²¹⁴ Бирюков, *Чайка*, 385-386.

Lidov included her final words in his first article. As Nazis are tightening the noose around her head, Zoia addresses her audience with the words used as the epigraph:

Эй, товарищи! Чего смотрите невесело? Будьте смелее, боритесь, бейте фашистов, жгите, травите!....Мне не страшно умирать, товарищи! Это счастье—умереть за свой народ!....Вы меня сейчас повесите, но я не одна. Нас свести миллионов, всех не перевешаете. Вам отомстят за меня. Солдаты! Пока не поздно, сдавайтесь в плен: все равно победа будет за нами! Прощайте, товарищи! Боритесь, не бойтесь. С нами Сталин! Сталин придет!²¹⁵

(“Comrades! Why look so sad? Be braver, fight, kill the Germans, burn them!...I am not afraid to die, comrades! To die for one’s people is happiness...You will hang me in a little while, but I am not alone. There are two hundred million of us, and you can’t hang us all. They will avenge me...Farewell, comrades! Fight on, have no fear! Stalin is with us! Stalin will come!”)²¹⁶

These words immediately became a crucial part of the official Zoia myth, and were reproduced in many works about Zoia. During the war, versions often included reference to Stalin, as we find in Chichaeva’s *novina*:

Вы прощайте, дорогие мои товарищи,
Наберитесь силы-волюшки,
Мстите, бейте врага проклятого!
Вы не бойтесь пыток, казни, смертные,
В их легко так умереть за отечество,
За народ, за страну, за товарища за Сталина!
Не одолеть врагам страну советскую,
Не одолеть им силу богатырскую!

(Farewell, my dear comrades,
Gather your strength and resolve,
Take revenge, beat the damned enemy!
Mortals, do not fear torture and execution.
Through them, it is easy to die for the fatherland,
For the nation, for the country, for comrade Stalin!
Our enemies will not conquer the Soviet land,

²¹⁵ Космодемьянская, *Повесть о Зое и Шуре*, 181; Лидов, “Таня,” 3.

²¹⁶ Лидов, “Таня,” 68

Our enemies will not overcome our knights' strength.)²¹⁷

In her eight-line speech, Chichaeva includes Zoia's farewell to her comrades, and a plea to avenge her death. She encourages them not to fear torture or death, but to love the fatherland, for the people, for the country, for Stalin. Arnshtam's film concludes with Zoia's beautiful face, with a church in the background, urging Russians to fight Germans. The church reminds the Russian people of their Orthodox roots and recalls Christ's martyrdom, drawing the obvious parallel between Zoia and Christ, Soviet and Christian sanctification.

Function 8: Immortality

In the last function of the master plot, the woman warrior-martyr achieves immortality through the memories of the Soviet citizenry and future successes of the Soviet state. Initially, during the war, she inspires others to avenge her death, as was the case with Zoia. It is worth repeating that during the war, Soviets cut out her picture, honored her memory, and vowed revenge for her death.

After the war, she becomes a leader-by-example for future generations. They carry on her memory by devoting their lives to building communism. Zыkov's play concludes with Liza Chaikina's beloved, Fedia, carrying her lifeless body off the stage, saying "За Чайку, вперед! Комсомольцы, вперед!" ("For Chaika, forward! Komsomol members, forward!").²¹⁸ The message to the audience is clear.

²¹⁷ Чичаева, *Не забудь нам веки-повеки*, 6.

²¹⁸ Зыков, *Предвестница*, 72.

The Soviets imprinted the warrior-martyr in public memory by building monuments at her execution site, school, and home. They celebrated her in art, music, film, and fiction. They named streets and pioneer circles after her. In martyr narratives, they preserve relics in museums under glass cases (figures 15, 16, and 17). Documentary narratives include pictures of the martyr's Komsomol card, letters, and other physical objects related to her.

Through collective memory and through the successes of the Soviet Union, the masses resurrect the deceased warrior: “Мы никогда не забудем Машу. Она будет жить вместе с нами в труде и борьбе, в наших радостях и успехах, в нашей памяти и песнях” (“We will never forget Masha. She will live together with us at work and in our struggles, in our joys and our successes, in our memories and our songs”).²¹⁹ Through memory she achieves immortality: “И еще раз убеждаешься: ничто доброе на земле не пропадает. Герои не умирают. Не только потому, что память о них—вечна. Они живут в нас самих. В наших делах, в наших поступках и мыслях. Ина обрела бессмертие в тысячах и тысячах жизней.” (“And one more time, you are convinced: nothing good on earth is ever lost. Heroes do not die—not only because our memory of them is eternal but because they live in ourselves: in our affairs, in our deeds and thoughts. Ina found immortality in thousands of thousands of lives”).²²⁰ The warrior-martyr leaves her mark on collective memory in a way that other women warriors do not. Katerina Clark notes that in the socialist realist novel, when the hero dies a ritual death,

²¹⁹ Масолов, *Тайна Зои Кругловой*, 22.

²²⁰ Константинова, *Девушка из Кашина*, 156.

history's onward march does not stop. Rather, other heroes survive to carry on the cause of ideological truth and continue the struggle for communism. The hero's spirit lives on well after death.²²¹

Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia remains the most famous and beloved Soviet woman to have participated in World War II. Although other warrior martyrs, namely Liza Chaikina, Ukia Gromova, and Liubov' Shevtsova, are recognizable to Russians, none have achieved the nationwide, cult-like devotion of Zoia. Now that I have characterized the martyr and her plot, I will now discuss the process of mythmaking by focusing on Zoia, since she is the most famous example. This part of the dissertation examines how this story became a tremendously powerful myth that told Russians who they were at a time when their land and their lives were under mortal threat. In the shaping of the Zoia myth, one finds a conflict of public spontaneity and state control, as the public responded overwhelmingly to Zoia's death *as a nation*, and the state grabbed control to shape the narrative to conform to ideological goals.

Before we examine the process of state mythologization, it will be well to summarize the facts, as we know them. Zoi Kosmodem'ianskaia was an 18-year-old, Muscovite schoolgirl and Komsomol member, hanged by Nazis on November 29, 1941 for allegedly burning houses and stables in Petrishchevo, a village near Moscow. In February 1942, she became the first woman in World War II to be named Hero of the Soviet Union. By her actions alone, Zoia Kosmodemian'skaia

²²¹ Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 181.

did not contribute much to the Soviet war effort: she was an inexperienced, comparatively unskilled scout in a special forces unit, killed within weeks of volunteering for duty. According to the official narrative, the Germans captured her in the act of burning a stable.

During the 2005-2006 academic year, while in Moscow researching woman warriors, I asked twenty Russians to tell me about women who participated in World War II. Almost always, Zoia Kosmodemian'skaia would be the first woman mentioned. To this day, most Russians remember, respect, and love Zoia. The corpus of works about Zoia far surpasses that about other woman warriors.²²² Her schools were transformed into museums. Schools, pioneer troops, streets, ships, and an asteroid were named after her (figure 18).²²³ Upon entrance to the Moscow metro station, Partizanskaia, one encounters a large sculpture of Zoia.²²⁴ Physical manifestations of Zoia's legacy are seemingly endless. Across the years, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, she remains an icon, honored and remembered by Russians. How and why was this insignificant girl transformed into such a widely admired legendary figure, much greater than her actual deeds?

²²² Works include one narrative poem, two plays, two films, one documentary, ten biographical sketches, three novellas, five documentary novels, her mother's memoirs, two paintings, five public sculptures, a ballet, a song, lyric poems, a novina, a Bulgarian dissertation (about Aliger's poem "Zoia") and possibly a propaganda poster. Some of her letters have been published, and Zoia's mother, Liubov Kosmodemianskaia, included excerpts of Zoia's diaries in her memoir "*Tale of Zoia and Shura*," which was printed about 3.5 million times (Kazimiera J. Cottam, *Women in Air and Resistance* (Nepean, Canada: New Military Publishing:, 1998), 299). The Soviet Post Office issued a commemorative stamped envelope with Zoia's portrait in 1985 (Cottam, *Women in Air and Resistance*, 299).

²²³ Ibid., 298.

²²⁴ Formerly the Izmailovskii Park station.

The Zoia myth, like other famous partisan myths, began with reportage. It sprang from the difficult days of early 1942, the first winter of the Nazi invasion. It developed throughout the Soviet era, and persists, albeit in increasingly fragmented forms, into the post-Soviet period. Through Lidov's 1942 articles in *Pravda*, which outraged and traumatized the public, Zoia's torture and death became central to the myth.²²⁵ In the first article (January 27, 1942), a picture of the young partisan's mutilated body drew attention to her suffering (figure 19). Nothing in her biography mattered, except that she was a martyr. Lidov begins his article by letting the reader know that a partisan, who called herself Tat'iana, had been executed by the Germans. He then moves on to describe the danger in which Moscow had been, highlighting the significance of Tat'iana's partisan activity. Lidov answers any questions readers might have about how Zoia was captured by reporting that residents of Petrishchevo had learned of her capture from German soldiers' stories. He describes "Tat'iana's" last actions using male pronouns so that the reader is surprised, just as Nazi soldiers would be in Arnshtam's 1944 film, when they discover that the stable-burning, communication-line-cutting partisan they had captured was in actuality, a young woman. He mentions that "Tat'iana" was armed. After those few paragraphs, Lidov progresses to a detailed description of Zoia's torture and interrogation, focusing on her resolute silence regardless of beatings:

“Хозяева насчитали двести ударов, но Татьяна не издала ни одного звука. А

²²⁵ Lidov supposedly gathered his information from witnesses in Petrishchevo. He had first heard about Zoia's execution when spending the night in Pushkin with other war correspondents. Александр Ткаченко and Владимир Харченко-Куликовский, *Зоя Космодемьянская: Правда о подвиге* (Москва: РТР, 2005).

после опять отвечала: ‘нет,’ ‘не скажу,’ только голос ее звучал глуше, чем прежде” (“The host counted two hundred blows, but Tat’iana did not make one sound, but again she answered ‘no,’ ‘I won’t say,’ only her voice was deeper than before”).²²⁶ He emphasizes her self-discipline by describing her lips, bitten through as she forced herself to remain quiet. He describes physical evidence (bruises, abrasions) conveyed by witnesses and describes her state of undress and her bound arms. He notes that she was beaten frequently into the early morning and details various methods of torture that would eventually inspire artists. On the day of her execution, the soldiers divide her clothing and field bag amongst themselves, just as Roman soldiers divided up Christ’s garments.²²⁷ Lidov juxtaposes Kosmodem’ianskaia’s silence before tormenters with last words to her people. His specific details about her last moments, such as the fact that a peasant Praskovia Kulik wailed as she was hanging, strengthen the apparent validity of his article. By including such seemingly insignificant details, it seems as though Lidov is reporting every known detail about Kosmodem’ianskaia’s execution. After describing the torture, execution, and postmortem mutilation of her body, Lidov begins the sanctification of the partisan uses religious words: “martyr’s death”²²⁸ (muchenicheskaia smert’). He also redefines “heroine” (*geroinia*) and “дочь великого народа, которого никому и никогда не сломить” (“the daughter of a great people whom none will ever break or bend”), using the words that had been

²²⁶ Лидов, “Таня,” 3.

²²⁷ Matthew 27:35-36 in (*The New Jerusalem Bible*).

²²⁸ Лидов, “Таня,” 3.

applied to the last Heroes of the Soviet Union, the crew of the Rodina.²²⁹ Finally, Lidov predicts the future cult of Zoia: citizens will stop by her grave to remember and thank her and will honor the parents and teachers that raised her. She will be glorified throughout the land. Most importantly: “Сталин мысленно придет к надгробью своей верной дочери” (“Stalin will visit his faithful daughter in his thoughts”).²³⁰ Lidov’s article about Zoia officially changed the expectations of women in the “Great Family” and the definition of a heroine. As Nina Tumarkin writes, “death was the perfect conclusion to a heroic feat, because it allowed the hero to sacrifice to the Motherland the most valuable thing in his possession, his life.”²³¹

S. Strunnikov’s “photograph” of Zoia’s mutilated body accompanies Lidov’s article, illustrating both the inhumane cruelty of the Nazi executioners, as well as the unknown partisan’s immortal spirit, evident in the corpse’s beautiful face.²³² The dead woman’s peaceful expression gives evidence of Zoia’s last words about the happiness of dying for one’s country and people. Rosalinde Sartorti compares this photograph to hagiographic depictions.²³³

Supposedly, after reading about Tania, Liubov Kosmodemian’skaia concluded that “Tania” was her daughter, and she identified the body. Zoia’s

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 80.

²³² Poster artist Viktor Deni likely used the photograph as inspiration of his 1942 “Kill the Fascist-Monster” (“Убей фашиста-изувера!”), which poster pictures a hanged woman and mirrors the first pictures of Zoia that appeared in *Pravda*. The woman lies in the same position as Zoia, with the rope still around her neck, and her body has been mutilated in the same manner, with a missing left breast. Виктор Дени, “Убей фашиста-изувера!” in *Плакаты войны и победы 1941-1945*, ed. Н. И. Бабурина and С. Н. Артамонова (Москва: Контакт-культура, 2005), 93.

²³³ Rosalinde Sartorti, “On the Making of Heroes, Heroines, and Saints” in *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, ed. Richard Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 185.

identity was then released to the public. Zoia was named a Hero of the Soviet Union, and *Pravda* published the portrait that would become an icon (figure 20). The February 17 portrait that *Pravda* printed contributes to the dual response that the Soviet readers have to her image. The portrait shows a teenaged schoolgirl with a short, masculine haircut and a serious demeanor. She is both a “young woman” (*devushka*) as well as a serious, strong, militarized woman on pages 8-9 of the 3rd issue in 1942 of *Rabotnitsa*. Early in the creation of the myth, writers and artists were unsure how to portray Zoia. Their confusion often resulted in contradictory depictions of “Zoia the girl” and “Zoia the warrior.”

Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia addressed the Soviet nation on the radio, expressing her grief and appealing to the Soviet youth to avenge her brave, pure-hearted daughter.²³⁴ Her speech stoked the flames of people's devotion to her daughter. Several lieutenants on the northwestern front wrote Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia, “We really should have some sleep but we cannot, for we have read your speech addressed to us, young Red Army men. Never before have we read anything with such passion and fervor.”²³⁵ The media blitz continued as newspapers and journals reprinted Lidov's articles and occasionally decorated her portrait with laurels. Like *Pravda*, the women's journal *Rabotnitsa* placed its first article about Zoia toward the back, indicating that few responsible for official propaganda understood the impact of her story. However, after the public reaction to Zoia's

²³⁴ Liubov' Kosmodemyanskaya, “Radio Broadcast by L. Kosmodemyanskaya—Mother of the Hero of the Soviet Union Z. Kosmodemyanskaya,” *International Literature* 3-4 (1942): 69-70.

²³⁵ Senior Lieutenants Koryagin, Kurtashov, Mityugov, Lieutenant Barsumyan, Jun. Pol. Instructor Dessyatnik, “A Letter from the Front,” *International Literature* 3-4 (1942): 71.

death, editors adorned the March 1942 issue 5, the first issue after the release of her identity, with Zoia's portrait. This cover was followed by a reprint of Liubov' Kosmodemian'skaia's radio address.

Although the partisan-martyr's beautiful face shows that her spirit transcends death, Petr Lidov's description of "Tania's" suffering and the image of the mutilation prompted spontaneous public outrage. People wrote letters to editors and to Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia. The nation responded immediately to the *Pravda* article with an unprecedented outpouring of grief. Zoia's death came to represent all of the suffering the Russian people had lived through in the first months of war. As the Soviet public read about Zoia, they were moved to tears, moved publicly to lament her death and the loss of multitudes of fellow citizens. Embracing her image, they bonded with one other.

Russians have an ancient tradition of lamenting the dead that includes family members and even professional wailers, hired for the funerals. Russians expected a young woman to have mastered the art of lamenting, just as she had mastered the arts of cooking and spinning.²³⁶ However, Merridale writes that "Red" funerals, beginning with Nekrasov's funeral in 1877, had no place for lamentation. Red funeral rituals included formality, red draped coffins, solemn speeches, processions, revolutionary hymns, and a sense that one was dying for freedom. Some saw mourning as self-indulgent, and one of the revolutionaries' favorite hymn was "Do

²³⁶ Merridale, *Night of Stone*, 41.

not Weep.”²³⁷ Authors of biographies of Zoia describe spontaneous public reactions and the beginning of the sanctification of Zoia as the myth unfolded. Marina Raskova, one of the three first female Heroes of the Soviet Union, the woman who would establish three women’s air regiments, cut out Zoia’s portrait and placed the picture on her desk. Raskova’s mother writes: “С волнением вошла я в Маринину комнаты. Подошла к её столу и увидела под стеклом вырезанный из журнала портрет Зои Космодемьянской” (“Upset, I went into Marina’s room. I went up to her table and saw a portrait of Zoia Kosmodem’ianskaia, cut out from the magazine and placed under glass”).²³⁸ The Young Guard’s Oleg Koshevoi cried when he read about Zoia, cut out her picture, framed it and placed it above his bed.²³⁹ His mother writes “Статья эта ударила Олега, кажется, в самое сердце. Как он ни старался закрыть глаза газетой, я заметила в них слёзы” (“This article struck Oleg, it seems, in the very heart. Even though he tried to cover his eyes with the newspaper, I noticed tears in them”).²⁴⁰ Zoia became one of the two principle examples for Oleg.²⁴¹

The Soviet public saw the pictures, heard the story about the young patriot, and were moved to action—to fight harder in battle, work longer hours at a factory, or write about her. In her memoir, *Swallows Over the Front* (*Ласточки над фронтом*, 1984), pilot and Hero of the Soviet Union Marina Chechneva recalls how

²³⁷ Ibid., 83-85.

²³⁸ Малинина, А. ”Жизненный путь Марины” (Москва: Государственное Издательство Детской Литературы, 1950), 170.

²³⁹ Е. Н. Кошечкина, “Повесть о сыне” (Донецк: «Донбас», 1985), 55-56.

²⁴⁰ The other was a soldier who eventually died from wounds he received on the battlefield. Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

Party official Mariia Runt read Lidov's article at the first political meeting of the women's aviation regiment:

Вспоминается одна из первых политинформаций в полку. Мария читает вслух очерк П. Лидова "Таня" о Зое Космодемьянской. Мы слушаем, затаив дыхание, и плачем, не скрывая слез. Плачет и Мария. Не было никакого обсуждения прочитанного, никаких речей. Да и не нужны они были. Глубоко переживая судьбу не известной нам до этого, но ставшей такой родной девочки Зои, мы и сами становились ближе друг другу, понимая, какой надежной опорой в этой борьбе станет наша дружба.

(One remembers one of the first political meetings in the regiment. Mariia read aloud the vignette by P. Lidov "Tania," about Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia. We listened, holding our breath, and crying, not hiding our tears. And Mariia cried. There were no prepared discussions, no speeches. And there did not need to be any. Deeply reliving the fate of an unknown girl, now so dear to us, we ourselves drew closer to each other, understanding what the support our friendship would give us.)²⁴²

Reading Lidov's story of Zoia's death, the pilots bonded. Their experience is not unlike a religious experience in which a community of believers gathers before a higher power.

All of the individual, incomprehensible losses and experiences of the first half year of the war converge in the image of Zoia, a model Soviet daughter. Russians were free to shed tears over her death, for mourning Zoia was a patriotic action. Apart from official literary documents and radio addresses including references to the nation in their framing of the Zoia story, and despite the state's immediate shaping of the story and its reception, the public freely and, seemingly,

²⁴² М. П. Чечнева, *Ласточки над фронтом* (Москва: Издательство ДОСААФ СССР, 1984), 32.

genuinely wept over Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia. In the *novina* "We Won't Ever Forget" ("Не забыть нам веки-повеки," 1944), E. I Chichaeva laments:²⁴³

Не прошла без слез одна газеточка,
Когда про ваше горюшко было написано,
Они все у нас оплаканы,
Они все у нас слезами облитые.
Вы поймите, Любовь Тимофеевна,
Не на газету слезы катятся,
Над ее могилкой орошаются.

(Not a single newspaper passed by without tears
When they wrote about your grief.
We all cried over them
We all shed tears over them.
Understand, Liubov' Timofeevna,
Our tears did not slide onto newspaper
They watered her little grave.)²⁴⁴

Chichaeva's *novina* shows the unified nation mourning, and also gives evidence of the role the media played in publicizing Zoia's death. A Ukrainian poem shows that Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia's influence extended beyond the Russia. Nadezhda Belinovich writes:

Слава Зои героини
Молнией брескает
Над краегармой Украиной
Над советским краем

(Glory to the heroine Zoia
Who silently beams
Over beautiful Ukraine
Over the Soviet land).²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Folklorist Aleksandr Gurevich allegedly recorded Chichaeva's lament in the Emel'ianovskii region, in Krasnoiarshii krai in 1942 and published it in 1944.

²⁴⁴ Чичаева, 8.

²⁴⁵ Надежда Белинович, "Дума про Зою Космодемьянскую: Сказ ис родной сказительницы Украины Ганны Переваяза, перевод с украинского" Фонд *Октябрь* 619, оп 1, ед. хр. 2047

Even Ukrainians mourned her death, glorified her memory, and were moved to avenge. As a result of collectivization and forced annexation prior to the war, Ukrainians were less loyal to the Soviet cause and most likely to desert the Red Army.²⁴⁶ The unifying factor of the Zoia myth in non-Russian lands cannot be underestimated.

Zoia gave soldiers a reason for which to fight. Although they were all supposed to be fighting for Stalin, communism, and the Motherland, in reality, many were not so dedicated to the “great leader.” These soldiers began to fight in earnest when they learned of Nazi cruelty. They could take the image of Zoia, both a brave warrior against fascism and a victim of it, onto the battlefield. According to her official biography, Mariia Oktiabrskaiia, a tank operator and another Hero of the Soviet Union, was only too happy to fight in a tank battle after a commander informed her battalion that they were fighting the Nazi division responsible for Zoia’s death. “Товарищи, против нас воюет дивизия фашистских палачей, дивизия, которая казнила в Петрищеве Зою Космодемьянскую. Отомстим палачам за смерть нашей девушки, за смерть комсомолки! Пусть эта атака будет атакой имени Зои Космодемьянской!” (“Comrades, against us fights a division of fascist butchers, the division that executed Zoia Kosmodem’ianskaia. We will take revenge on these butchers for the death of our young woman, for the death of the Komsomol member! Let this attack be an attack in the name of Zoia

²⁴⁶ Catherine Merridale, *Ivan’s War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945* (New York: Picador, 2006), 105.

Kosmodem'ianskaia!").²⁴⁷ Soviets carried her image with them into battle, if not physically, than mentally, as they used to carry icons with them during the tsarist regime. The lieutenants on the northwestern front wrote to Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia of Zoia's unifying effect: "Today your speech has forced tears of wrathful indignation from our eyes. We dried them and solemnly took the following oath: never shall we forget "Tanya" and never shall we forgive the Germans her death. Her sacred image enraptures, sets afire, calls and leads us into the fray. ... In the moments of danger our men say "Tanya," and "Tanya's" spirit lends them strength and courage. Now for us the name of "Tanya" is the embodiment of patriotism."²⁴⁸ The description of a girl's mutilated body likely inspired a primal urge to avenge her and protect other women from the same brutal death.

Since the image of Zoia prompted the Soviet citizenry to fight harder in the battle against fascism, the state immediately started to proliferate images and writings that expanded Lidov's short article. Literary and visual works were contracted to build up her legend. Famous writers and artists developed stories about her: Margarita Aliger, Lev Arnshtam, Matvei Manizer, the Kukryniksy, and Dmitrii Shostakovich. The following table shows the main works about Zoia:

Year	Author	Work	Genre
1942	Маргарита	"Зоя: Поэма" (Москва)	Narrative poem

²⁴⁷ С. Воронин and П. Петунин, *Герой Советского Союза М. В. Октябрьская* (Москва: Военное издательство военного министерства Союза ССР, 1951), 21.

²⁴⁸ Senior Lieutenants: Koryagin, Kurtashov, Miyugov, Lieutenant Barsumyan, Jun. Pol. Instructor Dessyatnik, 71.

	Алигер		
1942	Софья Абрамовна Заречная	<i>Горячее сердце: Повесть о Герое Советского Союза. З. А. Космодемьянской. Для ст. возраста. (Минск)</i>	Documentary narrative
1942		<i>«Бесстрашная партизанка Зоя Космодемьянская» Сб. очерков и др. мат-лов, посвящ. Герою Советского Союза З. А. Космодемьянской (Пятигорск)</i>	A collection of vignettes and dramatic materials
1942	Евгений Федорович Савинов	Зоины товарищи. Документальная повесть <i>Таня.</i>	Documentary narrative
1942		<i>Таня, Героическая дочь русского народа. (Краснодар)</i>	Documentary narrative
1942	Матвей Манизер	“Памятник Зое Космодемьянской”	Sculpture
1942	Кукрыниксы	“Допрос Зои Космодемьянской”	Drawing
1942	Кукрыниксы	“Таня: Подвиг Зои Космодемьянской”	Painting
1943		<i>Народная героиня, сб. материалов о Зое Космодемьянской (Москва)</i>	Collection of materials
1944	Е. И. Чичаева	<i>Не забыть нам веки-повеки: Светлой памяти Героя Советского Союза З. А. Космодемьянской. (Красноярск)</i>	<i>Novina</i>
1944, published in 1947	Маргарита Алигер	<i>Сказка о правде: Зоя. Драматическая поэма в 4-х действиях. Вариант 2, Фонд 2219 опись но 2 дело 53 (РГАЛИ, Москва)</i>	Play
1944	Лев Арнштам, Борис Чирсков Дмитрий Шостакович	<i>Зоя</i>	Film

	(score)		
1944	Дмитрий Шостакович	Песня о Зое, from Suite 64a	Song
1947	Van Muradeli	<i>Великая дружба</i> Танец Зои к виселице	Opera and ballet
1940s-1950s		Monument on Minsk highway near Petrishchevo	Sculpture
1950	Я. С. Солодухо	<i>Зоя: Симфоническая поэма для большого оркестра</i> (Москва)	Symphonic poem
1950	Любовь Космодемьянская	<i>Повесть о Зое и Шуре</i>	Documentary narrative
1955	С. Аксюка, И Озерова	Песня о Зое Космодемьянской	Song
195-	П. Диденко	“У памятника Зое”	Painting
1940-1950		Песня о Зое	Pioneer song
1957	Владимир Дмитриевич Успенский	<i>Второе поколение: Повесть о Зое Космодемьянской</i> (Москва)	Documentary narrative
1961	Вячеслав Александрович Ковалевский	<i>Брат и сестра</i> (Москва)	Повесть-Fictional biography
1961	Вячеслав Александрович Ковалевский	<i>Не бойся смерти</i> (Москва)	Повесть-Fictional biography
1965	Николай Александрович Борисов	<i>Будем, как Зоя</i> (Москва)	Documents related to children’s devotion to Zoia
1975	Николай Александрович Борисов	<i>С именем Зои</i> (Москва)	Documents related to children’s devotion to Zoia
1986	Олег Комов	Grave marker	Grave marker
1989	Владимир Дмитриевич Успенский	<i>Зоя Космодемьянская</i> (Москва)	Documentary narrative
2005	Г. И. Чигирева	<i>Вспомним всех поименно: Зоя Космодемьянская: Урок мужества для учащихся 5-7 кл.</i> (Саранск)	Poems, bibliography

2005	Александр Ткаченко	<i>Зоя Космодемьянская: Правда о подвиге</i>	Documentary
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Table 1. Works about Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia

The works in this table show both the orchestrated shaping of the myth and spontaneous responses to it. Some of the most famous creative minds produced works that would become part of the national Zoia canon. Alongside them, especially early on, one finds works by unknown citizens, sometimes unnamed, appearing in presses all over the Soviet Union, responding to the people's need for more information about Zoia, showing her cult even amongst non-Russian ethnic groups.

The early works about Zoia create a contradictory composite of her, as artists and writers did not yet know how to portray this national hero. Some depictions clearly follow precedents set in the 1930s, showing this "heroic daughter" as a strong, armed woman, while others emphasize her youth and her brutalized body. For example, in 1942, the sculptor Matvei Manizer created the first official monument to Zoia (figure 21). Continuing in the tradition of the 1930s militarized woman, he shows her strength and determined, purposeful carriage. Even though none of the official literary works or historical vignettes show that she fired a gun at anyone, he emphasizes her role as a warrior with a rifle over her shoulder. Manizer's Zoia embodies authority and purposefulness. She holds the rifle with her right arm, looks to the left, and steps forward with the right foot. Her left fist is clenched. Its muscular definition makes Zoia's body appear hard and almost indestructible.

Manizer's sculpture is likely the strongest, even most masculine depiction of the martyr.

One version of Manizer's sculpture stands in Park Pobedy in Moscow. The statue also stands at the Partizanskaia (formerly, Izmailovskii Park) metro station in Moscow (figure 22). This sculpture closely resembles Manizer's original model, with the exception that this sculpture stands flush against a wall, rather than striding forward. Although the sculpture is tall, lean, and muscular, with a mostly boyish body, and short hair, Manizer ensures that her gender is clear, clothing her in a skirt and sculpting her with an open jacket in order to display her left breast. The breast would have reminded citizens of her martyrdom by recalling the cut-off left breast in Strunnikov's photograph.

The drawing and painting by the artist collective Kukryniksy also focuses on Zoia's steadfast determination and strength before the Nazis and portrays a masculinized version of the heroine. The drawing, "The Interrogation of Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia" ("Допрос Зои Космодемьянской"), shows Zoia bound by her captors. She is roughly the same height as the Nazis, wears men's clothing, and looks like a boy. The drawing highlights her boldness, as she looks her main interrogator in the face. She does not flinch as one of Germans holds a candle up to her face. This candle illuminates her, while the rest of the figures in the drawing are animalistic and dark. The viewer can read her unwillingness to surrender or give up information to the Nazis. In their painting of her last moments, "Tania: The Victory of Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia" ("Таня: Подвиг Зои Космодемьянской"), Zoia stands

up straight and proud, despite a night of torture, and addresses the crowd, displaying a refusal to bow to her tormentors.

Margarita Aliger departs from the 1930s depictions of armed heroism in her narrative poem “Zoia” written in Moscow between July and September. Aliger’s poem was the most widely disseminated Zoia work of those published in 1942. Aliger read this poem over Soviet radio in 1942²⁴⁹ and in 1943, the poem was awarded the Stalin prize second degree.²⁵⁰ Aliger’s “Zoia” reverts back to traditional gender roles: this Zoia is girlish and romantic, victimized by Nazi beasts. Her poem was likely meant to immortalize Zoia, bring tears, and inspire people to unite and carry about Liubov’ Kosmodemian’skaia’s radio appeal to avenge her daughter’s death. Aliger’s poem, like all of the Zoia works, includes Zoia’s moving last words. Foregrounding this speech at the execution certainly made it a key moment in the master plot of the warrior-martyr. Zoia orders the Soviet people: “Убивайте их, травите, жгите.../Я умру, но Правда победит!/ Родина!” (“Kill them, destroy them, burn.../ I will die, but Truth will prevail!/ Motherland!”).²⁵¹ In the epilogue, the narrator writes, “Пока мы можем мыслить, говорить/ и подыматься по команде: 'К бою!’” (“Now we can think, talk,/ and rise up to the command “to battle!”)²⁵² and “но мы не сможем дома усидеть, и все-таки мы соберемся вместе” (“but we cannot sit at home, and all the same, we will gather together”).²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 110.

²⁵⁰ Маргарита Алигер, “Зоя,” *Избранное* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1947), 208.

²⁵¹ Маргарита Алигер, *Стихи и поэмы 1935-1943* (Москва: ОГИЗ Государственное издательство художественной литературы, 1944), 167.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 173.

The message to the reader is unmistakable: after hearing this poem, knowing about Zoia and her fate, one has to join the fight. If Zoia, a schoolgirl, fought for her country, then how can an older or stronger Soviet citizen do less for the war effort?

Aliger's narrator plays upon her audience's emotions by portraying Zoia as a child throughout the poem. She introduces Zoia as a seventeen-year-old schoolgirl reading a book. Several times, Zoia is described as "girl" (*devchonka*). Her lips are "childlike" (*detskie*) lips.²⁵⁴ She has a maiden's body (*devich'e telo*).²⁵⁵ The torture and execution of such an innocent being seems all the more cruel in light of her youth and childlike vulnerability. Nevertheless, although her youth makes her story more moving, one cannot think that Zoia did not know for what she died. Aliger's emphasis on her reading shows that she was a thinking person and politically conscious, even at an early age.

Aliger's Zoia possesses all of the characteristics common to the warrior woman martyr type; early Zoia works established the type. Aliger emphasizes her selflessness and desire to help others. As Zoia prepares for her fatal mission, we see her in the dark, cold forest. She thinks of those suffering all over her country: a dying soldier, a sighing mother, a young widow embracing an orphan, the city of Leningrad. "Ленинград, Ленинград!? Я тебе помогу! Прикажи мне! Я делаю все, что прикажут" ("Leningrad, Leningrad! I will help you! Give me orders! I will do all that is commanded").²⁵⁶ She dies in order to alleviate suffering, hasten

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 158.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 170.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 151.

the liberation of Motherland, and bring the return to a peaceful life. She dies in order to lead children on the path toward victory and to a life without fascism.²⁵⁷

Moscow plays a larger role than the Motherland, probably because Aliger wrote it so shortly after the battle for Moscow. In the introduction and first chapter, Moscow is almost as important as Zoia. It acts like a mother, nurturing Zoia, until Zoia, becomes a warrior in order to defend her.²⁵⁸ Zoia joins the war effort after she watches barricades spring up in Moscow alleys and when Moscow is surrounded.²⁵⁹ Later, in the midnight darkness of the forest, before her fatal mission, Zoia remembers the Timiriazevskii region in which she grew up.²⁶⁰ This poem is one of the only works that portrays Zoia solely as a Muscovite, without tying her to the Russian countryside through her family's dacha or her love for nature.

Unlike later incarnations of the Zoia myth, Aliger's Zoia was written in the midst of the Stalin cult. As a result, she dies not only for the Soviet Motherland, people, and Moscow, but also for Stalin and for "Pravda," or ideological truth, all of which appear as allegorical characters in Aliger's work. Several of the Zoia works written during the war feature Stalin; Aliger includes his encouraging words about victory.²⁶¹ The spiritual father is with his children, including Zoia. Later, at her execution, when asked where her Stalin is, Zoia responds that he is "at his post" (*na*

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 168.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 140-2.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 142.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 148.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 145.

postu).²⁶² He is with his people at home, at the factory, on the battlefield, and with Zoia at her execution.

Aliger describes her poem as an attempt to unify the nation. She claims that she wrote the poem so that the readers would “choke along with Zoia” and so that Zoia could begin to breathe. “мне хотелось написать о Зое/ так, чтоб задохнуться вместе с ней. Мне хотелось написать про Зою,/ чтобы Зоя начала дышать!”²⁶³ She wrote it to memorialize Zoia so that the Soviet nation would share Liubov’s pain, so children follow Zoia on their path toward victory, and, primarily, so that the people would come together and remember the sacrifice of one perfect Soviet girl.

Aliger’s narrative poem transforms the androgynous Zoia of Manizer’s and the Kukryniski’s visual representations into a traditionally feminine “girl.” Two 1944 works about Zoia continue this re-feminizing shaping of Zoia’s body. E. I. Chichaeva follows Aliger’s example and also emphasizes Zoia’s girlish femininity. In “We Will Never-Ever Forget You: In Memory of Hero of the Soviet Union Zoia Kosmodem’ianskaia” (“Не забыть нам веки-повеки: Светлой памяти Героя Советского Союза З. А. Космодемьянской,” “recorded” in 1942, published in 1944), Chichaeva uses the allegory of a bird that leaves its home and is killed. The small, kind, patriotic, right-minded, little bird flies faraway from her native Moscow to help her country and Stalin, only to be overcome by vicious predators:

Ты, голубка быстроскрылая,
Ты летала малой пташечкой
Через горы, через долиньки,

²⁶² Ibid., 164.

²⁶³ Ibid., 168.

Через тайги, через темные,
Через реки быстры перепархивала

Ты хотела, мое дитяtko, ...
Отомстить за друзей, за товарищей,
За малых детей
И за все муки люда советского.

Да не та-то тебе пала долюшка,
Мое дитяtko сердешное,
Налетела стая диких коршунов.

(You, fast-winged, little dove
You flew little bird
Across the mountains, across the valleys
Across the dark taiga,
Across the fast rivers you flitted.

You wanted, my little child,
To avenge your friends, your comrades
To avenge little children
And the torturing of the Soviet people.

Such a fate fell upon you,
Little child of my heart,
A flock of wild kites flew upon you.)²⁶⁴

Chichaeva includes all of the aspects of Zoia's character that Aliger had introduced in her narrative poem and plays: Zoia's purity, her drive to avenge her people, her dedication to Stalin. She does not add to the Zoia myth, but merely repackages Aliger's Zoia and presents her in the form of a folkloric character. She emphasizes Zoia's active participation in the war effort by describing her flight to the land far beyond the mountains to battle the foe of her nation and people, but she leaves Zoia unarmed. The reader, or listener, can clearly picture the little bird's swiftly beating wings, as her small body flies into danger. Chichaeva then concludes her novina by

²⁶⁴ Чичаева, *Не забыть нам веки-попеки*, 3-4.

noting how the Soviet people come together to avenge Zoia's death: "Мы сождем, спалим врага огнем-пламенем,/ Отомстим врагу за смерть Танину!"("We will burn, singe the enemy with fiery flames,/ We will take revenge on the enemy for Tania's death!")²⁶⁵

Like Chichaeva's novina, Lev Arnshtam's film *Zoia* also mirrors the clear trend in the media: the state was reverting back to traditional gender roles. Although Arnshtam emphasizes Zoia's abilities as a fighter, opening the film with a fighter clipping wire and then preparing to launch a lit can toward a building before being thrown to the ground by a larger Nazi soldier, he re-feminizes her at the same time. No pictures of Zoia with long hair exist, yet the actress wears her hair long, cutting her hair only when she becomes a partisan. Like Aliger, Arnshtam transforms Zoia into a girlish, romantic heroine, with a love interest. He might have intended to make Zoia more likeable with this refeminization. Furthermore, by including a boyfriend, who might have become a husband, the director shows her potential as a wife and mother.

Although Zoia was widely embraced, her biography leaves questions. Throughout the Soviet period and into the post-Soviet era, the validity of Zoia's story was buttressed by witness' reports. A supposed witness, A. S. Shmatkov writes in the December 2, 1966, Kaluzhsky oblast' version of *Krasnoe Znamia*: "Но потрясающим было то, что на моих глазах погибла Зоя Космодемьянская" ("And seeing Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia's death before my very eyes was

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 9.

staggering”).²⁶⁶ He describes the effect her words had on him: “Я не помню, что дословно говорила партизанка. Но только в моей памяти врезались слова в ее предсмертной, но бессмертной речи, что не плачьте, нас много, нас не перевешают, мы победим” (“I don’t remember what the partisan said word for word. But her last words, her immortal speech, cut into my memory, not to cry, that there were many of us, that they could not hang all of us, that we would be victorious”).²⁶⁷ In a 2005 documentary, *Зоя Космодемьянская: Правда о подвиге* (“Zoia Kosmodem’ianskaia: The Truth about her Feat”), Zoia’s comrade-in-arms Klavdiia Miroradova, remembers identifying Zoia’s body.²⁶⁸

The real story of Zoia’s background and death continues to be debated to this day. Some question whether or not Zoia’s body was the mutilated body in Strunnikov’s photograph and whether or not Nazis even occupied the village of Petrishchevo.²⁶⁹ In 1991, the leading doctor of the children’s psychiatric ward of the scientific-methodical center claimed that the hospital’s archives indicate that Zoia had been diagnosed with schizophrenia when she was fourteen years old.²⁷⁰ This issue has been debated in the media ever since. In *The Living and the Dead*, Nina Tumarkin relates what she calls “the story of the real Zoya,” told to her by Lazar Lazarev, Lev Arnshtam’s friend: Zoia’s father was shot in 1930s and Zoia’s mother

²⁶⁶ Александр Юрьевич Кривицкий, “Свидетель гибели Зои,” *Красное Знамя (Калужская область)* (Ф. 3126, опись 1, ед. хр. 566).

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ткаченко, *Правда о подвиге*.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ А. Мельников, С. Юрьев, and Н. Касмельсон, “Зоя Космодемьянская: Героиня или символ?” *Аргументы и факты* 43 (1991).

pushed Zoia toward self-sacrifice.²⁷¹ Zoia's mother actively campaigned for Zoia being named a Hero of the Soviet Union and she pushed her younger child, Aleksandr, to join the war effort when still underage. Perhaps one will never know how much of the Zoia myth is grounded in reality, and, there is tangible evidence that the Zoia myth changed during the Soviet period. In post-1953 reproductions of Lidov's "Таня," editors omitted references to Zoia's spiritual "father."²⁷² The Zoia of Vladimir Dmitrievich Uspensky's 1989 documentary narrative is less iconic than earlier versions.

After the initial, spontaneous outpouring of outrage and grief, the Soviet authorities took control of the situation and carefully shaped its citizens' response to Zoia. When it was decided that readers had sent too many poems to editors of journals, the tears were made to stop flowing. For example, the editors of the journal *Oktiabr'* refused to publish a reader's poem "Партизанка: Зоя Космодемьянская," claiming that it was poorly written and that "О Зое Космодемьянской писалось очень много, рискованно брать тему, уже использованную столько раз" ("So much has already been written about Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia, it is risky to choose a theme that has been used so many times).²⁷³ Such documents show that the authorities were curbing readers' spontaneous enthusiasm.

Why did Zoia's story touch Soviet citizenry to such an extent? Although authors' depictions of her vary from text to text, certain elements remain the same.

²⁷¹ Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead* 78, 231.

²⁷² Петр Лидов, "Таня" in *Дочери России* (Москва: Советская Россия, 1975), 41.

²⁷³ Фонд редакции журнала "Октябрь," фонд 619 опись 1, ед. хр. 2506, unknown date.

The heroic martyr dies a noble death for her Motherland and her people, defending its capital from fascist invaders. The unifying figure of Zoia is effective because of her character (resolute, brave, strong), willingness to sacrifice herself in fulfillment of heroic deeds, and her origins. As Cottam argues, she most likely earned her legacy because of the time and place of her death. In late November 1941, Nazi troops were approaching Moscow and the Soviets were coping with a ruinous situation. Zoia's picture was circulated among the public, and her name came to symbolize the virtues that Stalin needed most during that time: resilience and self-sacrifice.²⁷⁴ Almost overnight she came to represent all Russians, urban and rural, unlike Liza Chaikina, who died one week before Zoia but was from the provinces, from a village near Tver'. Although born in the Tambov region, Zoia grew up in Moscow and was perceived as being from Moscow. Authors would emphasize her origins. In Arnshtam's film, right after the Nazis beat Zoia, Moscow appears on the screen, accompanied by glorious music and followed by happy scenes from Zoia's childhood. By juxtaposing her final moments with scenes from her idyllic childhood, he contrasts the terrors of war with the "happy" Moscow life that preceded it. Certainly a part of Zoia's national appeal lay in her geographical and spiritual proximity to the heart of Russia.

The process of sanctification and elevation to a higher sphere of ideological authority is marked by the shift in representation of female body from brave muscular fighter to superhumanly brave martyr. Although the body is mutilated, the

²⁷⁴ Kazimiera J. Cottam, *Women in War and Resistance: Selected Biographies of Soviet Women Soldiers* (Nepean, Canada: New Military Publishing, 1998), 298.

warrior-martyr is not a victim. She is an extraordinary spirit, remarkably brave. Her mind and heart thoroughly control her body. When we look at the limp body, we see her proud, great spirit, the spirit present during her childhood, that illuminated her from inside and “shone through her skin.”

When the “silent,” but superhumanly strong-of-spirit martyr speaks out, her words ring out and resonate across the Soviet world. They carry authority, but only because she is “silent as a partisan girl,” even in the face of losing her life in the most ghastly of ways. Aliger describes her immortality: she cannot forget “Это девичье тело,/ Не мертвое/ И не живое” (“Her maiden’s body,/ Not dead/ And not alive”)²⁷⁵

Zoia is sanctified and becomes a bearer of ideology, just as ancient martyrs were bearers of the faith. References to ideological truth dominate Aliger’s narrative poem. In *In Stalin’s Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (1976), Vera Dunham argues that authors began to glorify Truth when Truth, the principle that held together Bolshevik ideology began to “ring hallow under Stalin’s rule.”²⁷⁶ Before the war, Zoia plays idyllically with children as her Komsomol Truth, her childhood understanding of ideology develops into Bolshevik Truth, her adult understanding of the Party. Dunham argues that Aliger’s poem extols Zoia’s idyllic private world (while her Bolshevik belief system develops) as a promise of the postwar future, rather than a realistic picture of the past.²⁷⁷ Like the early revolutionary martyrs, Zoia dies for ideology, thus connecting World War II to the

²⁷⁵ Алигер, *Зоя*, 170.

²⁷⁶ Vera S. Dunham, *In Stalin’s Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 74.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

Civil War and revolutionary struggles that preceded it. Aliger stresses that the deaths of individuals like Zoia do not lead to the death of Truth. As Nazis torture Zoia, a child witness asks her mother why they are torturing her. The mother replies “За правду, доченька.”²⁷⁸ The child then asks if the Nazis kill Zoia, would Truth die with her. The mother responds:

Девочка, слушай меня без дрожи.
Слушай,
 тебе одиннадцать лет.
Если ни разу она не заплачет,
что бы ни делали изверги с ней,
если умрет,
но не сдастся,
 Значит,
Правда ее даже смерти сильней.

(Girl, listen to me without trembling
Listen, you are eleven years old.
If she will not cry once
So that monsters would not bother her,
If she dies,
But does not surrender,
 That means,
That her strength is stronger than death.)²⁷⁹

Marked forever by her death, this child will remember Zoia’s ordeals and carry on the Truth for which she died. Zoia embodies Truth and the Soviet people, but they do not die with her. The narrator shows that ideological truth is stronger and larger than death.

Arnshtam’s film shows us that the Soviet state had “tempered” Zoia and prepared her to be a bearer of “Truth.” After her birth into a good, Communist

²⁷⁸ Алигер, “Зоя,” 157.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 158.

family, Arnshtam's Zoia is raised in her school where she learns about Russian heroes, such as Chkalov and Susanin. She participates in the 1930s militarization: she marches with pioneers among *fizkul'turisty* and learns to shoot well. From her early childhood, she is more a part of the great Soviet collective, than a child in an individual nuclear family.

Zoia's story provides an example for Komsomol youth who are themselves coming of age ideologically. In Aliger's poem, just before the war, Zoia had been absorbed with existential questions: "Who am I supposed to become?" and "What is happiness?" She had considered becoming a teacher, but wanted to affect more than a few lives.²⁸⁰ The narrator notes that it was not her fate to become a schoolteacher. By the end of the narrative, both questions have been answered: happiness is dying for your country and for Truth and it was Zoia's fate to become a martyr for the cause, to witness her faith. She was meant to become someone more than a schoolteacher: she was meant to be a national hero, to shape the lives of millions of children and to lead them on the path to communism. As she lies on the snow, dead in body, but alive in spirit, she becomes a symbol of Soviet Truth and strength for the Soviet people.²⁸¹

Aliger transforms Zoia into someone larger than life by emphasizing the ideological aspects of her character. Of course, in doing so, Aliger is following the usual Soviet recipe, making Zoia embody ideology [*ideinost'*] [belief in Truth], party-mindedness (*partiinnost'*) [dedication to Stalin and Komsomol], and,

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 131-2.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 171.

particularly, national-feeling (*narodnost*) [love for the people and the Motherland]. She instructs the her readers: “Навсегда сохрани фотографию Зои./ Я, наверно, вовеки ее позабыть не смогу./ Это девичье тело,/ не мертвое/ и не живое” (“Keep Zoia’s photograph forever/ I, likely will never be able to forget her./ This girl’s body,/ not dead/ and not alive”).²⁸² She helps to create an iconic, “eternal” Zoia from the final image of her dead face: “Но мы узнаем Зоины черты/ в откинутах,/ чудесном,/ вечном лике” (“But we will recognize Zoia’s traits/ in her thrown back/ wonderful,/ and eternal face”).²⁸³ In her narrative poem, Aliger establishes the plot elements, characteristics, and ideological concepts which make up the canonical Zoia narrative.

Arnshtam also depicts the development of ideology in his film. One might question Stites’s assertion that the film is a “brilliantly executed Soviet fairytale,” since the heroine is tortured and dies.²⁸⁴ Regardless of the physical pain Zoia experiences during her last moments, the film does include the requisite “happy ending” of a fairy tale. The director threads the theme of personal happiness through his film. As Zoia develops into a Komsomol warrior, we see her ask the question: “What is happiness?” and come to an appropriate conclusion: happiness is dying for one’s country. The director includes shots of a hand asking the question and developing the answer in a schoolgirl’s notebook. Happiness and torture are interwoven as the director cuts from scenes of her torture and execution to childhood

²⁸² Ibid., 170.

²⁸³ Ibid., 174.

²⁸⁴ Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture*, 114.

scenes. Viewers were surely mourning loved ones. Arnshtam's film shows that the deceased, like Zoia, died happy and fulfilled, since they were dying for their country and for Stalin. The film inspires hope in the future victory of the Red Army by including final scenes of westward bound tanks, victory made possible by loyal daughters like Zoia.

Zoia's image did not fade after the conclusion of the Soviet Union. In contrast, postwar works cement Zoia's transformation into a saint. Her story was codified in Liubov' Kosmodem'ianskaia's hagiographic biography, *The Story of Zoia and Shura (Повесть о Зое и Шуре)*. Liubov', the narrator, portrays her as a Soviet saint, indeed, as a Christ figure. This image of Zoia has no faults. As a child and young woman, she is wise beyond her years. The text concludes with the narrator looking at children and thinking that her two children and others died so that these children could live happily.

Liubov' attempts to take control of her daughter's legacy and corrects certain mistakes, such as the portrayal of Zoia as an only child in Arnshtam's film.²⁸⁵ Written after the war and the subsequent demobilization of women, the narrator disarms Zoia. The narrator uses the existence of a younger brother to transform Zoia into a quieter, more passive character. As children, Shura is more spontaneous and aggressive and Zoia is more domestic. He plays with friends outside while responsible Zoia cares for the house. Although we know she learns how to handle a

²⁸⁵The novella was ghost-written by Frida A. Vigdorova. See: Catriona Kelly, "Thank You for the Wonderful Book: Soviet Child Readers and the Management of Children's Reading, 1950-1975," in *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 6, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 735.

weapon, we never see her shooting. The State decorates Zoia for her noble death rather than any harm inflicted on the enemy. Shura is named a Hero of the Soviet Union for his participation in a tank battle. Liubov's inclusion of pages of detailed information on Zoia's upbringing transforms the work into a guide for parents, in addition to an example for Soviet children. From *The Story of Zoia and Shura* the reader learns how to raise children like Zoia and Shura. Schoolchildren were required to read Liubov's biography through the Soviet period.

Nikolai Aleksandrovich Borisov's books *We Will Be Like Zoia* (1965) and *In Zoia's Name* (1975) document saint-like devotion to Zoia. Borisov, the director of School 201, Zoia's former school, documents how pioneers and students at her former school in Moscow honor her memory. He includes poems created by children in her memory and photos of famous citizens visiting places of significance: "Летчик-космонавт Г. С. Титов сидит за партой Зои" ("The pilot-astronaut G. S. Titov sits at Zoia's desk").²⁸⁶ He describes pioneers' moving experiences when they make pilgrimages to Petrishchevo. They plant trees in her honor and sing about Zoia. The cover of *In Zoia's Name* shows an eternal flame and Zoia's iconic school portrait. With his books, he simultaneously documents and contributes to her cult.

Artist Oleg Komov's 1986 sculpture, that replaced Manizer's grave marker in the Novodevich'e cemetery, represents a final stage in the Zoia myth. Unarmed, the figure on the grave appears to be a hanged woman, minus the rope. Her left breast is bare, again recalling her mutilation of the body, and she has a relatively curvy body,

²⁸⁶ Н. Борисов, *Будем, как Зоя* (Москва: Издательство ДОСААФ, 1965), 92.

nothing like the portraits of Zoia. Although her arms are free, her bare feet seem to be bound. Appropriately, this body appears to be floating upward, stressing the spiritual over the corporeal (figure 23).

Tumarkin argues that dead heroes were more useful than the living to the makers of cultural myths because they could not interfere with the stories told about them, not embarrass themselves, nor could they make demands after the war.²⁸⁷ 1942 marks a change in the official Soviet attitude to women warriors, evident in decoration of female Heroes of the Soviet Union. The change of focus from the highly skilled woman, victorious in battle, to the self-sacrificing Soviet daughter is evident by the choice of first female heroes of the Soviet Union after the start of the war. The first three female Heroes of the Soviet Union were involved in underground or partisan activities and were decorated posthumously. None of these women held rank as soldiers, but they gave their lives while resisting Nazi occupation of their Motherland. This change of decoration accompanies the most difficult period of the war for the Soviet people.

The woman warrior-martyr is celebrated for her selfless devotion to the Soviet State rather than her individual actions, which is typical of Stalinist period. Her physical body is significant only in its mutilated form, which transcends the physical and ascends to the mythological realm. She can be characterized by her boundless love for her homeland. She follows the Great Father, Stalin, to her very

²⁸⁷ Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead*, 80.

death. She is silent when she must be, but proclaims inspiring, immortal words to her comrades at the threshold of death, as she is rising to sainthood.

The Soviet public embraced and glorified these idealized daughters and memorialized them, and held their mutilated bodies up to act as bearers of ideology and examples of devotion to the Motherland for generations of children. Although their role in the post-Soviet period has been unclear, as Russians have questioned the validity of Soviet myths and the Zoia story, the majority of monuments and geographical street markers remain. Websites and the 2005 documentary shows that she remains a collective source of national pride and a symbol of strength and courage of the World War II generation. Most Russians continue to venerate her, visiting her gravesite in Moscow and the Minsk highway monument, a bound, unarmed, dress-wearing young woman, in Petrishchevo. The most famous woman warrior-martyrs are enjoying renewed attention, as Russians reevaluate the mythology of World War II (figure 24).

Chapter 3: The Gendered Gaze: Disarming the Woman Warrior

Каждый день приходила она в овин с цветами и веточками пушистой вербы. Но не в цветах было дело: она приносила с собой благоухание милой женственности, по которой тосковали одинокие сердца бойцов.

(Everyday she would go into the barn with flowers and sprigs of fluffy pussy-willow. But the flowers were not the most important: she brought with her the fragrance of sweet femininity, which touched the lonely hearts of the soldiers.)

—Emmanuel Kazakevich, “The Star” [“Звезда,” 1947]²⁸⁸

Оружия у нее не было никакого, хотя оружие перед выходом можно было попросить у ребят, но, когда она намекнула на то Дозорцеву, тот запретил категорически—в ее деле лучше обойтись без оружия. Компаса ей тоже не дали.

(She did not have any kind of weapon, even though she could have asked one of the guys for a weapon before leaving. But when she hinted to Dozortseva, he forbade it categorically—it was better to go on her mission without a weapon. Nor did they give her a compass.)

—Vasil’ Bykov, “To Go and Not Return” [“Пойти и не вернуться,” 1977]²⁸⁹

“В шинельке, перешитой по фигуре.
Она прошла сквозь фронтовые бури...”

Читаю и становится смешно:

В те дни фигурками блистали лишь в кино,

Да в повестях, простите, тыловых,

Да кое-где в штабах прифронтовых.

Но по-другому было на войне—

Не в третьем эшелоне, а в огне.

(“In a coat, fitted to her figure,

She crossed the storms on the front.”

Such things are funny to me when I read them:

In those days, figures shone only at the movies,

And in love stories, excuse me, written on the homefront.

And in some headquarters near the front.

But it was different in the war

Not in the third echelon, but under fire.)

²⁸⁸ Эммануил Казакевич, *Звезда* (Москва: Транзиткнига, 2004), 32.

²⁸⁹ Василь Быков, “Пойти и не вернуться,” in *Повести* (Л: Лениздат, 1987), 210.

--Iuliia Drunina, "In a coat, fitted to her figure" ["В шинельке, перешитой по фигуре," 1973]²⁹⁰

After the prewar military buildup of the Soviet state World War II, the vast majority of women soldiers had been demobilized shortly after the war's end, in the fall of 1945.²⁹¹ Having fought heroically and successfully, many women expected to be remembered and honored as heroes, as patriotic daughters who had defended their Motherland. Instead, Soviet writers largely forgot their contributions, ignoring the women who participated in combat entirely and focusing instead on women in traditional, nurturing roles. As the war concluded, images of happy, smiling mothers holding children replaced pictures of women warriors. Although some women, especially pilots, hoped to continue military service or flying, most were demobilized after the war. Pilot Klavdiia Pankratova told Ann Noggle, "And then it came to who should retire. It was not the men, of course; I was made to retire, and I didn't want to. Later I wanted to go into civil aviation, but they hated fighter pilots; they didn't take me. So I had to quit flying."²⁹²

The two first epigraphs likely frustrated and disappointed many women who participated in the Great Patriotic War. These depictions in literature are representative of a much broader cultural trend that followed World War II. Although they had gained access to the military in the 1930s, women lost the right to

²⁹⁰ Юлия Друнина, "В шинельке, перешитой по фигуре" in *Светлокосый солдат* (Калининград: Калининградское книжное издательство, 1973), 212.

²⁹¹ Reina Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War* (Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press, 2001), 143.

²⁹² Anne Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 184.

bear weapons as soldiers. A photograph of aviator Evdokia Bershanskaia (1954) shows the decorated woman in her new station in life (figure 25). The caption reads:

В годы Великой Отечественной войны Евдокия Бершанская командовала славным Гвардейским Таманским женским авиационным полком сформированным из добровольцев-воспитанниц аэроклубов и лётных школ Гражданского воздушного флота. Бесстрашно борясь с фашистскими захватчиками, летчицы мечтали о том, как после победы они будут строить, творить, мечтали о счастье, о семье ... Евдокия Давыдовна Бершанская—сейчас счастливая мать троих детей. По-прежнему она энергичная общественница. Она заместитель секретаря партийной организации 1-го Московского городского аэроклуба ДОСААФ.

(In the years of the Great Patriotic War, Evdokiia Bershanskaia commanded the glorious women's Taman Guards aviation regiment, formed by volunteers, educated in flight clubs and air force flight schools. As they fearlessly fought against the fascist invaders, female pilots dreamt of the time after victory when they would build, create. They dreamt of happiness, of family... Evdokiia Davydovna Bershanskaia is now a happy mother of three. As before, she is active in society. She is the assistant party secretary of the First Moscow Municipal Flight Club of DOSAAF.²⁹³

Bershanskaia, in civilian dress and now a “mother of three children,” shows her daughter her decorated uniform. Although she continues to work in aviation, her role as a mother is supposed to fulfill her. Covers of *Rabotnitsa* in the postwar period show that Soviet women were expected to devote themselves to raising families.²⁹⁴

This chapter explores the cultural disarming that complemented the literal disarming of women soldiers. It investigates the male “gaze,” by which I mean, the objectifying view of a man, and the male author’s intentionality. I ask how male writers, typically representatives of the literary elite, and most widely respected to

²⁹³ *Работница* 2 (February 1954), color plate between 8 and 9.

²⁹⁴ Examples: *Работница* 8 (August 1949): inside cover; *Работница* 10 (October 1950): cover.

this day, respond to women warriors and how their responses conform to and dissent from official state positions.

Descriptions in the first and second epigraphs above illustrate typical male writers' portrayals of women soldiers. They were written by Emmanuil Kazakevich and Vasil' Bykov, respected members of the postwar literary elite. The Kazakevich passage emphasizes the woman soldier's feminine qualities, which many famous male authors idealize. Like most female soldiers, she disrupts the typically all-male world of war. Bykov more pointedly disarms his female partisan, emphasizing her inability to bear weapons and showing the distrust men had in women soldiers.

The third epigraph resists male writers' refeminization of female soldiers. The author, Iuliia Drunina, remains the only woman warrior celebrated as an important writer. In her diverse body of poetry about World War II, although she addresses women's experiences in World War II, her self-image is built on her active duty in the military and resists the focus of the male gaze on the female body in a shapely, fitted uniforms. She can only laugh as men transform women soldiers into complements whose roles in the war were mostly limited to fulfilling men's needs and desires.

Reina Pennington argues that the demobilization of women in the military was accompanied by displacement in postwar fiction.²⁹⁵ Some male authors, for example Viktor Nekrasov (1911-87), author of Stalin Prize-winning novel *In the*

²⁹⁵ Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War*, vi.

Trenches of Stalingrad (*В окопах Сталинграда*, 1947),²⁹⁶ avoid the topic of women soldiers entirely, as if 800,000 women had not fought on the front.²⁹⁷ Although Nekrasov does mention a woman, Liusia, who works in a hospital in Stalingrad, she is hardly a woman warrior. Although the reader learns of her attractive body, literary taste, and about her piano-playing abilities, he or she never sees Liusia in uniform, armed, or working as a military soldier. She functions only as the love interest for the narrator, as a woman who reminds him of his childhood sweetheart back in Kiev. Women soldiers, as Pennington shows, remain absent in the entirety of Nekrasov's oeuvre.

Most well-known writers, however, portrayed women soldiers in some capacity in their war literature. These writers almost always depicted them in the manner similar to that in the epigraphs. The women in these works either conformed to a traditional feminine role by being emotional, desirable nurturers or fought incompetently, hindering the war effort rather than contributing to it, or both.²⁹⁸ This treatment of the woman warrior is not limited to works by Russian male authors. Sharon Macdonald describes the two ways women warriors are “disarmed” in general in culture: either her “feminine nature” is stressed and she is made to uphold feminine virtues (chastity, shame, maternal nurturing), her heroism is downplayed, or her participation in warfare is shown to be a result of an exceptional circumstance;

²⁹⁶ Deming Brown refers to the novel as one of the finest novels of the war in *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 271.

²⁹⁷ Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War*, 1.

²⁹⁸ Sometimes authors will combine these approaches, as in Вуков's “Пойти и не вернуться” (1977).

or she is shown to be insufficiently feminine, “unnatural,” or abnormal.²⁹⁹ Fears about society judging them abnormal in their nontraditional combat service led many actual women to conceal their military service. In his introduction to Iuliia Drunina’s *Country—Youth* (*Страна юность*, 1967), Sergei Narovchatov recalls a chance meeting with a former comrade-in-arms and her boyfriend:

“Поздоровавшись, она оттянула меня в сторону и торопливо зашептала: ‘Только не говори, что я была медсестрой. Знаешь, это сейчас не котируется,’³⁰⁰ (“Having greeted each other, she pulled me to the side and quickly whispered: ‘Only don’t say that I was a nurse! You know, now it’s not really valued”). It is important to remember, however, that there were respected male writers who celebrated fighting women, most notably Il’ia Erenburg (1891-1967) and Boris Vasil’ev (1924-present).³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ Sharon Macdonald, Pat Holden, and Shirley Ardener, eds. *Images of Women in Peace and War: Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspectives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press: 1988), 7.

³⁰⁰ Юлия Друнина, *Страна Юность* (Москва: Художественная литература, 1967), 7.

³⁰¹ In 1948, Il’ia Erenburg published *The Storm* (*Буря*), a Stalin prize-winning, epic novel about World War II, set in the Soviet Union and France. Erenburg’s novel stands out from Soviet war novels in the immediate postwar period by both deviating from the party line and including well-developed portraits of women soldiers who participated in warfare in various capacities. He develops his characters, male and female, and explores their motivations. In *The Storm*, Erenburg shows the breadth of women’s service by writing about partisan scouts, a sniper, and nurses. Although in his novel he includes rich portraits of armed women warriors, a traditional, nurturing woman Natasha Dmitrievna Krylova-Vlakhova, a nurse, occupies the most important place in the narrative and survives to raise her child and live with her husband, showing the predominance of this type of character in the writing of a talented, relatively evenhanded male author. This chapter will return to Natasha later to examine her portrayal in greater detail.

Another exception to this pattern, Boris Vasil’ev, also includes depictions of a variety of women soldiers in his works about World War II, fifteen of which have become feature films.³⁰¹ In his 1969 novella, “The Dawns are Quiet” (“И зори здесь тихие”), a career soldier, Sergeant-Major Vaskov, leads a squad of five women anti-aircraft gunners on a search for Germans, reconnoitering in the Russian rear. Vasil’ev portrays the women as warriors, who contribute actively and violently to the war effort, even if they do baffle male soldiers who do not fully understand how to treat female subordinates. He presents the women as individuals, describes their physical appearances, personalities, and individual motivations which led the women to enlist as soldiers on the front.

When writing about women soldiers in World War II, male authors typically re-feminize the woman warrior, creating what we will call a “woman warrior-handmaiden,” a woman character who is subservient, nurturing, and sexually attractive, who acts a complement to a male character. She serves in a nonviolent capacity, usually as a nurse, radio operator, or translator. In keeping with the traditional male gaze, her body is of paramount interest and the reader always knows what she looks like, but not always what she thinks. Her role in novels and movies lies not in heroic feats or death, but in her relationship to a male character. One may question how such a character can be considered a woman warrior. I include her, not only because she appears on the front as a uniformed soldier and is sometimes armed, but because when questioned about examples of women soldiers, Russians themselves name these women. Handmaidens began appearing in the works of male authors shortly after the turning point of the war. As the figure below shows, authors and filmmakers continue to create works including handmaiden characters into the twenty-first century.

1943-44	Константин СИМОНОВ	<i>Дни и ночи</i>	Novel
1947	Эммануил Казакевич	“Звезда”	Novella
1948	Илья Эренбург	Буря	Novel
1949	Александр Иванов	<i>Звезда</i>	Film
1952	Эммануил Казакевич	“Сердце друга”	Novella
1959-70	Константин СИМОНОВ	<i>Живые и мертвые</i>	Novel

Vasil'ev shows the women engaging in violent combat. They are entrusted with weapons and use them.

1960	Василий Гроссман	<i>Жизнь и судьба</i>	Novel
1961	Василь Быков	“Третья ракета”	Novella
1963	Ричард Викторов	<i>Третья ракета</i>	Film
1964	Василь Быков	“Мертвым не больно”	Novella
1975	Василь Быков	“Волчья стая”	Novella
1975	Борис Степанов	<i>Волчья стая</i>	Film
1976	Василь Быков	“Его батальон”	Novella
1977	Василь Быков	“Пойти и не вернуться”	Novella
1987		Его батальон	Film
1990	Асхар Ашрапов	<i>Волчья стая</i>	Film
1992	Николай Князев	<i>Пойти и не вернуться</i>	Film
2002	Николай Леведев	<i>Звезда</i>	Film
2007	Ольга Жилуна	<i>Пойти и не вернуться</i>	Film

Table B: Authors and Works that Feature the Handmaiden

The character traits of the handmaiden type show a refeminized woman. They reject both the blurring of gender roles of the 1930s and the expanded roles offered to women in the midst of war. Now that the war had finished, the State tried to put Pandora back in her box. By limiting women’s role in combat and by refeminizing her in their revisions of the war, writers further emphasized the male soldier’s heroism as something naturally masculine.

The warrior-handmaiden is first and foremost defined primarily by relationship to a military man. The relationship is usually romantic, but occasionally, they may share a familial relationship, either as brother and sister or father and daughter. In all examples, she cares deeply for the hero and her actions are motivated by her feelings for him. For example, in Bykov’s “The Pack of

Wolves,” the partisan narrator, Levchuk, reminisces about Klava Shorokhina, a partisan and radio operator in his group, whom he once loved. Levchuk goes into the forest with her and another soldier, Griboed, in order to evacuate a wounded man, Tikhonov. Levchuk is the leader and Klava is always secondary to him, both in terms of their actions and her place in the narrative. This traditional relationship, based on stereotypes and well-defined gender roles, empowers the male as he always assumes a dominant role.

The handmaiden is also a nurturer, either caring for soldiers or little children. Handmaidens are typically nurses or doctors. Even if they serve in other military capacities, they usually acquire nursing duties. Bykov’s Liusia, the “girl-medic” (девушка-санинструктор)³⁰² in his 1961 story “The Third Missile” (“Третья ракета”), cares for a wounded man as though he were a child, keeping vigil as he dies. In Bykov’s “The Pack of Wolves” (“Волчья стая”), radio operator Klava, accompanying two male soldiers on a mission to rescue a wounded comrade, happens upon a child: “Малый на руках у матери начал проявлять беспокойство— затрепыхался в своем шелковом сверточке и впервые, наверное, подал свой тихий, плаксивый голос. ... Левчук отвернулся, и Клава пристроила ребенка к груди, слегка прикрывшись дерюжкой” (“The little one, in his mother’s arms, began to fuss—shaking a bit in his silk sweater and first, crying quietly. ... Levchuk turned away and Klava pressed the child to her chest, lightly

³⁰² Василь Быков, “Третья ракета,” in *Волчья стая*, Библиотека “Огонек” No. 4-5 (Москва: Правда, 1975), 82.

covering him with sackcloth”).³⁰³ Although Klava had been in possession of a Browning pistol at the time the three embarked on their mission, it is implied that she has given her weapon to her commanding officer after they encounter Germans. Although the reader never sees her using a weapon, or even a radio, the narrator provides several descriptions of Klava comforting the baby.

To the male gaze, the sexual body is more important than actions or thoughts. The reader often sees the handmaiden’s body through a male character’s eyes. The narrator of Kazakevich’s “Сердце друга” never ceases describing the translator Anichka’s physical beauty.³⁰⁴ The handmaiden appeals to all senses: she smells pleasant and has a beautiful voice. Kazakevich introduces his readers to Anichka through her laugh: “И вдруг за дверью землянки, совсем близко, раздался громкий, серебристый женский смех” (“And suddenly through the door of the hut, very close, loud, silvery, woman’s laughter could be heard”).³⁰⁵ Later, he describes her from the point-of-view of a captured German as “девушка, да еще красивая и с мелодичным голосом” (“a young woman, beautiful, with a melodic voice”).³⁰⁶

Functioning only as a complement to male characters, the handmaiden is rarely self-aware. If she has a self-image, she lacks self-assurance. Kazakevich’s Katia in “The Star” imagines herself as a warrior’s bride rather than a warrior herself: “Выпросив у улыбышевой зеркальце, она смотрелась в него, стараясь

³⁰³ Василь Быков, “Волчья стая,” in *Собрание сочинений*, Vol. 3 (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1985), 71.

³⁰⁴ Казакевич, “Сердце друга,” in *Звезда*, 173.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 216.

придать своему лицу выражение торжественной серьезности, как подобает— это слово она даже произносила вслух—невесте героя” (“Smiling in the mirror, she looked at it, trying to give her face an expression of ceremonial seriousness and pronouncing aloud ‘bride of a hero’”).³⁰⁷ She also sees herself as inferior to her man: “Ну какая я ему пара?—думала она.—Он такой умный, серьезный, сестра у него скрипачка, и сам он будет ученым. А я? Девчонка, такая же, как тысячи других” (“What kind of partner would I be for him?’ she thought. ‘He’s so smart, serious, his sister’s a violinist, and he himself will be a scholar. And I? A girl, just like thousands of others’”).³⁰⁸ Kazakevich’s Anichka also finds inadequacies in herself: “Но Аничка не казалась себе хорошей. Она считала, наоборот, что она очень плохая, взбалмошная, неуравновешенная, слишком рефлектирующая” (“But Anichka did not think much of herself. She thought, in contrast, that she was terrible, eccentric, unbalanced, too reflexive”).³⁰⁹ These instances of self-awareness are rare, however. The reader never really finds out how the handmaiden sees herself.

One can also see the handmaiden by her lack of aggressiveness, of an instinct to kill, not only in terms of her official military position, but in her demeanor. She never carries a gun and shies away from killing the enemy. This unsuitability for combat occasionally leads to a male character disarming the handmaiden. Klava in Bykov’s “The Pack of Wolves” is disarmed when she gives up her weapon to a male

³⁰⁷ Казакевич, “Звезда,” 85-86.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁰⁹ “Сердце друга,” 194.

comrade early in the novella.³¹⁰ She is often scared of the violence of war, like Bykov's Klava, who is scared of mines. One may assume that any male soldier would also dread landmines, but male authors rarely mention male soldiers' fears, focusing instead on the apprehensions of female soldiers. Kazakevich's Anichka fears her comrades will kill a captured German: "Когда они уже переправились через ручей, опять заработали немецкие минометы, пришлось лечь плашмя в грязь, кругом рвались мины, и Аничка ужасно боялась, чтобы не убило немца. Но все обошлось. Вскоре они оказались у Ремизова" ("When they had already swum across the river, the German mortars opened fire again. They had to lie down flat in the dirt, surrounded by exploding mines, and Anichka was terribly scared that they would kill the German. But everything turned out. They soon showed up at Remizov's").³¹¹ Her innate preference for peace leads her to dread violence, regardless of its object.

The handmaiden is emotional and weeps frequently. In Bykov's "The Pack of Wolves," Klava's incompetence results in tears throughout her military experience. Klava cries out of shame after sleeping through a shift on the night watch: "Плакала от обиды на себя, оттого, что так безбожно проспала свою первую в жизни боевую службу и что они так некстати пожалели ее. Весь следующий день она была угнетенно-молчаливая, и Левчук ругал себя за нерешительность. За робость, но ведь он же хотел как лучше" ("She cried from shame, due to her sleeping through the first of her military duties and they so

³¹⁰ Быков, "Волчья стая," 35.

³¹¹ Казакевич, "Сердце друга," 215.

irreverently pitied her”).³¹² In addition to her emotional weakness, the handmaiden is physically ill fit for combat. Klava later cries when she becomes exhausted, fleeing Germans:

Клава лежала на боку и большими, полными тоски глазами смотрела в сосняк.

—Наделала я вам забот. Ты уж меня извини, Левчук...Она вдруг заплакала, тихонько и жалостно, а он сидел рядом, вытянув к солнцу красные натертые стопы, и молчал. Он не утешал ее, потому что не умел утешать, к тому же считал, что в том, что с ней случилось, Клава была виновата сама.

Тихо всхлипывая, Клава плакала долго, и Левчук в конце концов не стерпел.”

(Klava lay on her side and she looked at the pines with big eyes, full of grief. --You have gotten fed up with me troubling you. Excuse me, Levchuk...she suddenly started to cry, quietly and mournfully, but he sat close, stretching his red, sore feet toward the sun, and was quiet. He did not console her because he could not comfort her, since he felt that Klava herself was guilty in what had happened to her. Quietly sobbing, Klava cried for a long time, and in the end Levchuk could not bear it.)³¹³

Her tears show that she is not fit for combat. She can neither fulfill duties nor control her emotions. Military service seems overly taxing, almost cruel, for the handmaiden and her comparatively delicate emotional constitution.

The handmaiden is dependent. She needs men and her decisions and actions are motivated by this need. In Bykov's "His Battalion" ("Его батальон," 1975), a pregnant medic, Vera Veretennikova, resists transfer from the front, not because she believes that motherhood and combat are compatible, but because she refuses to leave the baby's father, the company commander. ("“Никуда я от Вадьки не отправлюсь,” --сказала она. Однако решимость ее, похоже, стала ослабевать,

³¹² Быков, "Волчья стая," 35.

³¹³ Ibid, 41-42.

девушка всхлипнула и закрыла лицо руками”).³¹⁴ ““I will not be sent anywhere away from Vad’ka,’ she said. However, her resolve, it seemed, weakened, and the girl sobbed and covered her face with her hands.” She disobeys orders and remains with the battalion during an attack, which results in her death.

While narrators often refer to male soldiers by their last names or ranks, men almost always call female soldiers by diminutive forms of their first names, indicating a lower place in the military hierarchy. Male soldiers tend to address female soldiers, using the informal “ty,” while women often respond to men with the formal “vy.” Kazakevich writes:

Подняв глаза, [Ремизов] увидел девушку и вдруг, пораженный, воскликнул:
—Аничка! Как ты сюда попала?
Девушка присмотрелась к нему, вся просияла, обхватила его шею и закричала:
—Семен Фомич, дружище! Вы-то что тут делаете?
—Потом объясню, потом,—покосившись на присутствующих и густо покраснев, забормотал полковник.—Ты на фронте? Здесь? А где папа?”

(Raising his eyes, [Remizov] saw the young woman and suddenly, amazed, and exclaimed “Anichka, how did you end up here?”
The girl looked at him, all lit up, embraced his neck and cried:
“Semen Fomich, old boy! What are you doing here?”
“I’ll tell you later,” mumbled the lieutenant, looking askance and blushing deeply.
“You’re on the front? Here? And where is your father?”)³¹⁵

In the Kazakevich excerpt, the use of familiar address indicates a familial, paternal order, emphasizing the woman soldier’s subordinate position in the military family,

³¹⁴ Быков, “Его Батальон,” in *Собрание сочинений*, vol. 3, 166.

³¹⁵ Казакевич, “Сердце друга,” 176.

beloved and appreciated as an obedient daughter. He also affirms her dependence on family by asking about an authority figure.

The warrior-handmaiden is the keeper of the hearth, representing home and safety. Bykov depicts Katia by the hearth, cooking for her wounded charges in “The Dead Feel No Pain”: “Возле печки, шурша соломой, хлопочут санитары и Катя—они варят картошку. Катя без полушубка, покрасневшая, вся как-то по-хорошему оживившаяся от этой домашней женской работы, хлопотливо двигает казанами на припечке” (“By the stove, rustling straw, the medics and Katia were busying themselves, boiling potatoes. Katia without her coat, was flushed, somehow better off, invigorated by this domestic, women’s work, busily moving the stock pots on the stove”).³¹⁶ One of the characters reminds another that “Война—не мать родная” (“War is not your dear mother”),³¹⁷ but Katia, who remains a nurturer to her death literally embodies the hearth, and the comforting presence of a maternal figure. The wounded narrator longs for her: “За околицей вовсю гремит бой—и танковые выстрелы, и автоматы. Я чувствую: будет плохо! Хотя бы вернулась Катя, с ней как-то спокойнее. Мы уже привыкли за эти сутки к ее грубоватой заботе о нас” (“Beyond the outskirts of the village, battle thundered with all its might—tank volleys and machine guns. I felt it: it will be bad! If only Katia would return, it would somehow be a bit calmer with her. After days, she had already gotten used to her rough fussing over us”).³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Быков, “Мертвым не больно,” in *Мертвым не больно* (Москва: Эксмо, 2005), 332.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 418.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 417.

The handmaiden is eternally loyal, faithful, and devoted, even after there is no hope of her beloved's return. Kazakevich's Katia in "The Star" continues to wait for Travkin by her radio, and to call his name, long after everyone else has given up hope. In the 2002 film, we learn that after the war, she returns home to her small village and never marries, remaining faithful to Travkin until her death. Erenburg's Natasha in *The Storm* embodies the loyalty and faithfulness expressed in Konstantin Simonov's popular 1941 poem, "Wait for me" ("Жди меня"). Her husband Vasia has been missing for three years. She has no news of him, but her love does not diminish. She accepts his death, but also realizes that she will never love again. The handmaiden does not remain faithful and devoted because she feels she has to, but because she cannot be anything else. She is a "good girl" and faithful by nature. Through the handmaiden's love, the author restores the value to an individual's life that the Soviet state ignored. The man the handmaiden loves is irreplaceable.

Poet, novelist, and journalist Konstantin Simonov (1915-79) dedicated much of his career to writing about the Great Patriotic War. In both *Days and Nights* (*Дни и ночи*, 1943-44) and *The Living and the Dead* (*Живые и мертвые*, 1959-1970), the male protagonist meets, falls in love with, and marries a medical practitioner. Although the plot of the epic *The Living and the Dead* is considerably more complex, the women soldiers are remarkably similar, despite the more than twenty-five years that separate the publication of these two novels. The male protagonists save the lives of both women early in the novels. The women espouse traditional dreams of family life. They are infantilized throughout the works and in both of

them. Simonov addresses the idea of women bearing arms. Men disapprove of women's participation in combat, claiming that the difficulties of war are too intense for women.

The nurse Ania (*Days and Nights*) and the military doctor Tania (*The Living and the Dead*) both physically need their future spouses early in the works. Ania, unable to swim, would have drowned had Saburov not rescued her when their barge is attacked, crossing the Volga River. Tania sprains her ankle and needs Sintsov to carry her through Nazi-occupied territory. Simonov shows how women, regardless of their skills, need male soldiers for their survival in combat situations.

Shortly after their introductions, the women's roles in the novel is clarified: she exists to fulfill the protagonist's needs. Although they serve in the military, their expectations and hopes for the future do not deviate from traditional norms: they long for peacetime so that they can become wives and mothers. Shortly after their meeting, Ania describes her greatest fears to Saburov: "Мечтала, как выйду замуж,—и ничего этого тоже не было ... И вот я иногда боюсь, очень боюсь, что вдруг всего этого не будет. Я умру, и ничего, ничего не будет" ("I dreamt of getting married, and that did not happen either...and I sometimes am scared, very scared, that suddenly all of this won't be. I will die, and nothing, nothing will be").³¹⁹ When Tania envisions her future, she sees herself as a wife. Upon marriage, both women hope to remain on the same front as their husbands. However, after Tania becomes pregnant, she leaves for the rear.

³¹⁹ Константин Симонов, "Дни и ночи" in *Собрание сочинений в шести томах, том второй: повести* (Москва: Художественная литература, 1967), 21.

While the women serve as the protagonists' objects of desire and as nurturers, anticipating their potential as mothers, narrators in both novels transform the women into children. In *Days and Nights*, the narrator uses the child leitmotif in descriptions of Ania's actions: "Он налил ей, а она выпила вместе с ними, спокойно, не морщась, как послушный ребенок пьет лекарство" ("He poured her a drink, and she drank together with them, peacefully, not wrinkling up her face, as an obedient child drinks medicine").³²⁰ This excerpt emphasizes her obedience. She would likely be an obedient, submissive wife as well. Like a child, she is easily pleased: "Я сама проснусь,—уверенно сказала она, потом, подойдя к дивану, села на него и, по-детски раскачавшись на пружинах, с удивлением заметила: —Ой, мягко, я давно на таком не спала" ("I, too, will fall asleep," she said confidently, then, going to the couch, sat on it, and like a child bounced on it, and with surprise noted, "Oh, it's soft. I haven't slept on such a couch for a long time").³²¹ The following excerpt emphasizes Ania's natural childlike nature. None of her actions are affected: "добавила она с детской непосредственностью представления о родителях, как о людях, обычно не понимающих самых простых вещей" ("she added with childlike spontaneity the idea about parents, like people, not understanding the simplest things").³²² Ania's actions constantly emphasize the deficit in age and experience between herself and her beloved.

³²⁰ Ibid., 58.

³²¹ Ibid., 60.

³²² Ibid., 61.

Likewise, from the introduction of Tania, the narrator emphasizes her smallness and youth. The reader sees her through male eyes:

Врачиха была молоденькая и такая крохотная, что казалась совсем девочкой. Серпилин и стоявший рядом с ним Синцов, да и все, кто был кругом, смотрели на нее с удивлением и нежностью. Их удивление и нежность еще усилились, когда она, жуя горбушку хлеба, стала в ответ на расспросы рассказывать о себе.

(The woman doctor was so young and tiny, that she seemed just like a girl. Serpilin and Sintsov, standing near him, and those who were around them looked at her with surprise and tenderness. Their surprise and tenderness were strengthened when she, chewing on a crust of bread, began talking about herself in response to their questions).³²³

This description of Tania follows a passage in which she has shot a German, despite the weight of her rifle: “Наган был такой тяжелый, что ей пришлось стрелять, держа его двумя руками” (“The revolver was so heavy that when she had to shoot, she had to hold it with two hands”).³²⁴ Tania kills the soldier out of necessity and self-defense and her near inability to handle a weapon gives evidence of her unsuitability in a capacity other than that of a nurturer. Even when honored for partisan service, the narrator emphasizes her girlishness: “Улыбка, наверно, сделала ее еще моложе, и Калинин, отдав орден и протянув ей руку, посмотрел на нее с добрым, стариковским сожалением, словно ему было жаль, что на этой войне приходится вручать ордена Красного Знамени таким маленьким стриженным девочкам в военной форме” (“Her smile, probably, made her look even younger, and Kalinin, giving out the medal and extending his hand toward her, he looked at her with the kind compassion of an elder, as if he were particularly sorry

³²³ Константин Симонов, *Живые и мертвые* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1972), 1-126.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2-172.

that in this war, he had to hand out orders of the Red Banner to such little, short-haired girls in military uniforms”).³²⁵ Sintsov loves Tania’s childlike characteristics: “Он любил ее такой, какая она была,—маленькой, худенькой, легкой, как ребенок” (“He loved her just as she was: little, thin, light as a child”).³²⁶ Simonov’s habit of comparing women soldiers to children disarms them, making them less formidable in the eyes of the reader.

In the novels, the narrator emphasizes the woman soldiers’ body and clothing as a crucial part of refeminization (after they have fallen in love with the protagonists). In *Дни и ночи*, Ania receives women’s clothing from her mother:

“Да тут золовка ситчику дала, я и шью Аньке. Девчонка ведь все-таки. Платье захочет надеть хоть раз в месяц, вот и шью. А на ноги все равно ничего нет. Или эти ей отдать?”

Она села на стул, положила ногу на ногу и задумчиво посмотрела на свои старые, стоптанные, на низких каблуках туфли.³²⁷

(“My sister-in-law gave me some cloth, so now I’m sewing a dress for Anya. After all, she is a young girl. Even if she wears a dress only once a month—well, I’ll still make one for her ... But she hasn’t any shoes. Maybe I could give her these?”

She sat on the chair, put one leg over the other, and thoughtfully looked at her old, patched, low-heeled slippers.)³²⁸

This clothing represents Ania’s “true,” feminine self, the woman who will return once circumstances allow her to retire her uniform. Her mother’s use of the word “girl” (*devchonka*) emphasizes her femininity while also reenforcing her childishness.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid., 3-181.

³²⁷ Ibid., 3-133-4.

³²⁸ Konstantin Simonov, *Days and Nights*, Trans. Joseph Barnes (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), 223.

In *The Living and the Dead*, Tania's preference for the role of lover over that of a soldier is made explicit by a decision to remain unarmed voluntarily, immediately after she and Sintsov have consummated their relationship: "Ее ремень с пистолетом действительно лежал на кресле. Но Таня, взяв его в руки, не стала опоясываться, а положила перед собой на стол, опустила в кресло и, глядя на стоявшего перед ней Синцова, глубоко вздохнула.—Если ты знал, какая я счастливая и какая усталая. Ноги подкашиваются" ("Her belt which held her pistol was actually lying on the armchair. But Tania, having grabbed it in her hands, did not begin putting it on, but laid it between herself and the table, and dropped into the chair. Looking at Sintsov, who was standing in front of her, she sighed deeply, 'If only you knew how happy and tired I am. I'm weak in the knees'")³²⁹ Rather than getting dressed and donning her belt and gun, Tania smokes with her lover and discusses her personal happiness.

Both novels conclude ambiguously, with the women's lives in peril, after they have been wounded, having participated in unexpected combat scenes. Ania is wounded severely when the Germans appear, while she is bandaging a wounded soldier. She is frightened when they appear, but arms herself, grabbing a gun and shooting blindly: "Упав, Аня больно ударила лицо о что-то жесткое,—это был лежавший на дне окопа автомат убитого связиста. Она взяла автомат, положила его на бруствер окопа и, поднявшись, так же, как второй связист, стала стрелять, не видя еще, куда она стреляет." ("Having fallen, something hard

³²⁹ Симонов, *Живые и мертвые*, 2-611.

painfully hit Ania in the face. It was the dead radio operator's machine gun, lying on the bottom of the trench. She picked up the machine gun, laid it on the breastwork, and having gotten up, like the second radio operator, she began shooting, not seeing where she was shooting").³³⁰ By noting that she shoots blindly, the narrator minimizes the effectiveness of her actions: she almost certainly wounded no one. After shooting, she drops a gun in order to throw a grenade out of the trench. It explodes with the handle still in her hand. She is not disfigured, but badly hurt, carried across the Volga to a field hospital, where her role in the novel ends. The reader does not know whether she will survive and her husband assumes that she is dead.

Although Tania conforms to the handmaiden type in most respects, she is unusual in that she enters and exits the plot of the novel through battle. She is wounded when the Nazis attack the medical transport vehicle in which she is riding. Surrounded by Germans, her driver shot, Tania must shoot four Germans in order to survive:

Вспомнив об этом автомате, лежавшем у нее за спиной, она дернула его к себе за ремень и, так и не встав, продолжая почему-то сидеть на подножке грузовика, прижала автомат к животу и дала из него очередь по немцам. Сначала длинную—о всем, а потом спела еще одну, короткую, по немцу, подбежавшему совсем близко к машине и замахнувшемуся гранатой.

(Having remembered the machine gun, lying by her back, she harnessed it to her belt and so, not getting up, continuing to sit for some reason on the footboard of the truck, she pressed the machine gun to her stomach and from it, fired a burst at the Germans. At first it was a long one, at all, and then she

³³⁰ Симонов, *Дни и ночи*, 218.

managed to also fire a short burst at a German, running quite close to the truck, who was lifting up a grenade).³³¹

Although Tania had previously claimed to possess rifley skills, her handling of weaponry in this passage shows that she is ill at ease in combat.

The novel concludes with Tania's evacuation from the front and Sintsov's difficult decision whether he should remain with Tania or return to his prewar wife, previously thought deceased. Although Ania and Tania both pick up guns and fire at the enemy, they only engage in combat when there are no men to protect them, when they are surrounded by Nazis, and have no other choice. Simonov reconciles the idea of women handling weapons and taking lives by explaining the desperate circumstances that lead to such actions and by emphasizing the women's general unsuitability for combat, in terms of physical size, lack of fitness and skill, and nurturing nature. Ania, Tania, and the Russian women soldiers they represent would not have taken up arms if patriotic love for their Motherland and a need to defend themselves from attack by the enemy had not required them to do so. These women are beautiful, small, and nurturing. They need men, love men, and long for the war to be over so that they can raise families alongside their husbands.

In his widely popular 1947 short story about a group of reconnaissance scouts and snipers working behind German lines, E. Kazakevich presents a quintessential portrait of a woman warrior-handmaiden. Katia, a radio operator, falls in love with the story's protagonist, her commanding officer, Travkin, while stationed in a Belarusian village. Although she wants to go on a mission with Travkin, he refuses

³³¹ Ibid., 3-471.

and retorts to his commander, “Да что вы, товарищ майор, не нужно мне радиста. Не на прогулку идем” (“What are you thinking, Comrade Major? I don’t need a radio operator. We are not going on a stroll”).³³² showing his low opinion and condescending attitude toward her. She loves him regardless and asks another scout to watch out for Travkin, as the group is departing. After Travkin leaves on a mission, orbiting the area, as suggested by his code name, “Звезда,” or “Star,” Katia remains in the village, waiting by her radio transmitter, depriving herself of sleep and calling his name. She functions as a bridge to the peacetime comfort of home and family, as her code name “земля,” or “earth” suggests, connecting her to the image of the nurturing mother earth. Her character falls into one of the folkloric roles for women, that of the soldier’s wife (*soldatka*), waiting for her lover to return. Together, they represent the universe: the traditionally male sky with the feminine earth.³³³ They represent Russia: urban Travkin, a student of science from an educated family, comes from Moscow and civilization, and the grandeur of the Soviet Union’s capital, while Katia comes from a humble village and represents quaint rural life, tied to the earth.

Katia has two roles in the work. First, she connects Travkin to the hearth and to life through her symbolic connection to the earth. In her second role, she brings “femininity” in the forms of a woman’s scent and flowers into the otherwise all male detachment. While she loves Travkin romantically, she has maternal feelings toward

³³² Казакевий, “Звезда,” 47.

³³³ In Russian mythology, gods of the sky, sun, and wind were all male, while the god of the earth was female.

the other soldiers and cares for them as a mother would, worrying about their welfare and happiness, singing to them, and even doing their laundry. A fellow soldier, Mershcherskii, tells Travkin: “--Добрая она. Разведчикам стирает, они ей письма из дому читают, делятся с ней своими новостями. Когда она приходит, все очень довольны. Поет красиво.” (“She’s kind. She does the scouts’ laundry. They read her their letters from home and share their news with her. When she comes, they are very happy. She sings beautifully”).³³⁴ She even procures a bed and table for Travkin.

We never learn why she enlisted in the army, know nothing of her motivations to fight. After she falls in love with Travkin, she is guided entirely by her romantic feelings for him. She obeys him when he commands her not to come to the detachment’s gathering place when he is present. The narrator makes it clear that she waits by her transmitter beyond her military duties, simply in hopes of hearing Travkin’s voice, not necessarily out of feelings of military necessity

Радистов работало трое. Но Катя, кончив свою смену, не уходила. Она сидела рядом с Мещерским на узких нарах, склонив светлую голову на смуглые руки, и ждала. Иногда она вдруг начинала сварливо спорить с дежурным, что тот якобы потерял волну Звезды, выхватывала из его рук трубку, и под низким потолком блиндажа раздавался ее тихий, умоляющий голос: --Звезда. Звезда. Звезда. Звезда.

(The radio operators worked in threes, But Katia, having finished her shift, did not leave. She sat next to Meshcherskii on the narrow planks, having bent her light head on her tanned hands, and waited. Sometimes she suddenly began to argue crossly with the watchperson about as if he had lost Zvezda’s wave, snatching away the receiver from his hand, and under the low

³³⁴Казакевич, “Звезда,” 43.

ceiling of the dug out, her quiet, pleading voice reverberated, “Zvezda. Zvezda. Zvezda. Zvezda.”³³⁵

Katia’s love for Travkin inspires her to neglect her own personal needs. Her sleep-deprived mind conjures up the image of her beloved: “Катя в полудремоте целый день прижимала к уху трубку радиции. Ей мерещились какие-то странные сны, видения, Травкин.”³³⁶ “Half-asleep, Katia held the receiver to her ear all day. In some kind of strange dreams, it seemed as though she saw Travkin.” Her love for Travkin leads her to wait for him after all others have given up hope of connection: “И, полная надежды и железного упорства, она ждала. Никто уже не ждал, а она ждала. И никто не смел снять радию с приема, пока не началось наступление.” (“And full of hope and unyielding perseverance, she waited. No one else still waited, but she waited. And no one dared to take the transmitter with the receiver, so as not to prompt an attack”).³³⁷ Her spontaneous waiting, driven by her selfless and one-sided dedication to Travkin, defines her entire personality. She needs no other motivation.

Two films were based on this novella, attesting to its popularity even in the post-Soviet period. Aleksandr Ivanov’s 1949 film version of *The Star* feminizes Katia to still a greater extent, dressing her in a skirted uniform. Ivanov’s Katia wears her hair long and wavy, unlike Kazakevich’s Katia, who has a short man’s haircut. The music shows us that Katia falls in love with Travkin upon meeting him. She exists in the film only in relation to Travkin and disappears for long stretches of time

³³⁵ Ibid., 82.

³³⁶ Ibid., 86.

³³⁷ Ibid., 87.

as the film follows the men scouting behind German lines. The director emphasizes Katia's role as a *soldatka*, a woman waiting for her man, in one scene toward the end of the film, other radio operators read letters from loved ones while Katia stands waiting in a doorway, bathed in moonlight, watching a shooting star falling toward the earth, "zvezda" returning to "zemlia." Just before German planes bomb Travkin's scout group, Travkin makes contact with Katia on the radio, reconnecting with the hearth one last time.

Nikolai Lebedev's 2002 version of *The Star* emphasizes Katia's "feminine" weakness and need for men during the introduction of her character. She wakes up during a bombing on her first day at the front. Scared, she runs out of her cabin, only to be rescued by a man. He holds her to the ground, protecting her, and then helps her to her feet. He tells her that she is beautiful, drawing the viewer's attention to her body from her very introduction. In contrast, when the viewer meets the men who join Travkin's scout groups, the director introduces them through their individual skills, for example, one is an excellent shot, while another soldier speaks German. Lebedev transforms Katia's and Travkin's relationship from an unrequited love into a reciprocal longing for each other. When they first meet each other, both characters clearly are attracted to each other. As in Ivanov's film, Katia disappears for much of the film, only to reappear whenever Travkin is able to connect to camp. After a long break in communication, Katia weeps at hearing Travkin's voice. She conveys his important message about German troop movement, which eventually leads to the liberation of Poland. All members of Travkin's group die without

information, but are decorated posthumously. Katia's love for Travkin is so strong that she never marries. She returns to her small town and becomes a history teacher, nurturing school children as she would have nurtured Travkin's and her children, had the war not thwarted their love.

Katia is the quintessential warrior-handmaiden. She is beautiful, kind, nurturing—in short, traditionally feminine. She sees herself only in relation to Travkin and values herself less than him. While the men in her detachment use their last names, Katia remains Katia, a form of address which emphasized her diminutive, but affectionate, status among the other soldiers. In all versions of the story, she waits for her beloved soldier to come home, even after his death.

In his epic novel *The Storm* (Буря, 1948), Il'ia Erenburg also includes an image of eternal faithfulness and devotion in the figure of Natasha in his epic novel *Buria* (1948). Erenburg includes a variety of women in his epic novel in an attempt to represent the breadth of the entire Soviet war effort, the rear and the front.³³⁸

Natasha is the principal female character. The novel concludes with the joyful reunion of Natasha and her husband, Vasia. Their small family functions as a microcosm of the Soviet experience. Natasha clearly symbolizes the “Homeland-Mother” (*Rodina-Mat*). Her fate and the fate of the *Rodina-Mat* are intertwined. Erenburg writes: “И маленькая Наташа, у которой все было написано на лице, только-только узнавшая, зачем живут люди, стояла, не могла двинуться: судьба свалилась и на нее, судьба людей, России, мира” (“And little Natasha, on whose

³³⁸ He writes about nurses, snipers, and reconnaissance scouts.

face everything was written, just having learned the meaning of life, could not move: on to her shoulders fell the destiny of people, Russian, the world”).³³⁹ Natasha, a botany student, and her beloved, Vasia, an architect, recently married and living in Minsk, are separated when the Nazis attack the Soviet Union. After the invasion, Natasha feels a patriotic need to “do something,” and initially keeps watch on rooftops.³⁴⁰ Natasha’s initial reaction to the war sets Erenburg apart from most postwar male novelists: “Когда она вернулась на крышу, ее встретили радостной вестью: сбили четыре стервятника. Ночью ей не было страшно, а грохот зениток радовал—вот какая у нас сила! Наташа чувствовала себя солдатом: и явою.” (“When she returned to the roof, she was met with joyful news: they had destroyed four planes. She was not scared at night. Rather the thunder of missiles pleased her: ‘what power we have!’ Natasha felt like a soldier: ‘And I am at war”).³⁴¹ Not only does Natasha take pleasure in Soviet military might, something one would find sooner in the memoirs of a woman pilot, but she has a clearly developed self-image. She identifies herself by occupation and Komsomol affiliation, as well as by her relationship to a man: “Я? .. Студентка. Комсомолка. Я—жена командира” (“I? I’m a student. A Komosomol member. I am a commander’s wife”).³⁴² At this moment, in the midst of bombing, she sees herself as a soldier, helping defend the nation.

³³⁹Эренбург, *Буря*, 197.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 201.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 204.

Throughout the novel, Nazi brutality infuriates Natasha and makes her long for revenge:

Потом поднялась злоба: негодай, убивают безоружных жителей! ..И я ничего не могу сделать. Стою и смотрю, вот что самое ужасное ... Теперь горели дома возле заводов. Там Вася! ... Наташа больше не чувствовала страха, ничего не чувствовала, кроме ярости: стучало в висках, трудно было вздохнуть. Хоть бы сбили! ... И когда один из бомбардировщиков загорелся, Наташа в исступлении крикнула: “Сбили! Сбили!” Другие самолеты продолжали бомбить город.

(Then she got up angrily: “scoundrel, killing unarmed citizens! ... And I cannot do anything. I stand and I watch these terrible things ..Now the houses next to the factories were burning. Vasia is over there!” Natasha no longer felt fear, did not feel anything other than fury: it pounded in her temples and made it hard for her to take a breath. If only one could hit them! ... And when one of the bombers caught fire, Natasha cried in rage: “We got it! got it!” Other planes continued to bomb the city).³⁴³

Natasha is enraged at the destruction of the family of her friend Klava. When Klava’s pilot husband does not return from a mission it enrages Natasha: “Когда Наташа возвращалась от Клавы, у нее глаза были сухие и жесткие: ненавижу! Ох, как ненавижу! Хоть бы мины делать!” (“When Natasha returned from Klava's, her eyes were dry and hard: ‘I hate them! Oh, how I hate them! If only I could make mines!’”)³⁴⁴ Senseless violence develops hatred in a family-minded woman. After seeing corpses, Natasha demands to go to the front and is accepted as a nurse.

Although in the midst of bombing, female soldiers in male-authored works usually require comforting and assurance from their male peers, Natasha stands alone, fearless on the roof. Unlike most women in male-authored works, she rarely

³⁴³ Ibid., 202.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 328.

cries. Despite these points of divergence from the handmaiden model, Natasha remains an ideal female nurturer in a male-authored story. Like Tolstoy's Natasha in *War and Peace*, Erenburg's Natasha matures into an adult during the action of the novel and will help produce the next generation after the war. She simultaneously fulfills several roles, all of them traditionally feminine: kind nurse, patient, straw widow, dutiful daughter, and nurturing mother. She represents the family. The narrator introduces her at a wedding party and the reader sees her in a family situation at the end of the novel. She is always among relatives. She cares for her dying mother and worries about her mourning father. Even her botany studies indicate a dedication to living things. She nurtures her plants prior to the war, and nurses the wounded while caring for her family during the war.

After three weeks as a combat nurse on the front, Natasha discovers that she is pregnant. Pregnancy on the front is treated with relative frequency in the works of male authors. Often the pregnant soldier wants to remain at the front, almost always leading to tragic sacrifice and death. Natasha, in contrast, makes the "acceptable" choice, as the author wants the reader to do, realizing that motherhood and warfare are "incompatible." She returns to Moscow and nurses wounded soldiers until the end of the war. In the midst of the war, Natasha wonders at the promise of a new life: "Она с изумлением глядела на свой живот: как странно, что теперь можно родить ребенка! Ведь это что-то очень мирное, вечное ... А теперь и жизни нет, война все перевернула. Только природа не хочет ни с чем считаться. Скоро весна ... Это не от разума, не от сердца" ("With amazement, she looked at her

stomach: how strange that she could have a child now! Such a peaceful, eternal thing ... and now, there was no life, war had overturned everything. However, nature does not take anything into consideration. Soon it will be spring ... nothing to do with nature or the heart).”³⁴⁵ Like Tolstoy’s Natasha, Erenburg’s Natasha is a life-affirming character in the midst of the destruction of war.

Although separated, Natasha and Vasia are always in each other’s thoughts. Like all handmaidens, Natasha remains forever faithful to Vasia. She loves him living or dead: “Она знала, что Вася погиб, но любовь ее не гасла, а разгоралась, и порой она себя спрашивала: можно ли так любить того, кого нет?” (“She knew that Vasia had died, but her love did not die; rather it ignited again when she asked herself: could she love someone who no longer exists?”)³⁴⁶ She longs for him and needs him throughout the war. In works written by male authors, women and the thoughts of women often comfort men during battle. Vasia is no exception: Erenburg describes how the very idea of Natasha affects him during his partisan service:

Наташа неотступно была с Васей—не призрак, как в белорусских лесах,—живая, теплая: он видел, как она дует на горячий чай, забавно выставив вперед губы, как рисует тычинки растений, наклонив голову набок, как идет по улице Горького в маленьком синем берете, глаза смеются, а любопытный нос задран кверху. Когда же он ее обнимет? Терпеливо он ждал почти четыре года, а теперь пришел конец. Вася кричит “огонь,” и перед ним среди дыма и пламени, в серо-розовом рассвете (как будто к туману подмешали кровь) Наташа, милая, курносенькая...

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 325.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 516.

(Natasha never left Vasia's side—she was not an apparition as she had been in the Belorussian forests,--but alive, warm: he saw how she blew on hot tea, jokingly pursing her lips, how she drew plants, tilting her head to one side, walking along Gorky Street in a little blue beret, her eyes laughing and her curious nose lifted upwards. When would he hug her? He patiently waited almost four years, and now had come the end).³⁴⁷
(Vasia cried “fire,” and in front of him amidst the smoke and flames, in a rosy-gray dawn (as if blood had mixed with the haze), stood sweet, snub-nosed Natasha).³⁴⁸

Upon their reunion, he tells her: “Я писал тебе, когда ты был в окружении, разговаривал с тобой. Я это чувствовал. Вот поэтому мы друг друга узнали. Расстались—были детьми. А теперь у нас сын ... Я не тот, и ты другая ... А люблю больше прежнего” (“I wrote you, when you were encircled, I spoke with you. I felt it. Because of that, we recognize each other. When we parted, we were children. Now we have a son ... I'm not who I was and you are different ... but I love you more than ever”).³⁴⁹ and “И ты мне снилась, когда в лесу были, Наташа” (“And, Natasha, I dreamt of you when we were in the forest”).³⁵⁰ Their love never diminishes, and Erenburg's novel finishes in Moscow on May 9, 1945, with their happy reunion.

Although *The Storm* includes women participating in the war effort in various capacities, Natasha, the most traditional female character, remains central to Erenburg's novel. She survives the war, choosing a noncombat wartime occupation and putting her pregnancy before service at the front. The happy family portrait with which Erenburg leaves the reader mirrors the images in media at the time of writing.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 740.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 742.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 786.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 785.

In general, Soviet writers stopped writing about the Great Patriotic War during the 1950s, returning to the topic in the 1960s. Among the first in the Thaw period was Vasilii Grossman's epic novel *Life and Fate* (*Жизнь и судьба*, 1960). Although the novel revolves around a woman, Liudmila Nikolaevna Shaposhnikova, woman warriors are almost entirely absent from the novel. Grossman mentions five women soldiers in his narrative. He begins the novel with captured army doctor, Sofia Osipovna Levinton, an elderly woman, stripped of her military insignia, who dies in a gas chamber. He also describes two uniformed female soldiers, but only shows them playing cards and mentions their relationships to male commanding officers.³⁵¹ Katia Vengrova is the only female soldier who appears in more than one or two scenes in the narrative. He includes an episode in which a male soldier is wrongly prosecuted for rape of a female comrade due to an unfounded rumor about an armed, forced encounter with his beloved, Lida Voinovaia, a radio operator.

Grossman develops a subplot around one female soldier, Katia. Like Kazakevich's Katia, Grossman's Katia is a radio operator. She functions in the plot as the lover of Shaposhnikova's son Serezha. The male soldiers discuss her physical appearance at length, reducing her to a sum of body parts, in an attempt to disguise their attraction to her: "Конечно, при наших условиях и такая Катька сойдет, летом и качка прачка. Ноги длинные, как у журавля, сзади—пусто. Глаза большие, как у коровы. Разве это девка?" ("Of course, under these conditions, she'll do, since there's nothing else. She has long legs like a crane and doesn't have a

³⁵¹ Василий Гроссман, *Жизнь и судьба* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1990), 223.

behind. She has big eyes like a cow. What kind of girl is that?''³⁵² Serezha and Katia fall in love and sleep together. When Serezha is sent off to regimental headquarters, their commanding officer orders him to take Katia: "С тобой пойдет радистка, что ей тут делать без передатчика, доведешь ее до штаба полка" ("The radio operator will go with you as there is nothing for her to do without a transmitter. Take her to the regimental headquarters").³⁵³ Katia and Serezha are thrilled and Katia exits the narrative at this moment, when she leaves the front. She is content to follow her beloved and leave the front. She is beautiful, sweet, often scared, and needs Serezha. At a certain point, Katia falls in love with Serezha to the extent that she is prepared to sacrifice everything in order for him to live: "Она подумала, что все в жизни отдаст, лишь бы увидеть Шапошникова живым" ("She thought that she would give up everything in life just to see Shaposhnikov alive").³⁵⁴ In short, Katia acts as a true handmaiden. Her personal feelings and love for Serezha motivate her far more than the war. All of the women in Grossman's epic, with the exception of the elderly army doctor, function as handmaidens, as objects of male desire. The reader never sees any of these women engaging in official military business.

While criticized by Soviet critics for his negative portrayal of Soviet military leaders as cowardly, self-serving, and indifferent to subordinates, Vasil Bykov (1924-2003) remains a widely read author, due to his sensitive depictions of male

³⁵² Ibid., 188.

³⁵³ Ibid., 316.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 314.

soldiers, their psychological states, and brave, selfless actions. While he portrays Soviet male soldiers complexly and positively, his female characters fall into traditional secondary roles of sexualized handmaiden or maternal nurturer.

“The Third Missile” (1961) is the first of Bykov’s novellas to feature a female soldier. In the novella, an antitank crew of six men and one female medic, Liusia, perish destroying enemy tanks and infantry. Like many of Bykov’s novellas, the story is narrated years in the future by a male veteran, in this case, Lozniak, is the lone survivor of the decisive tank battle. This technique requires that we see women characters solely through the male gaze.

Liusia is one of the most active and positive female characters in Bykov’s oeuvre. Bykov contrasts her heroic deeds with those of a cowardly male soldier, who survives the war. The narrator attributes Liusia’s strength and her sense of justice not to her own character, but to her pedigree: her father was a Civil War hero, wounded eighteen times before his early death. Raised by strangers, she is a “good girl,” kind to everyone:

Вот она пошла с Лешкой, ей, видно, хорошо и весело с ним, иначе бы не смеялась она так озорно и счастливо, и этот ее смех непонятной болью вонзается в мою душу. Но я знаю: Люся очень хорошая девушка. Она так внимательна, деликатна и ласкова со всеми—и знакомыми и незнакомыми, молодыми и старыми

(She went with Leshka. You could see that she had a good with him, otherwise she would not have laughed so roguishly and happily. This laugh thrust incomprehensible pain into my soul. But I know: Liusia was a very good girl. She was so attentive, delicate and loving with all—acquaintances and strangers, young and old.)³⁵⁵

³⁵⁵ Быков, “Третья ракета,” 212.

Throughout the novel, the narrator describes Liusia's effect on himself and the other men. She enlivens them, bringing life into their quarters: "Легкой, бесшумной походкой, будто ночная птица, Люся вскоре появляется возле огневой, минует окоп. Ребята вдруг оживляются" ("Stepping lightly and as soundlessly as a night bird, Liusia would soon appear near the front line, crossing the trench. The guys would suddenly feel uplifted").³⁵⁶ Many of the men, including the narrator, fall in love with her. The narrator remembers her emotional warmth in the midst of a hopeless battle: "Мне очень плохо, очень тоскливо и очень трудно. Но все же где-то в глубине души теплится радость, и я знаю—это от Люси. Я чувствую ее тут, если и не вижу, слышу ее дыхание, каждое движение. Только все думаю, уберезем ли мы ее?" ("It is very hard for me, very sad and very difficult. But joy warms the depth of my soul, and I know: it's from Liusia. I feel her here, even if I don't see her. I hear her breathing, her every movement. Only God knows if we can protect her").³⁵⁷ His affection for her leads prompts the same reaction many male soldiers have toward female soldiers, a desire to defend and protect these women: "Из самых потайных глубин моей души поднимается волна ласкового чувства к ней. Что-то теплое, даже не дружеское, а братское вливается в мое сердце, я очень хочу прикрыть ее, защитить, не дать в обиду" ("A wave of love for her rose from the very depth of my soul. Something warm, beyond friendly, but brotherly flows into my heart. I so wanted to protect her, to defend her, to not let her

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 210.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 261.

be injured”).³⁵⁸ As the narrator’s situation becomes more desperate, his feelings for Liusia intensify: “Милая, хорошая девчушка!—хочется сказать мне.—Я люблю тебя! Люблю! Навсегда! Навеки ... Пусть мы погибнем, пусть пропаду я, все равно я буду любить тебя до последнего мгновения. Как же мне без тебя?” (“‘My dear, kind girl!’ I want to say. ‘I love you! I love you! Forever and ever ... If we are going to die, if I fall, then I will still love you to my last moment. How can I be without you?’”)³⁵⁹ For Lozniak, Liusia represents life, tenderness, joy, the antithesis of combat. He emotionally clings to her during the most difficult moments of war.

Lozniak is impressed by Liusia’s beauty from his first meeting with her. As a typical handmaiden, she is physically attractive, small, and rather childlike, inviting protection:

Синеглазка же была простая, удивительно общительная и ко всему еще очень красивая девушка. Невысокая, подвижная, с виду совсем еще девчонка лет шестнадцати, она вела себя так, будто не знала, какая на самом деле хорошая. У нас она пользовалась всеобщим уважением: и у бойцов, и у командиров, молодых и постарше. Мы чуть ли не наперебой старались сделать ей что-либо приятное, как-нибудь облегчить ее фронтовую жизнь.

(She was a simple, blue-eyed, surprisingly social, and an all-together beautiful young woman. Short, energetic, with the appearance of a sixteen year old girl, she carried herself as if she did not know that she was absolutely lovely. We all so respected her: the soldiers, commanders, the young and the older ones. As if in rivalry, we tried to make her life on the front a little better, a little more pleasant).³⁶⁰

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 270.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 270.

³⁶⁰ Быков, 192.

He also remembers her serious expression. Although comforting, Liusia's presence is somewhat divisive. She unintentionally makes the narrator hate his comrade Leshka, when Leshka appears to have more success talking to Liusia.

In "The Third Missile," one finds one of the rare instances in which a handmaiden uses a weapon, the only such instance in Bykov's oeuvre. We do not see her shooting, but the narrator picks up a weapon, recently used by Liusia: "Я сползаю с площадки в укрытие и там выпрямляюсь. Люся сидит над Лукьяновым, сбоку лежит ее автомат. Я берусь за кожух—горячий. Нет, это не от солнца—это она стреляла, а мы в грохоте и громе даже не заметили того. Я вынимаю диск, патроны в нем еще есть, но немного—диск легкий" ("I crawl from the landing to the shelter and stand up straight there. Liusia sits above Luk'ianov, with her tommy gun lying next to her. I take it by the jacket—it's hot. No, not from the sun, but because she had been shooting, but in the thunder of the battle, we had not noticed. I take the cartridge drum. There are still bullets in it, but only a few—the drum was light").³⁶¹ She also helps the narrator fire at the enemy when they are surrounded and outnumbered. She fights physically only because she is one of two soldiers left to aid Lozniak, soon returning to her nursing duties.

Regardless of her active fighting, the narrator makes it clear that only necessity led Liusia to handle a weapon. She is a nurturer by nature and continues to tend to the wounded even during battle: "Люся сидит, как сидела, склонившись над Лукьяновым, опершись на руку" ("Liusia was sitting, like she sat leaning

³⁶¹ Ibid., 261.

above Luk'ianov, supporting herself with her hand").³⁶² Although Liusia is primarily an object of male desire, sexually attractive to her comrades, she also fulfills the role of a mother to the dying men, treating them as a mother would treat children: "Молчите. Нельзя разговаривать—хуже будет,—будто ребенку, разъясняет Люся" ("Be quiet. You can't talk or you'll be worse," explains to him, as if he were a child").³⁶³ Her nurturing actions show the reader that she would be a loving mother.

Liusia dies in battle taking care of a wounded soldier: she crawls under fire to a dead German to retrieve a canteen of water, since her dying comrade Luk'ianov had been begging for water. On the way back to their trench, she is shot.

Люся уже близко, она подползает к первым глыбам окопа. Встретив наши испуганные взгляды, она ободряюще улыбается. Эта ее улыбка, кажется, все переворачивает во мне. Я хочу закричать от напряжения и страха за нее. Но Люся уже поднимается на уцелевший в этом месте бруствер. Кривенок, несмотря на опасность, встает во весь рост и тянет навстречу ей руки. Она протягивает к нему свои, приподнимается на коленях и...падает.³⁶⁴

Сквозь слезы я бросаю взгляд на Люсю—она молча и с бессильной покорностью ложится на бруствер.

(Liusia is already closer. She is crawling to the first earth mounds of the trench. Meeting our frightened glances, she smiles encouragingly. It is her smile, it seems, that turns everything over in me. I want to cry from tension and fear for her. But Liusia is already crawling onto the sole surviving breastwork. Krivenok, not considering danger, stands up at full height and reaches out for her. She extends her hands toward him, gets up on her knees...and falls.

Through tears, I cast a glance at Liusia. She is silent and with powerless obedience lies down on the breastwork).³⁶⁵

³⁶² Ibid., 263

³⁶³ Ibid., 262.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 280.

³⁶⁵ Быков, "Мертвым не больно," 281.

The narrator is both traumatized by the death of a woman he loves and struck by Liusia's bravery, especially in comparison to another soldier's cowardly, self-preserving actions.

In Bykov's 1964 novella "The Dead Feel No Pain" (*Мертвым не больно*), one finds a fine example of a handmaiden behaving like a mother. Not beautiful, Katia, a nurse, cannot function as an object of desire for the male soldiers, so the narrator focuses on her maternal, nurturing qualities. As previously discussed, she cooks for the soldiers and is invigorated by kitchen work. She comforts the wounded with her presence, treats her charges like children, scolding and commanding them, constantly binding their wounds. Katia calls the wounded narrator "my dear little one" (*milen'kii*), as she tells him to bear his pain.³⁶⁶ She gives life to the soldiers by leading them to safety through a minefield through her chain of steps to salvation. She leads the injured to safety, while bleeding to death after stepping on a mine.

In "The Pack of Wolves" (*Волчья стая*, 1975), the reader sees a female soldier Klava through the eyes of Levchuk, the narrator, as he sits in a courtyard awaiting a former comrade-in-arms thirty years after the war and remembers an unsuccessful rescue mission into a forest. Although she is officially a radio operator, she functions in the narrative primarily as the previous object of the narrator's affections: "Да и эта Клава...Было время, когда Левчук посчитал бы за счастье проехать с ней лишней километр по лесу, но не теперь. Теперь Клава его не

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 304, 305.

интересовала.” (“Yes and it was Klava...there had been a time when Levchuk had considered it happiness to walk an extra kilometer with her in the forest, but not now. Now, Klava did not interest him”).³⁶⁷ Levchuk is the leader of their group. Klava is always secondary to him, both in terms of their actions and her place within the narrative.

At the time of their last mission together, Levchuk is unsure about his feelings for Klava. He finds her beautiful, but her possible relations with other men diminish his feelings and lead the reader to question Klava’s morality.

Левчук сам точно не знал, любил ли он Клаву, может, она просто немного нравилась ему, но он ничем не показывал этого, потому что не хотел переходить дорогу Платонову. Еще в первый день, когда он привез ее из Кировской, с первого взгляда между их новой радисткой и их начальником штаба он понял, что так у них не обойдется: очень уж они были подходящими друг для друга.

(Levchuk himself did not know if he loved Klava. Maybe he just liked her a bit, but he did not show it at all because he did not want to cross into Platonov’s territory. Even on the first day, when he led her from Kirovskaiia, from the first glance between their new radio operator and the commander of the headquarters, he understood that it would end up simply like that: they matched each other perfectly.)³⁶⁸

Levchuk cannot help but be enchanted by Klava as her physical appearance impresses all she meets. Regardless of the hardships of war, Klava always looks beautiful, wears clothing that fits her and shows off her small, feminine frame.

Зато радисточка очаровала всех с первого взгляда, такая она была ладненькая в своем новеньком белом полушубочке и маленьких валеночках, мило поскрипывавших на утреннем морозце; уши ее цигейковой шапки были кокетливо подвязаны на затылке, на лбу рассыпалась светлая челочка, а на маленьких руках аккуратно сидели

³⁶⁷ Быков, “Волчья стая,” *Собрание сочинений*, Vol. 3, 20.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

маленькие меховые рукавички с белым шнурком, закинутым за воротник полушубка.

(But then, from first sight, the radio operator enchanted all. She was so graceful in her new, white jacket and her tiny, little felt boots, sweetly scraping the morning frost; she went about in a lamb's wool hat, which was coquettishly fastened at the back of her head. Light-colored bangs covered her forehead, but on her little hands, she wore little, fur gloves and a lace collar).³⁶⁹

When Klava is not crying from shame due to her substandard military performance or frustration from physical demands, she laughs nonstop and loves everything. This laughing, combined with her rosy cheeks, gives the narrator a childish impression of her. He and the other men try to persuade her to leave their company, to return home to her mother, in order to protect her and save her life. Clearly, they know best, but her stubborn, childlike refusal to leave results in her death: “—Не пойду я. Не пойду никуда ...” (“I’m not going. I’m not going anywhere”).³⁷⁰ The narrator reminisces: “Клаву лучше бы в какую деревню. К бабе. К какой-нибудь опытной бабе” (“It would have been better for Klava to have gone to some village. To her grandmother, to some experienced old lady”).³⁷¹

Bykov believes Klava, and by extension all women, should stay away from combat. Her presence on the front only hinders the male soldiers in their work. As previously noted in typology early in the novella, she sleeps through her nightshift and then cries in shame, but her incompetence interferes with military business when she cannot keep up with her male comrades. They must wait for her while she

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 33.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 18.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 19.

rests.³⁷² They slow down so she can keep up: “Они не спеша, чтобы не оставить сзади радистку, сошли с соснового пригорка, обошли овраг, за которым вскоре набрали на лесную дорожку” (“Not hurrying so that they not leave the radio operator behind, they descended from the pine knoll, skirted the ravine, beyond which they soon came upon to the forest path”).³⁷³ Klava should be a mother, rather than a soldier. Bykov shows her maternal potential when Klava comforts a child by hugging him.³⁷⁴ This scene precedes her death in combat, showing the tragedy of a situation in which women are killed before realizing what Bykov believes is their true potential as mothers. Klava contributes nothing to the war effort in this novella, and her presence serves only to show Bykov’s view that women are meant to raise families.

Bykov continues to explore the incompatibility of maternity and warfare in his story “His Battalion” (Его Батальон, 1976). In this novella, paternal, protective commanding officers try to send a pregnant medic, Vera Veretennikova, to the rear before the start of a serious battle. Veretennikova’s reluctance to transfer, regardless of policies and orders, results in her death, and by extension, the death of her unborn child.

Vera’s situation leads to various discussions which reveal the attitudes of male soldiers toward women soldiers. Upon the demise of Vera’s lover, an officer, Markin, decides to replace the deceased with Vera, out of desperation:

³⁷² Ibid., 41-42.

³⁷³ Ibid., 51.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 71.

Знаю. Седьмой пока покомандует Вера.
--Нашли командира!
--А что? Девка бедовая...
--Бедовая, да беременная. Вы подумали о том?
Ну что ж, что беременная. Никто ее тут не держал. Сама осталась. Так

что.

("I know. Vera will command the seventh."
"You found a commander!"
"So what? She's a sharp girl..."
"Sharp, yes, and pregnant. Did you think of that?"
"So what if she's pregnant? No one kept her here. She decided herself to
stay.
That's how it is").³⁷⁵

The men are obviously uncomfortable with the idea of a pregnant woman commanding a company, but simply have no other options. Markin's interlocutor, Voloshin, angrily insists that her place was behind the front and that nothing good would come from Vera being in combat: "И все-таки было досадно, главным образом от сознания того, что Вере в батальоне не место. Ни до, ни тем более во время этой не заладившейся с самого начала атаки, которая, кроме еще одной, совершенно нелепой смерти, ничего хорошего им не сулит" ("It was altogether annoying, but most importantly, there was no place for Vera in the battalion. No place before nor during this unsuccessful attack that promises nothing but another incidental death. All the more at this time, at the beginning of an attack, which assured her of an absolutely ridiculous death and promised nothing good").³⁷⁶ This decision to assign the 7th company to Vera supports the deep-seated assumption

³⁷⁵ Быков, "Его батальон," *Собрание сочинений*, Vol. 2, 271.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 272.

that Russian women may be able to fight, but for everyone's own good, women should do so only in the most desperate situations.

Rather than feminizing women soldiers and focusing on their nurturing or sexually desirable characteristics, some male authors verbally attack the soldiers, portraying them as incompetent. They transform armed women into negative characters, dysfunctional or “unnatural” as women. In the 1970s, Bykov focused more on women soldiers' incompetence in battle than he did in his earlier works. As noted above, Klava, the only female soldier in “The Pack of Wolves” is beautiful and nurturing, but is incapable of performing adequately in combat. Vera is so incompetent, that she dies not from a bullet or a mine, but because she got caught up in barbed wire during combat: “—Ну,—тяжело отсапываясь, сказал боец.—Там, на спирали, лежала. Зацепилась—насилу выпутали.” (“Well,’ sighing heavily, said the fighter, ‘there she was lying on the barbed wire. She got caught: it was hard to extricate her’”).³⁷⁷ His portrayal of the incompetent woman combatant reached an apex in his 1977 novella “To Go and Not Return” (“Пойти и не вернуться,” films 1992 and 2007). The novella begins with the partisan Zos'ka Nareiko's trek through the woods. From the first page, Zos'ka appears incompetent and unsuitable for partisan duties. She dresses inappropriately for the winter weather in a skirt, falls into a river, and gets lost. She is rescued by the partisan, Anton, who follows her to ensure her safety. Partisan leaders do not trust Zos'ka with a weapon: “Оружия у нее не было никакого, хотя оружие перед выходом можно было попросить у

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 299.

ребят, но, когда она намекнула на то Дозорцеву, тот запретил категорически— в ее деле лучше обойтись без оружия. Компаса ей тоже не дали” (“She did not have any kind of weapon, even though she could have asked one of the guys for a weapon before leaving. But when she hinted about it to Dozortsev, he forbade it categorically—it was better in her work without a weapon. Nor did they give her a compass”).³⁷⁸ Anton views her alternately as both a child “Экая ты малышка!— переходя на шепот, сказал он с заметными нотками нежности” (“‘What a child you are!’ switching into a whisper, he said with noticeable tenderness”)³⁷⁹ and a sexual object, culminating in a sexual encounter that approaches rape.

Interestingly, Anton, although resourceful, proves to be less than an ideal partisan himself. Shortly after their sexual encounter, Zos’ka and Anton have an argument after his decision to desert. Both are captured by Red Army soldiers and accuse each other of being deserters. Zos’ka saves Anton’s life by convincing their captors that their accusations are the result of a lovers’ quarrel, but she stupidly threatens to tell the village inhabitants everything that happened between them, so he shoots her. She crawls back to the village alone, proving her resolve and toughness, regardless of her clumsiness as a partisan.

We find an interesting progression in Bykov’s oeuvre. Women soldiers occupy prominent roles in five of his war stories. There is a definite trend from positive portrayals of brave women soldiers in the 1960s to more negative portrayals as he continues to write into the 1970s. Liusia, the first woman warrior to appear in

³⁷⁸ Быков, “Пойти и не вернуться,” Vol. 3, 209.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 220.

Bykov's work even participates in battle. Although Katia is not physically attractive, she is a nurturer. Both women sacrifice their lives in order to save the lives of male soldiers. In contrast, Klava, although a nurturer, is represented as a burden for the men who must wait for her to catch up with them. Veretennikova, although brave, is argumentative, quarrelsome, and disrespectful of authority. Her refusal to transfer to the rear results in her senseless death. Finally, the partisan Zos'ka is the most negative, cowardly, and incompetent of all of Bykov's women characters.

Throughout his writing career, it seems as though Bykov rethought the role of women in war and relegated them from traditionally feminine complements to male soldiers to merely negative roles. While the first women help and nurture men, the second group hinders male soldiers and, thus, the military effort. Bykov seems to have concluded that the presence of women will only cause distraction, therefore they have no place in the war effort whatsoever.

In his novella about a women's antiaircraft battery "Stepan Bukov" ("Степан БУКОВ," 1969), Vadim Kozhevnikov (1909-84) disarms women in combat in various ways. His women characters are arrogant, argumentative haters of life on the battlefield. Much of the novella is told through a male gaze, from the point of view of a male veteran who interacted with the women antiaircraft gunners prior to the bombing of their battery. Bukov, the narrator, relates his memories to the younger generation, long after the war has concluded, in the years when the woman's role in the military and her right to serve has been denied.

From the introduction of the female fighters, Bukov makes clear a gender based dichotomy. Men fighters can be soldiers, but women in combat remain merely girls. “Командовала девчатами—я прямо скажу, беспощадно—с крашеными волосами, уже пожилая лейтенанка” (“The commander of these girls—commanded mercilessly, let me tell you,—was an aged lieutenant, with dyed hair”).³⁸⁰ He juxtaposes male and female soldiers: “Когда нас, солдат-мужчин, убивают, это еще куда ни шло. А когда девчат, женщин—тут сверхчеловеческие силы надо, чтобы перенести” (“When they kill us, men soldiers, well, it happens. But when they kill girls, women, then it takes superhuman strength to bear it”).³⁸¹ A man may be a soldier, but a girl is just capable of being a woman. Bukov uses feminine, diminutive suffixes at every opportunity, for example, *leitenanka* and *politrushka*.

A woman warrior is treated as an “unnatural” construction: “сейчас главное—любовь к Родине, а не к кому-нибудь персонально. Советская женщина на фронте—это прежде всего боец, а не женщина” (“Right now, love for the Motherland is most important. There’s no time for personal love. The Soviet woman on the front is first and foremost a fighter, and not a woman”) proclaims the battery’s political instructor immediately after crushing a flower below her boot.³⁸² This woman not only takes lives when she shoots down planes, but shows hateful disdain for the living when she destroys a symbol of beauty and life. From women’s

³⁸⁰ Вадим Кожевников, “Степан Буков,” *Особое подразделение* (Москва: Издательство «Известия»: 1975), 23.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 23.

memoirs, we know that women serving in the military did not feel the need to reject femininity. They stress their love for flowers.

The narrators, both Bukov and the omniscient narrators pay greater attention to women's physical appearances than they do to men's. Bukov describes the *leitenanka*, the female lieutenant commander of the women's battery in negative terms. He would likely describe a male commander as "experienced," and does not describe the hair of any of the male characters. By focusing on the lieutenant's dyed hair, he emphasizes her age and artificiality.

Kozhevnikov casts his female characters using the usual stereotypes, nurturing women who are most concerned with tending to their appearances, finding husbands and having babies. The women soldiers are less concerned with weaponry or military strategy. Even though the political instructor hypocritically chastises Bukov for bringing the women flowers and the women for interest in male soldiers, she paints her lips specifically to attract the attention of tank operators: "Но вы что думаете, может, она всегда такая принципиальная? Когда танкисты от нас технику отремонтированную забирать прибывали, так их в женской батарее всегда с почетом встречали. И эта политрукша губы себе специально для них мазала" ("But do you think that she was always that principled? When the tankists would return to us to retrieve the repaired tanks, the women's battery would be there to meet them with honor. And this political instructor would paint her lips especially for them.")³⁸³ After the bombing, the political instructor, Zoia, cries, holding her

³⁸³ Ibid., 23.

wounded arm, “Сидит с закрытыми глазами и качается. Потом глаза открыла, такие, знаете, мутные, смотрит как бы сквозь меня, говорит сонным таким, усталым голосом: ‘Я же ребенка теперь не смогу искупать одной рукой’ (“She is sitting with closed eyes and rocking. Then she opened her eyes, such, you know, blurry ones, as if looking right through me. She speaks in a tired voice: ‘I cannot bathe a child with one hand’”).³⁸⁴ Women warriors also describe obvious distress upon wounding, but they were most often concerned with returning to the front and their comrades-in-arms as fast as possible. Zoia’s friend Liuda understands why, upon demobilization, Zoia takes up with another veteran as fast as possible: “А Зоя сама хотела заботиться о ком-нибудь, как всегда заботилась о девчатах-зенитчицах, и от этого все считали Каронину старшей не только по званию. Но про любовь Карониина говорила с девчатами, как о дисциплинарном проступке, так, словно любовь—нарушение воинского устава” (“And Zoia herself wanted to worry about someone, as she had always worried about the women antiaircraft gunners, and because of this, all thought Karonina was older, but not only because of rank. Karonina talked about love with the girls, as if it were a disciplinary offence, as if love were a destruction of military regulations”).³⁸⁵

Throughout the novella, Kozhevnikov drives home the message that women do not belong in combat. When bombed, the women move around in a gaze, shell-

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 25.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 135.

shocked. The horrors of war and the sight of dead comrades overwhelm them.³⁸⁶

The two significant women soldiers are both maimed in combat.

Interestingly, Kozhevnikov believes that there is no solidarity among women. Women gunners, at least in “Stepan Bukov,” look down upon radio operators. At one point, the gunner Liuda chastises another veteran, whom she accuses of flirting: ““Привыкли там со связистками, а я вам не связистка. В артиллерик служила”” (“You got used to getting it on with radio operators, but I’m not a radio operator. I served in the artillery”).³⁸⁷ Radio operators, in Liuda’s estimation, are more sexually free.

Bukov describes the ideal woman soldier:

И должен я вам, ребята, объявить: хуже животного тот наш брат мужского происхождения, который в женщине не видел и не видит наивысшего человеческого. Они ведь на многое большее нас способны, они ведь какие, эти наши зенитчицы. К примеру, отстрелялись, отработались во время налета, оттерлись от крови, обвязались от ран, а потом спрашивают Гуляева:

“Может, вашим солдатам постирать нужно? Так пожалуйста. У нас всего одно орудие осталось, есть возможность стирку устроить на всех.”

(“And I have to announce to you guys: our brother of the male persuasion is worse than an animal if he does not see in a woman the highest human characteristics, but a woman has such high human characteristics. They are capable of much more than we are. Do you know how they were, our female anti-aircraft gunners. For example, they shot and worked their way out during the raid, rubbing off blood, dressing their wounds. Then they would ask Guliaev: “Perhaps your soldiers need to do some laundry? We have only one weapon left, so we can do everyone’s laundry”).³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 24-25.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 130.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 25.

At the first opportunity, the women in the antiaircraft battery eagerly drop their weapons to engage in housekeeping tasks. Bukov values these soldiers for their traditional abilities and their desire to do homemaking tasks for male soldiers, rather than their combat skills.

In contrast, Bukov appreciates women because of their maternal natures.

While he discounts armed women, he considers mothers to be heroic:

всю жизнь Буков сохранял застенчивое, благоговейное чувство к женщине.

Шагая по освобожденным пространствам разоренной фашистами земли, он видел безмолвный героизм женщин, ютящихся с детьми у печных остовов в шалашах из всякого хлама.

Буков был убежден, что, воюя “на всем готовом”, солдаты невосполнимо задолжались перед нашими матерями и женами. Он не терпел развязных разговоров о женщинах. Говорил Коле Чуркину:

--Насчет равенства мужчин с женщиной ... Ну, это еще как сказать...Поначалу следовало историческую подлость подправить. А с ходом нашего времени надо женщинам особые привилегии выдать, как им и положено, за то, что они даруют жизнь новым людям. Их, значит, в себе вынашивают.³⁸⁹

(All his life Bukov had stood in awe of women and it was not simply because there had been a lot of men but few women at the front.

As he marched across the liberated countryside which had been devastated by the fascists, he saw silent heroic women huddling with their children by makeshift stoves in ramshackle huts.

Bukov was convinced that Soviet soldiers were deeply indebted to their mothers and wives for being provided with everything at the front. He could not stand small talk about women and used to say to Nikolai Churkin, “As for the equality of the sexes ... Well, first we’ve got to put right historic injustices. As time goes by we must give women the special privileges they deserve for giving life to new people. It’s they who bear them, after all. And the better we make life for them, the better people will become in the future.)³⁹⁰

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 217

³⁹⁰ Vadim Kozhevnikov, *The Special Subunit* (Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 1983), 477.

Although one cannot equate Bukov with Kozhevnikov, Kozhevnikov does portray Bukov as a positive character. Like the hero of Sholokhov's "One Man's Destiny," Bukov is a Soviet everyman, representing the average Soviet veteran.

Bukov's disgust with women warriors most likely has less to do with women's participation in combat than with the political instructor's reaction to him when he brings a flower to the women's battery. She commits a mortal sin: she mocks him and embarrasses him in front of others. He never forgets this transgression and when asked to contribute a bronze flower to a memorial of the women casualties, he refuses, remembering his smashed gift. This scene gives evidence of the primary reason why the makers of government policies and why male authors were so ready to eliminate women from combat spheres: they intruded on the man's world and threatened his right to prove himself before others. When women are introduced to the military, they must assert their status as warriors. When men approach these women and are rebuffed, they become confused. The rebuffed man feels humiliated and objects to the woman's right to intrude in his world.

Although the (mostly male) literary establishment actively buttressed the nation's policies of demobilization and reclassified women soldiers as marriage-minded helpmates, some of the women soldiers disagreed with the military and literary disarming of women. One veteran, Iuliia Drunina (1924-91), achieved fame and literary acclaim.

Throughout her literary career, veteran Drunina confronted male authors' tendency to disarm women soldiers and to discredit their military contribution to the war.³⁹¹ First published in *Znania* in 1940, she wrote dozens of volumes of poetry, mostly on war themes, and became the only female veteran to achieve literary acclaim. From 1941 to 1945, she served as a medic, but saw herself and her sisters-in-arms as warriors. She describes how she became a warrior in "In the Recruiting Office" ("В райкоме," 1953):

Простая девчонка из средней школы,
Одна из обычных девчат.
До срока окончились школьные годы,
Ты слышишь? –орудья гремят.
Я стала бойцом комсомольского взвода,
Одним из обычных солдат.
Билет пронесла я сквозь ночь отступления,
По ужасу минных полей.

(A simple girl from high school,
One of the ordinary girls.
She finished her school years ahead of time,
Do you hear? Weapons are thundering.
I became a soldier of a Komsomol brigade,
One ordinary fighter.
I carried my [Komosomol] card through the night of the retreat,
Across the horror of mined fields.)³⁹²

One can find the image of the child who becomes a warrior to defend her country throughout Drunina's poetry, as she associated her youth and abrupt immersion into the adult world with her military service. Drunina's choice of the term "*boets*"

³⁹¹ Iuliia Drunina's official Web site. <http://juliadrulina.narod.ru/biography.html#biography1> (accessed 1 March 2008).

³⁹² Юлия Друнина, *Страна юность: Избранные стихотворения* (Москва: Издательство "Художественная литература," 1967), 83-84.

shows that she saw herself as a fighter, rather than a nurse. She emphasizes the danger of war by including images of booming cannons and mine fields.

Drunina directly addresses male authors' clichés about female soldiers. The epigraph to this chapter shows her amusement with her culture's inaccurate rewriting of her military experience:

“В шинелке, перешитой по фигуре.
Она прошла сквозь фронтовые бури...”
Читаю и становится смешно:
В те дни фигурками блистали лишь в кино,
Да в повестях, простите, тыловых,
Да кое-где в штабах прифронтовых.
Но по-другому было на войне—
Не в третьем эшелоне, а в огне.

(“In a coat, fitted to her figure,
She crossed the storms on the front...”
It is funny as I read
In those days, figures shone only at the movies,
And in love stories, excuse me, written on the homefront.
And occasionally in headquarters near the front.
But it was different in the war
Not in the third echelon, but under fire.)³⁹³

In this poem, she describes the difficulties of service on the front, shows that there was no time nor place to alter soldiers' overcoats so they closely fit women's bodies.

As in much of her work, she deromanticizes the military experience: “Сирой окоп—солдатская постель/ А одеяло—вогпяная шинель.” (“Wet trench is a soldier's bed/ And for a blanket, a damp overcoat.”)³⁹⁴ In the third stanza, she describes her job, going onto the battlefield with a medic's bag to aid comrades

³⁹³ Юлия Друнина, “В шинелке, перешитой по фигуре,” in *Светлокосый солдат: Избранное* (Калининградское книжкое издательство, 1973), 212.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

wounded in battle. She concludes this poem by reiterating the idea that altered, closely fitted soldier's greatcoats existed only in the movies: "Куда ее перешивать? Смешно!/ Передний край, простите, не кино..." ("Why would I alter it? That's funny!/ The front line, excuse me, is not a movie").³⁹⁵

Like male authors, Drunina describes female comrades, but a women's gaze differs greatly from a man's gaze. Drunina's female comrades are brave soldiers, rather than objects of male desire. Like the women pilot memoirists, Drunina memorializes fallen comrades, focusing on their bravery and their sacrifice, rather than their physical appearances. In "Homeward" ("Домой," 1945), a cavalry squadron drinks "За связистку, смелую девчонку" ("For the radio operator, a brave girl").³⁹⁶ In "Zinka" ("Зинка," 1944), she memorializes Hero of the Soviet Union Zina Samsonova, describes their service together, Zina's subsequent fatal wounding, and covering her dead body. Throughout the poem, Drunina juxtaposes Zina's military uniform to her blonde braids. "Снова рядом в сырой шинели/ Светлокосый солдат идет."³⁹⁷ Drunina describes the death of a woman soldier as she rushes toward bayonets. "Again, nearby, in a gray overcoat/ A blonde-braided soldier goes by."

Целовались, плакали и пели.
Шли в штыки. И прямо на бегу
Девушка в заштопанной шинели
Разбросала руки на снегу.

Мама! Мама! Я дошла до цели...

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 213

³⁹⁶ Друнина, "Домой," in *Страна юность*, 42.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

Но в степи, на волжском берегу,
Девушка в заштопанной шинели
Разбросала руки на снегу.³⁹⁸

We kissed each other, cried and sang.
We confronted the bayonets. And right at the beginning
A girl in a darned overcoat
Splayed her arms on the snow.

Мама! Мама! I made it to the goal...
But on the steppe, on the wolf's shore
A girl in a darned overcoat
Threw her hands on the snow.

Drunina resurrects these fallen comrades, describing them as heroes, situating them in a combat situation. They are never the mere accessories, but people in their own right.

She addresses the male gaze and male mockery in her poem “Two Evenings” (“Два вечера,” 1952).

Мы стояли у Москвы-реки,
Теплый ветер платьем шелестел.
Почему-то вдруг из-под руки
На меня ты странно посмотрел—
Так порою на чужих глядят.
Посмотрел и улыбнулся мне:
--Ну, какой же из тебя солдат?
Как была ты, право, на войне?
Неужель спала ты на снегу,
Автомат пристроив в головах?
Понимаешь, просто не могу
Я тебя представить в сапогах!...
Я же вечер вспомнила другой:
Минометы били, падал снег.
И сказал мне тихо дорогой,
На тебя похожий человек:
--Вот лежим и мерзнем на снегу,
Будто и не жили в городах...

³⁹⁸ Друнина, “Целовались, плакали и пели,” in *Светлокосый солдат*, 21-22.

Я тебя представить не могу
В туфлях на высоких каблуках!...

(We stood by the Moscow River,
The warm wind rustled my dress.
For some reason suddenly, out from under your hand
You looked oddly at me
How one occasionally looks as a stranger.
You looked and smiled at me:
'Now, what kind of a soldier would you make?
How were you, really, in the war?
You surely did not sleep on the snow
With your tommy gun by your head?
Understand, I simply cannot
I cannot imagine you in soldiers' boots!...')
And that evening, I imagined another:
There were mortars and the snow was falling.
And a loved one told me quietly,
He looked a bit like you:
"Here we lie freezing on the snow,
As if we had not lived in cities...
I cannot imagine you
In high-heeled shoes).³⁹⁹

She understands that some men cannot reconcile the image of a woman soldier with a woman in feminine clothing. The male gaze simplifies a woman and reduces her to her physical body. These men can only see her surface, not the person in the clothing. Like many Russians, the postwar suitor cannot imagine Drunina's narrator or women in military dress. She answers him with her memory of another man from another time, who could not imagine her in peace-time, high-heeled shoes. In her writing, Drunina shows the complexity of women soldiers who can be both soldiers and beautiful.

³⁹⁹ Друнина, *Светлокосый солдат*, 74.

Drunina does not treat men as sexual objects, as some male authors represent women. Drunina does not deny romance or female soldiers' need for male soldiers. However, in Drunina's poems, the poetic voice needs men differently than women need men in male-authored works:

Минуту счастья делим на двоих,
Пусть—артналет, пусть смерть от нас на волос.
Разрыв! А рядом—нежность глаз твоих
И ласковый срывающийся голос.
Минуту счастья делим на двоих...

(We divide a minute's happiness between the two of us,
Not paying attention to an artillery raid, or death an inch from us.
Explosion! And nearby—the tenderness of your eyes.
And your loving, breaking voice.
We divide a minute's happiness between the two of us).⁴⁰⁰

The poetic voice in Drunina's poems does not need a man to save her life, rather she wants a man for companionship. Supporting male comrades simply make their experiences more pleasant. In "Из окружения, в пургу, мы шли по Беларуси," Drunina shows a male soldier helping a female soldier in a completely different way than men help women in male writers' narratives:

Семнадцать суток шли мы так,
И не отстала ни на шаг
Я от ребят.
А если падала без сил, ты поднимал и говорил:
--Эх ты, солдат!—
Какой январь! Как ветер лих!
Как мал сухарь, что на двоих!
Мне очень трудно быть одной.

(Seventeen days we walked
And I did not stand behind by one step
From the guys.

⁴⁰⁰ Друнина, "Ждала тебя. И верила. И знала.," in *Страна юность*, 19.

And if I fell without strength, you raised me up and said
'What kind of soldier are you?'
What a January! What an evil wind!
How little is a piece of dry bread, and for two!
It's very hard for me to be alone).⁴⁰¹

Drunina does not need a man physically to save her life. Her comrade encourages her, lifts her up when she is exhausted, but he does not have to carry her. She can walk as well as the men can.

In her writing Drunina explores her complex feelings toward military life and demobilization. Although she describes terrible events and laments the loss of beloved comrades, she also remembers aspects of the war fondly. In "Oh childhood! As usual, how I wanted..." ("Ах детство! Мне, как водится, хотелось," 1958), the narrator looks back upon the war as an equalizer that afforded her equality with men, something she had longed for as a child:

Ах детство! Мне, как водится, хотелось
Во всем с мальчишками быть наравне.
Но папа с мамой не ценили смелость:
"Ведь ты же девочка!—твердили мне.—

Сломаешь голову, на крыше сидя,
Бери вязанье да садись за стол."
И я слезала с крыши, ненавидя
Свой женский, слабый, свой прекрасный пол.

Ах, детство! Попадало нам с тобою—
Упреки матери, молчание отца...
Но опалил нам лица ветер боя,
Нам ветер фронта опалил сердца.

"Ведь ты же девочка!"--твердили дома,
Когда сказала я в лихом году,
Что, отвечая на призыв райкома,

⁴⁰¹ Друнина, "Из окружения, в пургу, мы шли по Беларуси," in *Страна юность*, 52.

На фронт солдатом рядовым иду.

С семьей меня отчизна рассудила,--
Скажи мне, память, разве не вчера
Я в дымный край окопов уходила
С мальчишками из нашего двора?

В то горькое, в то памятное лето
Никто про слабость не твердил мою...
Спасибо, Родина, за счастье это—
Быть равной сыновьям твоим в бою!”

(Oh childhood! As usual, how I wanted
To be equal to the boys in everything.
But papa and mama did not value bravery:
“You are a girl, you know!—they repeated to me.

‘You will break your neck, sitting on the roof,
Take you knitting and sit at the table.’
And I crawled from the roof, hating
My feminine, weak, my beautiful sex.

Oh childhood! We were both reprimanded.
Reproaches from my mother and silence from my father...
But our faces were scorched with the wind of a battle
And the wind of the front scorched our hearts

But you are a girl, they repeated at home
When in that hard year, I said
That I was going to the front as an enlisted soldier,
answering the call from the recruiting office

My fatherland settled our dispute
Tell me, memory, was it only yesterday
I went off with the boys from our yard
To the smoky land of trenches?

In that bitter, memorable summer,
No one repeatedly talked about weakness to me.
Thank you, Motherland,—for the happiness
To be equal with your sons in battle.)⁴⁰²

⁴⁰² Друнина, “Ах детство! Мне, как водится, хотелось,” in *Страна юность*, 111-112.

Like women soldiers before her, the poet values military service for providing freedom from the boredom of traditional women's work. Despite the adventures, freedom, and equality the war provides, Drunina's portrayal of the war is not a romanticized one:

Только что пришла с передовой
Мокрая, замерзшая и злая,
А в землянке нету никого,
И, конечно, печка затухает.

Так устала—руки не поднять,
Не до дров,—согреюсь под шинелью.
Прилегла, но слышу, что опять
По окопам нашим бьют шрапнелью.

(I have just come from the front line
Wet, freezing and angry,
Nobody is in the mud-hut dug-out
And, of course, the stove had gone out.

I am so tired - I cannot lift my hands,
No energy for the firewood, I'll make myself warm under my overcoat.
I laid down, but I hear that
Shrapnel hits our trenches).⁴⁰³

This poem emphasizes her exhaustion and the difficulties of war. At the same time, she loves her youth on the front and wishes her man would understand her feelings:

Обжигает веселой плетью
Острый ветер степных дорог.
Я хочу, чтобы этот ветер
Мой любимый услышать мог.

Чтоб он понял, за что люблю я
Свою молодость фронтовую.

(Scorched by the cheerful lash

⁴⁰³ Друнина, "Солдатские будни," in *Страна юность*, 20

Of the sharp wind of the steppe roads.
I wish my beloved one
Could hear this wind.

So that he would understand what for
I love my youth on the front).⁴⁰⁴

These conflicting emotions about her military service result in mixed feelings upon demobilization. She hates to bid farewell to the close friends she has made during her time in the service: “Чуть пригубив толстый край стакана,/ Отвечает девушка на тост:/ --Что ж, за дружбу! Жалко расставаться” (“Having sipped from the rim of the thick glass/A girl answers on the toast:/ “Well, to friendship! It’s a pity to part”).⁴⁰⁵ She sees her military service as a success:

Нет, это не заслуга, а удача—
Быть девушке солдатом на войне.
Когда б сложилась жизнь моя иначе,
Как в День Победы стыдно было б мне...
....

Смотрю назад, в продымленные дали:
Нет, не заслугой в тот зловещий год,
А высшей честью школьницы считали
Возможность умереть за свой народ.

(No it is not service, but fortune
For a young woman, to be a soldier in the war.
If I had lived my life differently,
On Victory Day, I would be ashamed.

I look back, into the smoky distance:
No, in that ominous year, it was not just a service,
But what the schoolgirls considered the highest honor
The possibility to die for one’s country).⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁴ Друнина, “После госпиталя,” in *Страна юность*, 22.

⁴⁰⁵ Друнина, “Домой,” in *Страна юность*, 42.

⁴⁰⁶ Друнина, “Нет, это не заслуга, а удача,” in *Светлокосый солдат*, 215.

Although many authors portray war as something alien to women's nature, Drunina realizes that despite the difficulty and cruelty of war, she learned a lot about life and qualities traditionally identified as feminine:

Не знаю, где я нежности училась,--
Об этом не расспрашивай меня.
Растут в степи солдатские могилы,
Идет в шинели молодость моя.

...

А вечером над братскою могилкой
С опущенной стояла головой...
Не знаю, где я нежности училась,—
Быть может, на дороге фронтовой...

(I don't know where I have learned tenderness
Don't ask me about that
The soldiers' graves of the steppes are growing
My youth is wearing a military overcoat.

...

And in the evening over a fraternal grave
I stood with my head bowed...
I don't know where I have learned tenderness
Maybe, on the path of the front...)⁴⁰⁷

Surrounded by death, she learned compassion.

In "I Remember: The platoon arose to the attack ready to fire, the native soil trembled." ("Я помню: поднялся в атаку взвод, качнулась земля родная," 1960),

Drunina discusses how alive the war makes her feel:

Я помню: поднялся в атаку взвод, качнулась земля родная.
Я помню: кто-то кричал—"Вперед!"—может, и я,—не знаю.
Ворвались в немецкие блиндажи мы на сыром рассвете.
Казалось, стоит на свете жить ради мгновений этих.
...Я помню: в тиши тылового дня, где-то на формировке,
Впервые в жизни моей меня обнял лейтенант неловкий.
И руки мои не сказали "нет!"--как будто их кто опутал.

⁴⁰⁷ Друнина, "Не знаю, где я нежности училась," in *Страна юность*, 49.

И думалось: я родилась на свет ради такой минуты.

(I remember: the platoon arose to the attack ready to fire, the native soil trembled
I remember: someone yelled ‘Forward!’ Maybe it was I. I don’t know.
We rushed into the German dugouts in the damp dawn.
It seemed as though one lives in this world for moments like these.
...I understand: in silence of a day in the rear, somewhere during formation,
For the first time in my life, a clumsy lieutenant embraced me.
And my hands did not say “no!” as if someone had tied them.
And I thought: I was born in this world for moments like these).⁴⁰⁸

These lines are juxtaposed with descriptions of experiences in the postwar period that also make her celebrate life: the birth of her daughter and then publication of her first book. Male authors often portray the war as something as a great misfortune for any woman participant. Drunina answers this tendency by showing that her military experience was one of the defining moments of her life.

Unlike her male colleagues, Drunina portrays women soldiers as multidimensional characters with personal motivations for going to war. She uses aggressive words like “*boets*” that makes heroes of nurses as fighters. She writes of her personal motivation to take up arms: “Я пришла из школы в блиндажи сырые, /От Прекрасной Дамы в “мать” и “перемать,” /Потому что имя ближе, чем “Россия”, /Не могла сыскать.” (“I went from school into the dugout, / From the Beautiful Lady to “mother- f...er” and “f... your mother”/ Because I could not find a name more dear to me than Russia”).⁴⁰⁹ In several poems, she juxtaposes a woman’s personal feelings with the soldier’s experience: Словно в песне, мне приказ—на запад,/ А тебе—‘в другую сторону’./... ./ Я грущу сегодня очень женской,/

⁴⁰⁸ Друнина, “Я помню: поднялся в атаку взвод, качнулась земля родная,” *Страна юность*, 155

⁴⁰⁹ Друнина, “Я ушла из детства в грязную теплушку,” *Страна юность*, 15.

Очень несолдатскую тоской.” (“As if in a song, they ordered me to the west,/ And you ‘in the other direction’/.../ I feel sad in a very feminine,/ a very “un-soldiery” way”).⁴¹⁰ Through the portrayal of women as complex individuals with a sense of themselves, Drunina deconstructs the handmaiden type. Although Drunina, like male authors, writes about nurses and telephone operators, her women warriors are far more than flat characters fulfilling the role of romantic leads and complements to male characters.

Most male authors expressed the attitude, as early as 1943, that women are somehow worse in combat than their male counterparts. Their responses buttressed the state’s postwar policy of demobilizing women and pushing them back into traditional nurturing, nonaggressive roles. Furthermore, these writers participate in the nation-wide demobilization of women by disarming them symbolically, though systematically. Even when authors do not explicitly describe taking weapons from women, they disarm the women soldiers implicitly by neglecting to mention weaponry in general, choosing instead to focus on “women’s work” or romantic interests. We know that historically nurses and radio operators were issued rifles and pistols, but male authors usually choose to ignore that, focusing instead on their medical field bags (giving them the capacity to nurture) and transmitter radios (which connect men with the metaphorical hearth, their home bases). The second epigraph, taken from Bykov’s “To Go and Not Return” illustrates this tendency.

⁴¹⁰ Друнина "Контур леса выступает резче," in *Страна юность*, 17.

Unlike her male comrades, the partisan scout Zos'ka is not entrusted with a gun, not even a compass. Bykov even takes away her ability to guide and defend herself.

Male authors employ various tactics in their works to support the postwar state policy that women have no place in combat. In addition to showing women's incompetence and re-asserting female, nonviolent nature, male writers often include characters who explicitly express the opinion that a woman has no place in war. In Kazakevich's novella "Heart of a Friend" ("Сердце друга"), an officer, Remizov, tells Anichka: "У меня все время душа была неспокойна за вас. Нехорошо все-таки. Вы не сердитесь на меня, но девушкам здесь не место, честное слово." ("I was so nervous about you the whole time. It's altogether not good. Don't get mad at me, but girls have no place here, honestly.")⁴¹¹

These works overwhelmingly supported the opinion that women were not welcome at the front, generally because men believed that a woman's physical ability and emotional personality hindered her performance in combat. These same literary works also show that the men themselves were the least equipped to deal with a woman's presence in his unit. Vera's unplanned pregnancy and her commanding officers' subsequent confusion in Bykov's "His Battalion" show that, although almost a million women soldiers served on the front following the massive militarization campaign, male soldiers well into the war remained confused by and uncomfortable with women's presence at the front.

Возвратясь в землянку, комбат, нарочно ни к кому не обращаясь, бросил
вполголоса "не догнал," и генерал с едва скрываемым презрением

⁴¹¹ Казакевич, "Сердце друга," 215.

посмотрел на него. Комбат ждал гневных упреков, выговора и, наверно, выслушал бы их молча, сознавал, что был виноват. Но там, где дело касалось военных девчат, он чувствовал себя беспомощным. Вся его воспитанная за годы воинской службы логика поведения заходила в тупик, когда он сталкивался с самым банальным девичьим капризом. Впрочем, как и многие на войне, он считал, что армия и женщина несовместимы, что это недоразумение—женщина на войне.

(Returning to the dugout, battalion commander, speaking to no one in particular, half-audibly hurled “I didn’t catch up,” and the general looked at him with barely hidden contempt. The commander awaited the angry reproaches, scolding, and apparently, would listen to them quietly, realizing that he was guilty. But when it would come to matters concerning military girls, he felt helpless. The logic of behavior, instilled in him from all his years of education from military service met an impasse, when he came up against the most banal girlish whim. However, like many in the war, he felt that the women were incompatible with the army, that the woman in the war was a misunderstanding.)⁴¹²

Some works by male authors support the assumption that women should not be at war because they distract male soldiers. The mere presence of women in combat situations destroys the camaraderie among male soldiers that was so valued in the Red Army.

Women’s participation in the war, in the view of many male writers, leads to unplanned pregnancies and even rape when men do not control their lust for female soldiers. In “To Go and not Return,” the female protagonist has had to harden herself in response to her male comrades’ advances:

В отряде приходилось быть непреклонной, жесткой и даже грубой— только это помогало ей защитить себя от мужских притязаний. Что и говорить, очень нелегко девушке среди стольких мужчин, где каждый стремится приблизиться, кто действительно затем, чтобы помочь, посочувствовать, переложить на себя часть ее ноши, а кот и с явной или тайной корыстью имея в виду свое, кратковременное и оскорбительное. Раньше, когда в отряде была Авдонина, ей было

⁴¹² Быков, “Его Батальон,” 154.

легче,--две женщины среди стольких мужчин старались держаться вместе.

In the squad, she had become steadfast, strict, and even rude, only to help her defend herself from men's attentions. What can one say? It's not easy to be a young woman amongst so many men, where each one tries to get close to her, some really try to help her, to empathize, to ease some of her burden, while some are openly or secretly thinking only of their short-lived and offensive pleasure. Earlier, when Avdonina was in the squad, it was easier. Two women among so many men tried to protect themselves together).⁴¹³

In *Life and Fate*, Katia is scared of being left alone with the male soldiers in her own regiment, knowing that they might force themselves upon her.

In the prologue of his collection, "About War: Novellas about Women," Sergei Baruzdin summarizes women's participation in the war effort while giving evidence of the condescending attitude toward women soldiers: "Эту книгу я назвал 'Повести о женщинах,' ибо мне хотелось рассказать не просто о войне, которая всегда была мужским делом, а о войне и о женщинах. Пятьсот тысяч их, наших советских женщин, было в сорок первом—сорок пятом в армии, на фронте. Пятьсот тысяч—полмиллиона. И им приходилось куда тяжелее, чем нам, мужикам" ("I entitled this book "Stories about Women" since I wanted to not only simply talk about the war, which was always a man's business, but about the war and about women. Five hundred thousand of them, our Soviet women, were on the front between 1941 and 1945. Five hundred thousand. That's half a million. And it was even harder for them than it was for men").⁴¹⁴ Xenia Gasiorowska writes

⁴¹³ Быков, "Пойти и не вернуться," 227-28.

⁴¹⁴ Сергей Баруздин, *О войне: О женщинах повести* (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1971), 277.

that this attitude is intended to affirm masculine strength, rather than to advocate feminine weakness.⁴¹⁵

In their revisions of World War II, male authors return women to their traditional place, removing them from an arena in which men prove themselves. These authors aimed to recreate and celebrate the individual experience of the typical Red army soldier, who was a man. They had little interest in the martyred heroines who had become mythologized to the point they were untouchable. Male authors also had little need for strong, independent women warriors. Indeed, these authors demoted the warrior to the status of handmaiden, the woman who remained in the background of the Red Army soldier's story, attractively complementing him in her tightly-fitted overcoat.

⁴¹⁵ Xenia Gasiorowska, *Women in Soviet Fiction: 1917-1964* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press: 1968), 159.

Chapter 4: Пишущие Поляницы:

Women Warriors and Their Epic Battle for Soviet Cultural Memory

“Don’t take the mistrust you’ve encountered here to heart too much. After all, you are the first female regiment that ever existed. The men are amazed by this, even though you and I see nothing special in it.” Raskova was slightly nervous. She often—too often—changed her pose: now she leaned forward, supporting herself by resting her hands on the table, and now straightened herself, transferring her hands to her wide leather shoulder strap and holding it tightly.

“We shall meet again at the front. I wish you a great deal of success...I hope you’ll earn the honorific of *Guards*.”

A loud booming sound burst into the room through the wide open windows. Again Likhaya was being bombed. Standing shoulder to shoulder, we all thought and felt the same. After all, a new chapter was opening up in our lives. We were reluctant to part from Raskova, our first commander and a wonderful woman whom we considered our role model. Who would have thought we would never see her again.”⁴¹⁶

In the 437th Fighter Regiment, Litvyak scored her very first two kills on 13 September [1942?], three days after her arrival and on her third mission to cover Stalingrad, becoming the very *first woman fighter pilot* to shoot down an enemy aircraft.⁴¹⁷

“Since my childhood I have been a freedom-loving Cossack girl riding a horse along the Kuban steppes. My spirit has always been emancipated, unconquered, and proud. Nothing passes by me unnoticed—that is part of my Cossack nature also. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a strong desire to fly was born in my flesh.”⁴¹⁸

It is deeply ironic that during the post-Soviet period Canadian and American women have been the ones to keep alive the memory of the Soviet Union’s greatest women fighters. In the late Soviet period, aviators, tank operators, machine gunners,

⁴¹⁶ Natal’ya Meklin (Kravtsova), Hero of the Soviet Union. “Our Commander” in *Women in Air War : The Eastern Front of World War II*, trans. and ed. Kazimiera J. Cottam (Nepean, Canada: New Military Publishing, 1997), 121-22.

⁴¹⁷ Kazimiera J. Cottam, *Women in War and Resistance* (Nepean, Canada: New Military Publishing, 1998), 150.

⁴¹⁸ Anne Noggle, *A Dance with Death* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1981), 53; the words belong to Senior Lieutenant Yevgeniya Zhigulenko, director of *Ночные ведьмы*.

and scouts wrote dozens of memoirs that have fallen into oblivion since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Canadian historian Kazimiera J. Cottam spent decades gathering materials, synthesizing them, and translating into English memoirs first published in the Soviet Union. Cottam celebrates the memory of these heroes and introduces them to the English-speaking world. Hero of the Soviet Union Nadezhda (Meklin) Kravstova described Marina Raskova's late 1942 speech in the first collection of women's recollections of their military aviation service in World War II.⁴¹⁹ Raskova's speech acknowledges the discrimination and lack of respect women warriors faced before, during, and would fight after the war. This chapter examines the epic efforts of the Soviet Union's greatest women fighters, a group of aviators who themselves were heroes of epic proportions, for their place in Russian cultural memory alongside famous male pilots like Ivan Kozhedub.

These women's contributions during World War II remain relatively unknown, both in the former Soviet Union and abroad. Short articles about Soviet women pilots have appeared in English since the 1940s, but Cottam's 1997 translation marks the first time these women's voices surfaced in the English-speaking world. In addition to her translations of Russian works by and about woman warriors, Cottam contributes to Western readers' appreciation of these heroes through her biographical sketches, published in *Women in War and Resistance*. She

⁴¹⁹ М. А. Казаринова and А. А. Полянцева, *В небе фронтовом: Сборник воспоминаний советских летчиц,—участниц, Великой Отечественной войны*, 1st edition (Москва: Молодая гвардия, 1962).

includes bibliographies of women warriors and details their heroic contributions to the Soviet war effort.

The pilots wrote about themselves throughout the postwar period, paying tribute to Raskova and insisting on their rightful place in cultural memory. They detail their individual motivations for fighting on the front and describe gender-based discrimination, however, due to centralized, state control of the publishing industry, the memoirs could only be published in heavily censored form. Senior Sergeant Valentina Kovaleva-Sergeicheva told U.S. World War II veteran Anne Noggle, “For the last seventy years of this socialist existence we have been used to saying no words about anything at all, to refrain: that is why now we look upon this chance with you as an opportunity to relate our stories.”⁴²⁰ Noggle’s published interviews read drastically differently from the Soviet-era memoirs. Each interview introduces an individual who describes her war experience in both heroic and mundane terms. Noggle brings the women alive in the early 1990s, in an era when the woman warriors had all but stopped publishing works about themselves.

In the third epigraph, taken from one of Noggle’s interviews, the speaker situates herself in the centuries-long tradition of women warriors arming themselves and fighting on the battlefield by recalling knightly women warriors of the past: the *polianitsy* of East Slavic epic tales, or *byliny*, and free-spirited Nadezhda Durova, whose words also demonstrate the personal drive that brought most of the women to

⁴²⁰ Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 174.

aviation.⁴²¹ To judge them from this passage, the speaker saw herself as a “free-spirited” individual, answering to no one. Her motivation to fly was deeply personal, rooted in history, ethnicity, and a romantic love of adventure and risk, and had little to nothing to do with patriotism or a love for the Soviet Union. This individual motivation to fly, shared by many of the pilots, might be a reason the state ignored them.

The chapter addresses the woman warriors who actively engaged in battle, whose faces were unknown to the masses, though many of them were decorated Heroes of the Soviet Union, like Liza Chaikina and Zoia Kosmodem’ianskaia. Forgotten in mass culture, these women began to reassert themselves during the Thaw period (1956-68). They published their own accounts of their service in World War II. Between 1960 and 1989, at least thirty-two memoirs and collections of vignettes, written by aviators, appeared in print. While some of the memoirs were published by military publishing houses (Voennoe Izdatel’stvo and Izdatel’stvo DOSAAF), many were published in popular publishing houses (Molodoi chitatel’, Molodaia gvardiia, Lumina, Detskaia literatura). The memoirs typically appeared in large print-runs of 100,000 copies. Several of the memoirs were reedited and republished. Despite the ideological patina, this corpus of memoirs about these aviators is comprised of narratives about individual women who made a heroic contribution to the war effort against the Nazis. While they successfully published,

⁴²¹ Ibid., 53.

they never achieved the recognition they expected and deserved. Some Russians deny that women ever even participated in combat.

I have termed these women warriors as *polianitsy*, an appellation that typically refers to the folkloric armed women of *byliny*, Russian epic poems, composed between the tenth and sixteenth centuries. *Polianitsy* actively waged war, fencing and riding horses, challenging male knights (*bogatyri*). The choice of name recalls the centuries-long tradition of women waging war and indicates that they are the most recent variations in a national tradition of women warriors. Although they remain much less acceptable in mass culture, less acceptable to ordinary Russians, and, forgotten by the general public, the *polianitsy* accomplished much more in historical fact for the Motherland than the mythic martyrs Zoia Kosmodemian'skaia and Liza Chaikina. This chapter posits that the *polianitsy* of World War II represent themselves as epic heroes, as truly heroic warriors and that they engage in an ongoing fight long after the conclusion of the war for recognition of their heroic deeds. While there were many different women warriors who fought on the front using various machines, this chapter concentrates on aviators because they made such a concerted group effort to place themselves in the center of the nation's memory.

Before examining the aviators' memoirs, it will be helpful to define some terms, particularly the concept of "epic." An epic can be understood as a narrative that deals with a heroic figure or a group of such figures and a historical event, such as a war or conquest, or a heroic quest or some other significant achievement that is

central to the establishing of traditions, the identity of an ethnic group or a nation, and its cultural values.⁴²² Epic time is another crucial element. Mikhail Bakhtin claims that the epic narrator speaks about a past which is inaccessible to him or her⁴²³ and that “the represented world of the heroes stands on an utterly different and inaccessible time-and-value plane, separated by epic distance” from the singer and listener.⁴²⁴ The epic takes place in the deep past, in a heroic situation, in a significant place for the nation.

The epigraphs at the head of this chapter introduce heroic figures who took part in the largest mythic event after the Revolution and Civil War: the Great Patriotic War, which was central in the Soviet experience. Although the warriors actively engaged in this monumental, national event, they remained outsiders in national memory and were forgotten in the process of mythmaking about the war. Even today, these women warriors are rarely subjects of novels, stories, and films. One single film *Night Witches* (*Ночные ведьмы*, 1981), based on the pilots’ wartime experience, was directed by a veteran, Evgeniia Zhigulenko. Not only did these women have to fight for the right to fight, they had to fight for a place in national memory by writing or making films about themselves.

Unlike the majority of partisan scouts who were often depicted as martyrs for the Soviet cause, the polianitsy were military professionals: aviators, machine-gunners, snipers, tank-operators, scouts (ambushers, not reconnaissance scouts).

⁴²² Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan, eds., *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (New York: MJF Books, 1993), 361.

⁴²³ M. M. Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 13.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

Most had been trained prior to World War II and had been waiting for the opportunity to “show their stuff.” In the 1930s, it will be remembered, encouraged by media images and living examples, hundreds of thousands of girls and young women entered civil defense organizations and prepared themselves as part of the Soviet militarization of youth. These women learned how to operate various weapons, to fight, to parachute, and to fly. Images of smiling women holding rifles and working machine guns graced covers of many popular magazines, such as *Samolet*, *Osoaviakhim*, and *Rabotnitsa*.

As women moved out of private spheres into the public and contributed to the industrialization of the country, armed women represented an extreme: the new Soviet woman worked in the factory or studied chemistry or engineering at the university, but in her spare time, she engaged in war games and sports, familiarized herself with weapons, learned to operate vehicles. She was strong and muscular like the woman athlete pictured in A. Kokorekin’s poster, “Be prepared in work and defense!” (“К труду и обороне будь готов!”)⁴²⁵

During this time of industrialization and militarization, pilots occupied a special place in Soviet culture, as they represented the convergence and apex of technical achievement, courage, and skill. Soviet children of the 1930s grew up amid media reports of Soviet air achievements and propaganda posters commanding “Young People—to your Airplanes!” (“Молодежь—на самолеты”).⁴²⁶ These

⁴²⁵ А. Кокорекин, “К труду и обороне будь готов!” *600 Шестьсот плакатов*, Александр Снопков, Павел Снопков, and Александр Шклярчук (Москва: Контакт-Культура, 2004), 158.

⁴²⁶ G. Klutisis, “Molodezh’—nasamolety [sic],” in Снопков, *600 Шестьсот плакатов*, 82

children idolized Valerii Chkalov, the famed test pilot who broke numerous records in 1936 and 1937. Raisa Aronova, Hero of the Soviet Union and veteran of the 46th Guards Regiment, writes about the record-breaking heroes of the 1930s: “Мне казалось, что эти люди—чудо-богатыри, наделенные природой каким-то особым качеством, которого у меня нет” (“It seemed to me that these people were magical-knights, whom had been allotted some kind of special quality I lacked”).⁴²⁷ Women in all arenas soon found role models in nationally celebrated aviators, Valentina Grizodubova, Marina Raskova, and Polina Osipenko. Their celebrated victory and Raskova’s autobiography, published in 1939, only encouraged more women to step out into the public sphere engaging in traditionally masculine activities and to enroll in Osoaviakhim and flight clubs. Dospanova writes:

Мне хотелось стать летчиком. Эта мечта родилась не сразу. Мы, школьники, как и все советские люди, с большим волнением следили за подвигами первых Героев Советского Союза, летчиков, спасших челюскинцев. Но особенное впечатление произвел на нас беспосадочный перелет Москва—Дальний Восток женщин-летчиц Гризодубовой, Осипенко, Раскова. Теперь я знала, что женщина может быть отличным летчиком.

(I wanted to become a pilot. This dream was not born immediately. With great agitation, we schoolchildren, like all Soviet people, followed the victories of the first Heroes of the Soviet Union, pilots, who saved the Cheliuskin steamship crew. But the nonstop flight from Moscow to the Far East, completed by the women pilots Grizodubova, Osipenko, Raskova, made a particular impression was made on us. After that, I knew that a woman could become an excellent pilot.)⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ Р. Е. Аронова, *Ночные ведьмы* (Москва: Советская Россия, 1969), 7-8.

⁴²⁸ Хиваз Доспанова, *Под командованием Расковой: Воспоминания военного летчика* (Казахское государственное издательство Художественной литературы, 1960), 5.

Already inspired by Chkalov, the first women to become Heroes of the Soviet Union showed young women that there were no areas off limits to them, that they, too, could defy gravity through love of flight. The media indicated that women were welcome in all aspects of Soviet life.

Although the government officially supported and encouraged women to engage in nontraditional activities, ordinary men resisted women's participation in the military. The *polianitsy* found themselves engaged in a battle for the right to fight (1930-42). Many memoirists describe discrimination on the part of both government institutions and individual men. Even after completing training in flight clubs, women were not allowed to pursue aviation in higher education. Several of the memoirists describe disappointment that they could not accompany their male comrades to military academies. Chechneva refused to accept rejection. She looked up Raskova's telephone number, met with her and begged Raskova to help her get into the military academy: "Марина Михайловна!—горячо закончила я свою исповедь,—ну помогите мне стать истребителем! Клянусь, я не подведу вас!" ("Marina Mikhailovna! I proudly completed my confession, "Help me become a fighter-pilot! I swear, I will not disappoint you!")⁴²⁹ Raskova encouraged her to remain in the flight club as an instructor. Chechneva recalls: "Но мне от этого не легче. Я чувствовала, как рушилась моя мечта, и приуныла" ("But that wasn't easy for me. I felt as though my dream had been destroyed and I became

⁴²⁹ М. Чечнева, *Самолеты уходят в ночь* (Москва: Военное издательство Министерства Обороны Союза, 1961), 14.

depressed”).⁴³⁰ Such women clearly dreamt of flying at war and were frustrated by contradictory messages: become aviators, but not in the highest levels of the military.

The Soviet policy of excluding women from combat flight continued after the commencement of the war, June 22, 1941. Like thousands of other Komsomol members, the women who had trained in civil defense organizations flooded recruiters’ offices, eager to serve at the front. Meri Avidzba, a pilot and a student at the Leningrad Military-Medical Academy, appealed to a recruiter as Leningrad burned: “Я—летчица. Не могу смотреть, что делают проклятые фашисты с любимым Ленинградом. Не могу находиться в тылу. Мое место—на фронте” (“I am a pilot. I cannot watch what the damned fascists are doing with my beloved Leningrad. I cannot remain in the rear. My place is on the front”).⁴³¹ Uliianenko echoes her: “На фронт, на фронт—там мое место. Просто стыдно мне, молодой, здоровой, сидеть в тылу. В этот же вечер иду в военкомат, где уже собралось много добровольцев. Кое-как протиснулась, добралась до военкома. Изложила ему свою просьбу” (“On the front, the front—my place is there. I am simply ashamed as a young and healthy person to sit in the rear. This very evening, I went to the recruiting office where a lot of volunteers had already gathered, I could hardly get through the crowd. I set forth my request”).⁴³² Evgeniia Krutova argues: “Я не могу сидеть здесь в тылу, молодая, здоровая, умеющая летать... не могу!”

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁴³¹ Марина Чечнева *Боевые подружки мои* (Москва: ДОСААФ, 1975), Издание второе, дополненное, 265.

⁴³² Аронова, *Ночные ведьмы*, 1st edition, 19.

(“I cannot sit her in the rear, young, healthy, able to fly...I cannot!”)⁴³³ Raisa Aronova writes, “Мне казалось, что сейчас все должны взять в руки оружие и идти сражаться с врагом. Доучусь после войны. Сейчас не могу. Хочу защищать Родину” (“It seemed to me that at that time, all needed to take weapons into their hands and go wage war with the enemy. I will complete my studies after the war. Now I cannot. I want to go defend the Motherland”).⁴³⁴ She conveys that she knows how to fly, but is sent home to work with other young women behind the lines. Dospanova remembers that she and other students harbored one hope: to help the Motherland. She felt as though she were surrounded by danger, and she burned with the desire to go to the front and battle fascism.⁴³⁵ Polina Gelman tells Noggle, “We were patriotic and wanted to do something, to enlist or whatever.” She continues: “We hated the German fascists so much that we didn’t care which aircraft we were to fly; we could have flown a broom to be able to fire at them!”⁴³⁶ The women warriors yearned to fight.

Although recruiters accepted some women almost immediately as reconnaissance scouts or combat nurses, they initially dismissed would-be fighters: “—Ах, летчица?— переспросил он.—Все вы летчицы! Много вас тут таких вояк ходит. Давай, девочка, не мешай работать. Иди домой” (“‘You’re a female pilot?’ he asked, ‘All of you are female pilots. A lot of “fighters” like you are

⁴³³ М. Чечнева, “Летали девчата в гвардейском...” (Чебоксары: Чувашское Книжное Издательство, 1968), 19.

⁴³⁴ Аронова, *Ночные ведьмы*, 1st edition, 16.

⁴³⁵ Доспанова, *Под командованием Расковой*, 11

⁴³⁶ Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 37

coming here. Come on, girl, don't get in the way. Go home''").⁴³⁷ Gelman describes the pilots' confusion about contradictory official positions regarding women in combat: "When we women applied to join the army along with the men, we were not accepted because the army would not draft women. We protested that we were brought up to believe that women were equal to men, and we thought that we should be allowed to go into the army, too."⁴³⁸ The women worked in the rear in various capacities, building fortifications or teaching aviation in flight clubs, waiting for mobilization, and besieging officials with requests to serve.⁴³⁹

The pilots gained the right to fight through Raskova's advocacy.⁴⁴⁰ Many memoirists recall how they rushed to Raskova, claiming they would be willing to do anything to be admitted into the regiments. After interviewing the women, Raskova placed them in three regiments: a night bomber regiment, flying the PO-2, a dive-bomber regiment, flying the PE-2, and a fighter regiment, flying the Yak-1. Although women had initially claimed that they would do anything to go to the front, most really wanted to wage war in the most aggressive manner: as fighter pilots. Marina Chechneva writes of disappointment when Raskova informed her that she would be flying the PO-2, an open-cockpit biplane, designed by N. N. Polikarpov in 1927.⁴⁴¹ Most women wanted to command a fighter plane and engage in combat one-on-one with Nazi pilots, though they all accepted their assignments and grew to

⁴³⁷ Чечнева, *Самолеты уходят в ночь*, 17.

⁴³⁸ Noggle, 39.

⁴³⁹ Pennington posits that it was Raskova's idea to form women's air regiments. In Spring 1942, 100,000 women were conscripted for the Air Defense Force. Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War*, 25.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁴¹ Cottam, *Women in Air War*, Fig. 34.

love their planes, even the primitive, open cockpit PO-2. Many of the memoirists remember Raskova's inspiring words during their training. Dospanova remembers Raskova's determination to assert women's right to fight:

Марина Михайловна говорила о вековой мечте женщины—о равноправии. В Советском Союзе женщина получила равное право с мужчиной на труд и на отдых, право стоять у станка и управлять государством, а теперь, когда на нас напали гитлеровские полчища— право вместе с мужьями, отцами и братьями с оружием в руках защищать родину. И вот как проявление этого равноправия партия поручила ей, Расковой, формировать женские авиационные соединения. “Мы получили право быть воинами, и мы оправдаем это право в боях,” закончила она.

(Marina Mikhailovna spoke about the eternal dream of women, about equality. In the Soviet Union, women had received equal rights with men in labor and recreation, the right to stand at the machine and to lead in the government, and now, when Hitler's hordes descended upon us, we've received the right to defend the Motherland with weapons in our hands, along with our husbands, fathers, and brothers. And as a display of these equal rights, the party had charged her, Raskova, with the formation of women's aviation units. “We received the right to be warriors, and we will realize this right in battle,” she concluded).⁴⁴²

Raskova may have used the argument that women were supposed to have equal rights in the Soviet Union and should, thus, be granted the right to wage war alongside men, when she requested Stalin's permission to form the women's regiments.

If the first battle was to be able to fly, the aviators' next battle was the actual fight against fascism (1942-45). The memoirists portray themselves as highly competent, decorated, celebrated women who proved themselves to be as capable as male aviators under the most difficult of conditions. The women fought effectively

⁴⁴² Доспанова, *Под командованием Расковой*, 24.

and were honored throughout the war. Two of the three regiments were designated as Guards regiments. In all twenty-nine women pilots, from all three regiments, were eventually named Heroes of the Soviet Union. The Soviets awarded the women with decorations, wine, and even high-heeled shoes! They were recognized internationally. In July 1944, the U. S. magazine, *Aviation*, featured the women in an article by Madeline Blitzstein: “How Women Flyers Fight Russia’s Air War.” The Germans nicknamed them “night witches.” Late in the war, a regiment of French pilots, delighted by the women, presented them with watches. Some men admitted that they underestimated women, as does the brigade commissar, Gorbunov in Chechneva’s *Airplanes Fly into the Night* (*Самолеты уходят в ночь*).

—А вот и не угадали,—ответил Горбунов.—Я тоже был в числе противников. Знаете, уж очень необычным было ваше появление на фронте. Теперь вижу, крепко ошибались мы, недооценили советских женщин.

—Это не ново,—заметила я.—До войны многие летчики-инструкторы тоже не хотели обучать девушек.

—В самом деле?

—Спросите любую аэроклубницу.

(‘And who would have guessed,’ answered Gorbunov. ‘I also was among those opposed. You know, your appearance on the front was very unusual. Now I see that we were greatly mistaken, that we had underestimated Soviet women.’

‘It’s nothing new,’ I noted. ‘Before the war, there were many male flight-instructors who also did not want to train young women.’

‘Really?’

‘Ask any female member of a flight club’).⁴⁴³

The women pilots believed that they had proven that although men and women were different and had different strengths, women were as capable as men, if

⁴⁴³ М. Чечнева, *Самолеты уходят в ночь*, 59-60.

not better, at flying planes in combat. Lieutenant Evgeniia Guruleva-Smirnova tells Anne Noggle, “We had fewer casualties in our regiment than the men did flying the same type of aircraft; I think we were more precise in our flying.”⁴⁴⁴ They thought erroneously, however, that through their performance they had changed minds, and subsequently, changed prejudice against women in combat in Soviet culture.

This chapter focuses on the aviators’ last and longest fight: their efforts throughout the 1960s to the 1980s to be remembered. Almost immediately upon the conclusion of the war, the regiments were demobilized. Some were happy, like Sergeant Anna Kirilina, who tells Noggle, “when I returned to the plant, entered the room, and saw my textile instrument standing there, I rushed up to it. I was extremely happy that I had returned to peaceful labor.”⁴⁴⁵ Most left the military, but a few were able to continue serving in army-aviation. Galina Markova writes of Klavdiia Fomicheva:

Одна за другой мы демобилизовались из армии. Снимали выгоревшие гимнастерки, говорили «прощай» своим боевым машинам. Клава же продолжала служить, передавая свой боевой опыт, свои знания молодому поколению летчиков. Потом она перешла в Военно-воздушную академию, где стала работать летчиком-инструктором.

(One after another we were demobilized from the army. We removed our fading soldier’s shirts, said “farewell” to our combat machines. Klava continued to serve, passing on her combat experience and her knowledge to the younger generation of pilots. Then she moved to the air force academy where she started working as a flight instructor).⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 111.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁴⁴⁶ Галина Маркова, *Расскажи береза: документальные повести* (Москва: Военное издательство, 1983), 135

All, regardless of postwar careers, were proud of their collective and individual contributions to the war effort and their accomplishments. All expected to be remembered by their country, ordinary people and leaders alike. Upon demobilization, most women left aviation. Some returned to universities. Olga Khomiakova, one of the women who remained in military aviation, describes continued discrimination, in some ways worse than before the war. In the media, images of fighting women were replaced by mothers holding children. The few women who did achieve immortality in mass culture were martyrs, like Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia. Although Raskova was the one notable exception to this consignment to oblivion, it should be noted that she had achieved Hero of the Soviet Union status prior to the war and was celebrated, not for her contribution to the war effort, but rather for her achievements during the 1930s peacetime militarization period. To this day, Russian documentaries focus on her prewar military achievements, rather than her role in the war effort.

This situation must have been exceedingly frustrating for the women who had fought so bravely in war, as the war continued to live within them. Golubeva-Teres writes of the women's changed social identities and the feelings of alienation some of them experienced:

Посторонняя публика восхищалась, глядя на блестящие под солнечными лучами ордена и медали, прикрепленные к нарядным костюмам женщин. Посторонняя публика не знала, как всем демобилизованным было трудно после войны: как же теперь быть и жить дальше, как сразу ответить на множество вопросов, заданных мирным днем? Например, где жить? У некоторых не то чтоб квартиры или комнаты, угла своего не было. Что делать, кем работать: Волей необходимости первой нашей профессией в жизни стало военное дело?

Летчик, штурман, прибористка, механик, орежейница... все это вдруг в один действительно прекрасный день ушло в прошлое. Всем захотелось быстрее сменить шинели на пальто, гимнастерки и брюки—на платья и жакеты, сапоги—на туфли.

(Looking at the decorations and medals, shining under the sun and fastened to the smart uniforms of the women, the civilian public was enchanted. The public did not know that it was difficult for all of the people demobilized after the war: how to live afterwards, how immediately to answer the multitude of questions and fulfill the tasks of peacetime. For example, where should one live? Some did not have apartments, rooms, or even their own corners. What should one do? Where should one work? Of necessity, our first profession had been the military: pilot, navigator, mechanic, armorer. And one really fine day, all of this receded into the past. Everyone wanted quickly to exchange the soldier's overcoat for a coat, the soldier's shirt and pants, for dresses and women's jackets, boots for shoes.)⁴⁴⁷

Larisa Shepitko depicts the demilitarized woman pilot's experience in her 1966 film *Wings (Крылья)*. Especially in the case of the 46th Guards night bomber regiment, veterans did not stop identifying themselves as pilots and members of the regiment just because their regiment had been officially demobilized. Although they continued to meet twice a year in front of the Bolshoi Theater, the nation remained virtually silent about their heroic deeds. They had been pushed into a corner, passed over, while as a whole, the nation was encouraged to be proud of Soviet performance in World War II.

During the Thaw period, the aviators began fighting back, wielding their pens as weapons in a third epic battle, this time for a more prominent place in the Soviet collective memory. They continued to challenge boundaries through writing about their heroic feats, just as they did in the 1930s through flight. How did the aviators

⁴⁴⁷ О. Голубева-Терес, *Страницы из летной книжки: повесть* (Москва: Военное издательство, 1988), 246-47.

structure their memoirs in order to achieve the goal of a fuller representation in the Soviet memory of World War II. Why did these epic warriors garner much less public attention than the young, less trained and less effective “martyrs?”

The works about *polianitsy* differ from the body of works about the martyrs. Both groups suffered and gave themselves to defense of the Motherland, but the *polianitsy's* contribution did not become part of the Soviet lore of World War II as their particular type of contribution was marginalized by the demobilization that followed World War II. The martyrs were idealized to the extent that the most famous ones, Zoia Kosmodem’ianskaia and Liza Chaikina, became icons, whose mere images and names inspired mourning and indignation and moved the public, first to avenge their deaths during the war and then, in the postwar period, to lead moral, useful lives as Soviet citizens. The works treated in this chapter were intended to fill readers with pride and awe at the epic feats of individual women’s heroic deeds, rather than their ultimate sacrifices for the Motherland.

The vast majority of works about the *polianitsy* are either memoirs or biographies written about fallen aviators by comrades in arms. They also published journals, letters, children’s books, and two versions of a novella (K. Larionova’s *The Navigator Rumiantseva* (*Штурман Румянцева*, 1949) and *The Starry Road: A Novella* (*Звездная дорога: повесть*, 1963). Editors included occasional vignettes in autobiographical World War II publications. Journals such as *Rabotnitsa* and newspapers like *Krasnaia zvezda* (*The Red Star*) included rare articles on women

warriors. With the exception of some of the vignettes and articles, the authors were women.

Interestingly, one of the first works were not memoirs, but novellas. One may see this publication as a first attempt, disguised as fiction, before the mass assault of memoirs the aviators launched in the 1960s. K. Larionova's novel *The Navigator Rumiansteva* was based on the 46th guards' regiment in 1949. Many of the episodes come directly from women's war experiences and resemble descriptions in memoirs. For some reason, possibly related to demilitarization and the public's rejection of the image of the military woman, Larionova felt most comfortable presenting the pilots' war experience as fiction.⁴⁴⁸ That year, the first memoir, Ul'ianenko's *Nezabyvaemoe*, was published in a province, the Udmurt Republic. It would be the only memoir for the next eleven years.⁴⁴⁹ In 1955, a version of the diary and letters by the deceased Hero of the Soviet Union, Evgeniia Rudneva, appeared. Rudneva's diary was almost certainly heavily edited for ideologically correctness.

After these three early publications, the women turned almost exclusively to memoirs and began representing themselves in their own words. In memoir form, they claimed their actions and detailed their specific contributions to the war effort. This choice of genre dates back to the first female Russian officer: Nadezhda Durova, who fictionalized parts of her memoir and omitted facts (marriage, child),

⁴⁴⁸ Although I suspect that "Larionova" was a pen name one of the veterans used, I have found no evidence in RGALI to support this theory.

⁴⁴⁹ N. Ul'ianenko, *Nezabyvaemoe* (Izhevsk: Udmurtgosizdat, 1949).

perhaps recognizing that her audience would not understand her decision to leave her husband and child for a military life.

Although women who fought in various capacities published memoirs, the pilots published more than anyone. They were an elite, educated group and continued to meet as a unified collective twice a year long after demobilization. The war remained alive in their interactions as they symbolically, regularly reconvened as a unit. One can assume that each supported the others' decisions to write about their experiences.

Of the pilots, veterans of the 46th guards unit who flew night bombers in open-cockpit biplanes published the most. Of the three women's regiments formed by Raskova, the 46th regiment was the first to be designated a guard unit, the only one to remain solely a women's regiment, and the one to produce the largest number of Heroes of the Soviet Union. The two most prolific writers, Marina Chechneva and Nadezhda Kravtsova, were veterans of this regiment. Evgeniia Zhigulenko tells Noggle: "All of us who were navigators looked upon ourselves as a very elite group because our backgrounds were in the institutes and universities. We were well-read, intellectually minded, had good manners, and never heard or said dirty words."⁴⁵⁰ After the war, many aviators earned advanced degrees.

By publishing memoirs, the pilots fulfilled two needs, first to express their individual contributions to the war effort and, second, to make a bid for public memory and honor. During the Thaw, the period following Stalin's death, one finds

⁴⁵⁰ Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 54.

a resurgence of the thinking self, independent and critical of the state. Characteristic of the Thaw period, the aviators introduce a personal world, an individual passion—this time for flight and combat. Although the memoirs resemble each other, each one details the author’s personal experience of entrance into aviation and Raskova’s influence. When reading these memoirs, one must keep in mind that the pilots’ stories were almost certainly heavily edited by both by the authors themselves and by state censors. Publishers may have employed ghostwriters, which would explain the similarities amongst works. A comparison of the Soviet era memoirs with oral interviews conducted by an American veteran, Anne Noggle, translated and published in the United States in 1994, suggests that the women were more ambitious and independent, less dedicated to Stalin, and more interested in male attention than their memoirs indicate. One woman was grounded for several months after smearing the words “За Сталина” “For Stalin” when a painter painted “За родину! За Сталина!” (“For the Motherland! For Stalin!”) on her plane. She was grounded for several months. One of the women admits to Noggle that she enlisted in the army for a mundane reason: because she was attracted by the healthier food rations. Although the *polianitsy* are not idealized to the extent of the martyrs, they—or their ghostwriters and editors—do give the impression of being enthusiastic patriots.

Questions as to the audience for these memoirs and their purpose must be answered if we are to understand the nature of the aviators’ quest for a place in the national memory: are the authors writing for young women, young men, or both?

Are they writing to educate the younger generation, which is largely ignorant of their feats or are they writing to push the boundaries of gender roles and expectations?

Through their descriptions of heroic achievements and skilled flying, many make the case for women's inclusion in the military. The memoirs suggest that they are writing either to encourage young women to enter aviation or to challenge assumptions that men are better suited for certain professions, or they are addressing those who doubt history, those who argue that women could not have possibly performed as well as men.

Motivation and intended audiences vary from author to author, but Chechneva, who worked for DOSAAF, the successor to Osoaviakhim, as a flight instructor after the war, writes to inspire young people to become aviators: “Эту книгу нельзя читать без волнения. Она учит нашу молодежь безгранично любить Родину, зовет ее в небо” (“One cannot read this book without agitation. It will teach our youth to love the Motherland without limits. It will call them into the sky”).⁴⁵¹ If the intended goal was to call young people to the sky, then the intended audience must be a male or mixed audience, as only young men would have been able to take to the sky and become military pilots in the 1960s and 1970s. However, regardless of Chechneva's introduction, young women were more likely the intended audience of the pilots' memoirs. Although they could not become military pilots at the moment of

⁴⁵¹ Чечнева, *Ласточки над фронтом*, 135.

publication, the women heroes show younger women how to go against the grain, how to challenge gender-based obstacles.

There are several indicators that the ideal reader was a young woman.

Numerous memoirists describe how the women pilots fought as well, if not better, than male pilots. Rakobol'skaia remembered:

There were a few cases when the aircraft would be over the target, and a bomb would stick and not drop. The navigator would get out of the cockpit, stand on the wing, and reach down with her hands to try to push it loose. The women were as brave as the male crews.

We had parties and danced and sang, and we had amateur contests and wrote poetry. The first slogan of the regiment was: You are a woman, and you should be proud of that. When weather caused the cancellation of a mission, everyone stayed at the airfield and danced. It would never come into any man's head to do that, while waiting for permission to fly.⁴⁵²

Senior Lieutenant Serafima Amosova-Taranenko supports the view that women pilots were just as brave and able as the men: "The female regiment performed better and made more combat flights each night than the male regiment. The male pilots before a flight started smoking and talking, but the women even had supper in the cockpit of their aircraft."⁴⁵³

Rakobolskaya and Amosova-Taranenko emphasize aviators' talents and bravery, their equality with men, but also stress their pride in being women. The *polianitsy* did not reject their gender and assume androgynous identities. Instead, they embraced both their "femininity" and their roles as warriors. Such statements would most likely not appeal to male readers. The authors also discuss romantic details and descriptions of handicrafts, which a male reader might find silly.

⁴⁵² Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 29.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 46.

Golubeva-Teres dedicates her memoir *Stars on the Wings* (*Звезды на крыльях*) with the following epigraph: “Своим дочерям, комсомолкам семидесятых годов, посвящаю” (“To my daughters, the *komsomolki* of the 1970s, I dedicate this book”).⁴⁵⁴ Clearly, her intended readers were the women of the next generation.

Regardless of the intended audience, the authors portray themselves as heroes which can best be illustrated with Chechneva’s introduction of *Girls Flew in a Guards’ Regiment* (*Летали девочки в гвардейском*), about aviators Zhenia Krutova and Zoia Parfenova. She chooses the following epigraph taken from the Guards’ march, composed by Hero of the Soviet Union and children’s book author, Natalia (Meklin) Kravtsova:

На фронте стать в ряды передовые
Была для нас задача нелегка.
Боритесь, девушки, подруги боевые,
За славу женского Гвардейского полка!
...Никто из нас усталости не знает,
Мы бьем врага с заката до зари.
Гвардейцы-девушки в бою не подкачают
Вперед, орлы, вперед, богатыри!

(To stand on the front in advancing ranks
Was not an easy task for us.
Fight, girls, friends in combat [*boevye podrug*],
For the glory of the women’s Guards regiment!
...None of us knows exhaustion.
We pound the enemy from sunset till dawn.
Guards-women will not disappoint in battle
Forward, eagles, forward knights!)⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵⁴ О. Голубева-Терес, *Звезды на крыльях* (Саратов: Приволжское книжное издательство, 1974), 5.

⁴⁵⁵ М. Чечнева. *Летали девочки в гвардейском* (Чебоксары: Чувашское Книжное Издательство, 1968).

This epigraph locates the action of the narrative in the recent past during the Great Patriotic War “on the front, in the advancing regiments“ (“На фронте стать в ряды передовые”). The situation is clearly a war situation. The brave, tireless heroes who thump the enemy from dusk to dawn are women—fearless women. They are fighting for the glory of their regiment. Hero of the Soviet Union Nadezhda (Meklin) Kravtsova, and by choice of this epigraph, Chechneva, are represented by folkloric images usually reserved for men: eagles and knights (*bogatyri*). The epigraph introduces Krutova, and the other women of the 46th as heroic knights who fight the enemy. The author clearly aims to represent the members of the 46th precisely as *epic* heroes.

Epic heroes take part in events that take place in the deep past, at a defining point in a nation’s formation which serves a key role in the formation of a nation’s collective memory. L. I. Litvinova begins her memoir by juxtaposing the peaceful present, in which she awaits a comrade-in-arms in a Moscow train station, with the distant, wartime past: “Давно отгремели бои и ушли в историю события Великой Отечественной войны” (“Long ago, battles quieted down and entered the history of events of the Great Fatherland War”).⁴⁵⁶ Typically, the generation reciting the epic is far removed from the time in which the epic events occur. Although only a generation had passed between the conclusion of World War II and the period of the 1960s, the new generation, the intended reader, already regarded the war as an event of “long ago.” Many of them did not comprehend the pilots’ heroic deeds at the time

⁴⁵⁶ Л. Н. Литвинова, *Улицы Татьяны Макаровой* (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1976), 5.

the women were penning memoirs. In their memoirs the aviators attempt to educate future generations about their contributions. Chechneva concludes her first memoir:

[Я] попыталась лишь поведать о том, что видела сама, что переживала и что сохранила моя память. Хочется надеяться, что мой скромный труд поможет молодому читателю лучше и больше узнать о том, как в годину тяжелых испытаний сражались за Родину молодые советские патриоты.

(I merely tried to relate what I saw myself, what survived and was preserved in my memory. I hope that my modest work helps the young reader to know better and more about how young Soviet patriots defended the Motherland during the period of difficult trials).⁴⁵⁷

At the time of publication, Chechneva clearly felt that the younger generation did not fully understand how the previous generation had performed during the war and wrote to correct this paucity.

Several of the authors begin or conclude memoirs by describing their experiences to members of the next generation. Ol'ga Timofeevna Golubeva-Teres is very conscious of her role as memory keeper. She starts her memoir, *Pages from My Flight Log: A Novella* (*Страницы из летной книжки: повесть*), by answering her youngest daughter's question: "Мама, ну зачем тебе эти бумаги?" ("But why do you have these papers, Mama?") as the narrator removes documents related to her military service from an upper drawer, long out of reach. This scene represents the narrator's removal of her experience from the dusty drawer of forgotten history and her attempt to convey her service and heroism to her daughter. She describes actions by listing the documents and writes about the symbolism of her notes: "Записи в летной книжке скупы, но за скупостью слов стоят ночи, когда каждый час

⁴⁵⁷ Чечнева, *Самолеты уходят в ночь*, 157.

измерялся жизнью, а каждая минута была экзаменом на мужество, честность, верность Родине” (“The notations in the flight log are laconic, but behind the few words stand nights, when every hour was measured by life, and when every minute was an examination of courage, honor, and loyalty to the Motherland”).⁴⁵⁸ The reader witnesses the younger generation’s inability to conceptualize the veterans’ experiences when the impatient daughter, representative of her generation, insists that her mother put down the war documents and take her out for a walk. As Golubeva-Teres flips through her flight log, each two or three line entry reminds her of her wartime experience, and although long hidden out of view like the flight log, the war vividly comes back to her, even through the most laconic of passages. One sees the disjunction between generations: the war remains alive in the pilots’ memories but is completely absent from their children’s experience. Golubeva-Teres’s daughter clearly does not care that her mother fought heroically to defend her country.

Pilot and Hero of the Soviet Union Aronova’s epigraph, “Чем дальше в будущее входим, тем больше прошлым дорожим” (“The farther we go into the future, the more we value the past”), shows her motivation to pen her memoirs: she cherishes the past and her part in it.⁴⁵⁹ She is determined to preserve the past. It should be noted that this valuation of the past and fixation on the glorious victory, on the defeat of Nazi Germany, is certainly not something unique to women veterans.

⁴⁵⁸ О. Голубева-Терес, *Страницы из летной книжки: повесть* (Москва: Военное издательство, 1988), 5.

⁴⁵⁹ *Аронова, Ночные ведьмы*, 1st edition, epigraph.

In recent years, in honor of May 9, there has been an annual, public-awareness campaign encouraging people to wear or display black and gold ribbons which mean “I remember, I am proud” (“Помню, горжусь”). However, the women’s insistence on memory is more significant than the typical Russian pride in liberation of the world from fascism. They have an agenda: restoration of themselves, mostly forgotten, into their national history.

Sometimes the author’s choice of final image concludes the work by illustrating that the war is still a very large part of her experience as a human being and that she still sees herself as an aviator. By extension, those who recall the war should include her in it. For example, Galina Markova, who is generally more present in her narratives than other authors, concludes her 1983 memoir, *Tell, Birch Trees* (“Расскажи, береза...”), with a stock image from aviation films and literary works: she, a navigator, and her long-deceased pilot Klavdiia Fomicheva are flying together in spirit, long before other pilots have replaced them in the sky:

Другие самолеты—реактивные, сверхзвуковые—поднимаются сегодня с аэродромов. Другие летчики штурмуют небо. Но в свисте ветра, несущегося с Москвы-реки вдоль улицы с цепочкой заснеженных лиц, я слышу знакомый гул взлетающих Пе-2 и голос друга:
“Ну как, Джун, все в порядке ... ?”

(Today, other planes, jet planes, supersonic aircraft, ascend into the sky from the airfields. Other pilots navigate the sky. But in the whistle of the wind, coming from the Moscow River down the street with the chain of snow-covered faces, I hear the familiar rumble of the soaring Pe-2 and the voice of a friend:

‘So, June, is everything in order ... ’?)⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁶⁰ Маркова, *Расскажи береза*, 137.

Markova asserts her identity and demonstrates the place the war holds in her memory, while glorifying a comrade who died in the 1950s of an undisclosed illness related to her military service. Markova shows that the war is still alive within her, and by extension, the Soviet Union, by concluding her narrative with an image, the image of the narrator navigating with her pilot. Through these specific combat images, the pilots return to their nation's defining moment: the righteous battle against fascism, so alive in their memories. Despite the passage, in some cases, of less than twenty years, World War II had already faded into history and myth in the Russian national consciousness at the time of publication.

The epic event forms a defining moment in nation building, in this case, the liberation of the Homeland, the beloved Soviet Union. Mikhail Bakhtin argues that “the epic as it has come down to us is an absolutely completed and finished generic form, whose constitutive feature is the transference of the world it describes to an absolute past of national beginnings and peak times,” a time of nation-building, a pivotal moment in the nation's history.⁴⁶¹ The Soviets experienced such a moment when their young country's existence was threatened by the Nazi invasion on June 22, 1941. Memoirists convey that the pilots were initially motivated to fight after their Homeland, which Soviet authors usually idealize as a peaceful, glorious place, was attacked by “beasts.”⁴⁶² Larionova describes a navigator's reaction to the wartime destruction in her fictional narrative: “Катя вздохнула. Горе мешало ей

⁴⁶¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination*, 15.

⁴⁶² Chechneva includes a short poem taken from her diary which illustrates the feelings young people had toward the Motherland during the pre-war period: “Я мечтаю быть пилотом/ В нашей радостной стране,/ Обогнать на самолете/ Птицы в синей вышине” (“I dream of being a pilot/ In our happy country,/ To pass birds,/ In the blue sky in an airplane,.)” *Самолеты уходят в ночь*, 8.

радоваться. Слишком тяжело видеть эти следы войны. Но слезами горю не поможешь. Надо мстить врагу и не слабеть от горя, а бить без промаху” (“Katia sighed. Grief interfered with her celebration. It was too hard to see these results of the war. But you will not help your grief with tears. You need to take revenge on your enemy and not weaken from grief, but hit him without missing“).⁴⁶³

The women felt a burning desire to defend their Motherland at the moment of national crisis, and after witnessing Nazi atrocities, avenge the deaths of unarmed fellow citizens. Valia Luchinkina wrote Marina Chechneva: “Я уверена, что девушки нашего полка навсегда сохранили тот огонь сердца, который побудил их в тяжелые для Родины дни встать в первые ряды ее защитников...” (“I am sure that the girls of our regiment always kept that fire of the heart, which awoke them during the terrible days for the Motherland, and motivated them to arise in the first rows of her defenders...”)⁴⁶⁴ As the narratives progress, the authors specify the areas in which they were stationed and they detail those that they liberated, emphasizing the significance of the epic fight on *Soviet* land, highlighting their role in the restoration and building of the Soviet state.

As warriors build their nation through battle, many armed and unarmed citizens die. Epic heroes, like Achilles, are traditionally motivated by vengeance. As the war continued, pilots died, and as the aviators witnessed more atrocities and experienced personal losses, they became more and more motivated by a desire to

⁴⁶³ К. Ларионова, *Звездная дорога: Повесть* (Москва: Военное издательство министерства обороны СССР, 1963), 129.

⁴⁶⁴ М. Чечнева, *Боевые подруги мои*, Издание второе, дополненное (Москва: ДОСААФ, 1975), 155.

avenge the dead. The pilots wreaked vengeance by nightly bombing of Nazi camps and installations. After losing comrades-in-arms, they dropped bombs in their comrades' names. Larionova emphasizes this note of personal revenge: "По ночам, подвешивая бомбы, вооруженцы писали на них: 'За Галину!' За Ольгу!" ("At night, when putting bombs on the planes, the armonors wrote 'For Galina! For Ol'ga!'")⁴⁶⁵ Katia, the navigator protagonist, thinks: "За всех, за всех, кто не вернется домой, за всех, кого будут оплакивать старые отцы и матери, за молодость, погубленную раньше времени, я буду мстить сейчас, и завтра, и до последнего дня" ("For everyone, for everyone who will not return home, for those whose elderly fathers and mothers will cry over, for youth that died early, I will take revenge, now, and tomorrow, and until the last day").⁴⁶⁶ When Katia's best friend Zhenia perishes in combat:

—Женю убили!—тихо сказала она и рванулась обратно к самолету. — Погляди, Даша, они Женю убили! Только сейчас...Надо немедленно отомстить. Летим!"

("They killed Zhenia!" she quietly said and dashed off back toward her plane. "Look, Dasha, they killed Zhenia! Now, we need to take revenge. Let's fly!")⁴⁶⁷

Ее жгло только одно желание—лететь немедленно, отомстить...

(She burned with only one desire—to fly quickly and take revenge).⁴⁶⁸

И небо зовет ее. Лети. Лети, отомсти за Женю!

(And the sky called her. Fly. Fly and avenge Zhenia!)⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁵ К. Ларионова. *Штурман Румянцева. Повесть* (Москва: Советский писатель, 1949), 123.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 189.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 190.

⁴⁶⁹ Ларионова, *Звездная дорога: Повесть*, 162.

Летчицы выслушивают задание и улетают. Мстить врагу—вот их единственная цель. Бомбить эшелоны, топить на переправах, жечь в блиндажах, уничтожать, уничтожать! Мстить за Женю! За Глафиру! Вечно помнить о погибших подругах!...

(The female pilots listened to details of the mission and flew off. To take revenge on the enemy—that was their only goal. To bomb echelons, to sink them in their crossings, to burn them in their dugouts, to destroy, destroy! To avenge Zhenia! For Glafira! To remember forever fallen comrades!...) ⁴⁷⁰

Katia Rumiantseva initially enlisted in the military due to patriotic feelings, but these passages show that after the death of Katia's best friend, the war with the Nazis becomes a personal war.

Larionova describes the tradition of painting vengeful messages on fuselages such as “Мстим за боевых подруг Галину Руденко и Ольгу Климову” (“We will avenge our girlfriends in combat Galina Rudenko and Ol’ga Kimova”) ⁴⁷¹ and the inscription on Katia's plane: “Мстим за боевую подругу Женю Курганову” (“We avenge our girlfriend in combat, Zhenia Kurganova”). ⁴⁷² Chechneva recalls the aviators' reaction to the burial of a comrade-in-arms: “Похоронили мы Полю и Лиду в центре станицы Пашковской, под Краснодаром. Похоронили и поклялись: Мстить, мстить, мстить!” (“We buried Polia and Lida in the center of the station in Pashkovskaia, outside of Krasnodar. We buried them and we swore: Revenge, revenge, revenge!”). ⁴⁷³ Vengeance for the invasion of the Soviet Union

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 163.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid. 128.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 216.

⁴⁷³ Марина Чечнева, *Крылья: Очерк о первой абхазской летчице Мери Авидзба* (Сухуми: Издательство "Алашара," 1968), 42.

and personal losses transform young pilots into fierce warriors, or epic heroes fighting a decisive battle, building a nation for future generations.

These epic heroes, the Soviet *polianitsy*, are not born epic heroes: they undergo a transformation into heroes. The aviators describe this process in their memoirs. The key transformative moments occur after enlistment in the military. They travel from various hometowns all over Russia to Engels for training and physically transform into uniformed warriors.⁴⁷⁴ Many of them initially resent short hair cuts and laugh at the male uniforms. Dospanova describes efforts to escape the mandatory haircuts: “Каждый стремился доказать, что косы и локоны совсем не мешают летать, что надо об этом сказать Марине Михайловне, так как она, наверное, ничего не знает. Но нас выстроили и повели в парикмахерскую” (“Each strove to prove that braids and curls absolutely did not interfere with flying, that they need to tell that to Marina Mikhailovna, that she, surely, did not know anything about it. But they lined us up and took us to the hairdresser”).⁴⁷⁵ Although they wanted to fight and felt equal to men, most had no desire to look masculine. Aronova describes the laughable uniform situation: “На следующий день мы получали военное обмундирование. Вот где смеху было. Нам выдали все мужское, вплоть до белья. Многим форменная одежда оказалась явно не по росту, девушки выглядели в ней неловкими, смешными. Особенно большие огорчения доставили сапоги, которые почти все были 40-43-го размера” (“On

⁴⁷⁴ Engels is just outside Saratov. This process is mirrored at the conclusion of many narratives: they make the journey East, return to Moscow, then shed their warrior garb.

⁴⁷⁵ Доспанова, *Под командованием Расковой*, 16.

the next day, we received our military uniforms. That was really funny. They gave us men's things, down to the underwear. A lot of the uniforms did not fit and the girls looked awkward and funny in them. The boots were especially distressing, since they were almost all sizes 40-43").⁴⁷⁶ But, despite initial resistance, upon physical transformation, their self-images change and they begin to see themselves as warriors in their memoirs, especially after their oath to fight as a regiment.

Chechneva describes their images of themselves: "Вот теперь мы стали настоящими бойцами. С теми, кто уже проливали на полях войны свою кровь, мы связаны нерушимым воинским долгом и честью. И если мы нарушим присягу, пусть всеобщее презрение и смерть покарают каждую из нас" ("That was when we became real warriors. With those who already shed blood on the fields of war, we were connected by the indestructible bonds of military duty and honor. And if we violate our oath then let there be all the more contempt and may death punish each of us").⁴⁷⁷ They saw themselves as true warriors.

With their oath of loyalty, the aviators become soldiers officially, but for the women of the night bomber regiment, the key transfigurative moment occurs when Marina Raskova, their leader and role model, gives them a speech just before the aviators enter combat. Through her speech, Raskova transforms them: right before they are sent out to wage war, she inspires them as they become warriors. Dospanova writes:

⁴⁷⁶ Аронова, *Ночные ведьмы*, 1st edition, 21.

⁴⁷⁷ М. Чечнева, *Самолеты уходят в ночь*, 26.

Перед отлетом Марина Михайловна долго беседовала с нами. Говорила о том, что партия и правительство, советский народ доверили нам боевые машины, послали защищать Родину, и мы должны гордиться этим доверием и оправдать его. Хотя мы и так были полны вдохновенных порывов, хотя и без того горели желанием поскорее схватиться с врагом,—теплые, проникновенные слова Расковой о благородном долге войны были, казалось, для нас самыми нужными в то время. Она говорила о том, что фашизм несет миру рабство, нищету, голод, говорила о бредовых планах Гитлера, претендовавшего на мировое господство.

(Before takeoff, Marina Mikhailovna talked with us a long time. She spoke of the party and about the government, about the fact that the Soviet people had entrusted us with military machines, had sent us to defend the Motherland and that we needed to be proud of this trust and justify it. Even though we were full of inspired impulses, even though we hoped to soon seize the enemy, the warm, earnest words of Raskova about the noble duty of war were the most needed at that time, it seemed. She spoke of the fact that fascism would bring the world slavery, poverty, and hunger. She spoke about Hitler's insane plans to dominate the world).⁴⁷⁸

Almost all memoirists of the 46th guards recall Raskova's speech in their memoirs, showing the importance of Raskova and this key moment in their development into epic heroes. She transformed them into warriors by focusing on their patriotic duty to defend their Homeland against a hated enemy and their desires to prove themselves equal, if not superior, to male pilots.

This occasion was the last time the aviators saw Raskova, as she died in a plane crash in January 1943. As the martyrs moved the nation to avenge them, Raskova's death inspired the women pilots to fight. The warriors were devastated by her death, but dedicated their future successes and combat acts to her memory.

Dospanova writes, "После этого печального сообщения мы договорились, что предстоящие очередные боевые вылеты на задание будем делать в честь

⁴⁷⁸ Доспанова, *Под командованием Расковой*, 22-23.

Расковой” (“After this sad news, we agreed that we would complete the next combat missions in honor of Raskova”).⁴⁷⁹ Mariia Ivanovna Runt attributed the women’s military transformation to Raskova: “Наши боевые успехи—это ее успехи! Она учила нас мужеству и отваге своим личным примером, своей повседневной жизнью” (“Our combat successes were her combat successes! She taught us courage and bravery with her individual example, in her daily life”).⁴⁸⁰ After her death, she remains an example of a brave, honorable soldier for her subordinates.

Dospanova writes:

Мы потеряли отличного организатора и боевого командира, отличного штурмана и честного товарища—заклучил свое сообщение Захаров. – Майор Марина Михайловна Раскова погибла как солдат, выполняя боевое задание. Свой долг перед родиной она выполнила честно и до конца. Светлая память о ней всегда будет жить в наших сердцах. Мы знали и любили Марину Михайловну. Ее знали, ее подвигами восторгались все советские люди.

(“We lost an excellent organizer and a military commander, and excellent navigator and an honorable comrade,” Zakharov concluded his news report. “Major Marina Mikahilovna Raskova died as a soldier, fulfilling her combat duty. She fulfilled her duty before the Motherland honorably and to the end. The bright memory of her will live on in our hearts. We knew and loved Marina Mikhailovna. All Soviet people knew her and delighted in her victories”).⁴⁸¹

For the aviators, Marina Raskova represented all they strove to become. Upon her death, they felt even more compelled to fight bravely, honorably, and effectively, and the night bomber regiment was honored as the 46th Guards Unit.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 76.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 84.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 76.

The Soviet *polianitsa* shares several key characteristics with Soviet positive heroes, who, as defined by Katerina Clark, represent “what ought to be.”⁴⁸² The *polianitsy* are fearless, clever, bold, proud, elite, self-assured women. They show leadership and skill in dealing with deadly situations. They are loyal to their cause and to each other. Like positive heroes, the women are willing to sacrifice themselves to build the future through their military service, liberating the Homeland for future generations of Soviet children. Verbal descriptions of their actions show that they are able, kind, and brave. Pictures of the women having good times together demonstrate their cohesiveness as a group and their congeniality. They were capable of accomplishing almost inconceivable deeds in wretched conditions and often seemed better, stronger, larger than life.

While congenial, the *polianitsy* were aggressive. Although they initially told recruiters and Raskova that they wanted to serve the Motherland in whatever capacity open to them, most really wanted to become fighter pilots in order to engage in one-on-one combat. Almost all of the aviators chosen to fly the PO-2, were initially disappointed, as they did not want to drop bombs over invisible targets. They wanted individually to fight Nazis, wanted to attack Nazi planes, almost as if fencing on a battlefield. They wanted to see their opponents and to shoot them down.

The *polianitsy* were passionate: passionate about fighting and about flying. Galina Markova takes her epigraph from a poem by Iuliia Drunina: “Нет, это горят

⁴⁸² Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 46.

не хаты—/То юность моя в огне./ Идут по войне девчата,/ Похожие на парней” (“No, those aren’t huts that are burning—/That is my youth aflame./ Girls go into war./ Looking like boys”).⁴⁸³ Not only does Markova paint pictures of a young woman in a man’s guise whose youth is on fire,—passionate, burning to fight, burning for great, heroic deeds, burning away, like the women in her narrative, but she legitimizes her work by invoking the only famous woman-warrior poet. Upon learning that Raskova is forming women’s aviation regiments, a recruiter tells Makarova and Malakhova: “Вот и может исполниться ваше горячее желание попасть на фронт” (“Now you can fulfill your burning desire to go to the front”).⁴⁸⁴

Almost all of the women express a burning drive, almost possession, by aviation. Senior Lieutenant Evgeniya Zhigulenko tells Anne Noggle: “Since my childhood I have been a freedom-loving Cossack girl riding a horse along the Kuban steppes. My spirit has always been emancipated, unconquered, and proud. Nothing passes by me unnoticed—that is part of my Cossack nature also. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a strong desire to fly was born in my flesh.”⁴⁸⁵ The aviators loved their planes as if they were animate beings. “ПО-2—хорошая боевая машина. Мы любили ее по-настоящему. Любили ее во всех родах наземных и воздушных войск, эту верную спутницу ночных боев. Недаром летчики и бойцы гордо называли ПО-2 ‘старшиной воздуха’” (“The PO-2 is a good combat machine. We really loved it. We loved it in all versions of land and air forces, this faithful escort

⁴⁸³ Юлия Друнина, “Качается рожь несжатая,” in *Страна юность* (Москва: Издательство “Художественная литература,” 1967), 16.

⁴⁸⁴ Лариса Литвинова, *Улица Татьяны Макаровой* (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1976), 63.

⁴⁸⁵ Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 53.

in night battles. It was not without reason that pilots and fighters proudly called the PO-2 the ‘master sergeant of the air’); and further: “И действительно, не было, кажется, на фронте такого задания, которое не выполнил бы ПО-2. Самые беспокойные и самые страшные ночные бомбардировщики для врага были наши ПО-2” (“And actually, it seemed as if there were no job that the PO-2 could not do. For the enemy, the PO-2 was the most worrying and the scariest night bomber”).⁴⁸⁶ The plane simply replaces the horse, as an officer’s vehicle in battle).

The women succeeded in aviation and in battle because they were persistent and determined when they encountered adversity. Almost all describe discrimination. After transferring to a male regiment, Lilia Litviak had to fight for the right to fly her own plane.⁴⁸⁷ The pilots’ passion for aviation, and later their dedication to the Motherland and their need to avenge the deaths of sisters-in-arms drove them to overcome difficulties. Many pilots describe how they and their comrades crash-landed, spent months recuperating in hospitals and sanitariums, pushing themselves back into their cockpits as soon as possible.

The aviators were decisive leaders, who sometimes interpreted service differently than their commanders. In the second scene of Valutskii’s and Zhigulenko’s film, two pilots help an injured pilot, Galia, escape from a hospital in order to return to her regiment. Galia is later reprimanded for not following her orders, but after arguing that she had fully recovered, she is cleared for combat.

⁴⁸⁶ Литвинова, *Улица Татьяна Макаровой*, 38.

⁴⁸⁷ Н. Кравцова, *Вернись из полета!* (Москва: Детская Литература, 1971), 12-14.

The women believed in themselves. Kravtsova writes about Olga Iamshchika: “Никаких сомнений она не знала и твердо верила, что при большом желании в жизни можно всегда добиться того, к чему стремишься” (“She did not have any doubts and she firmly believed that one could achieve anything she strove for”).⁴⁸⁸ Self-assurance is a vital part of a combat pilot’s or navigator’s character. Furthermore, the women warriors would have never become pilots during peacetime if they had not believed that they were capable of flight, regardless of conservative men’s opposition.

The authors stress their bravery. They overcome fear and maintain clarity of thinking in stressful situations. Kravtsova describes Litviak’s mental state prior to battle: “Сдерживая волнение, Лиля с нетерпением ждала момента атаки. Вот они, враги, с которыми она сейчас вступит в бой...Теперь она видит их отлично! Крепко сжав ручку управления, вся собравшись, как перед прыжком, Лиля приготовилась к бою” (“Holding her nervousness in check, Lilia patiently awaited the moment to attack. There they were, the enemy, with whom she now was beginning combat...Now she saw they perfectly! Firmly holding the joystick, having prepared everything as if before a jump, Lilia prepared for battle”).⁴⁸⁹ In Zhigulenko’s film, the women appear fearless in battle. Throughout the film, they are ready and eager to undertake any orders given to them by their commanding officers. Under fire, the pilots drop their bombs before escaping danger.

⁴⁸⁸ Кравцова, *За Облаками Солнце*, 51-52.

⁴⁸⁹ Кравцова, *Вернись из полета!*, 34

It is worth mentioning that the memoirists carefully modified the epic model to demonstrate that they were “normal” women, despite their military service, as the veterans refer to their gender throughout the works. While they maintained that they performed as well, and in some cases, better than male aviators, most aviators enjoyed dressing as women and engaging in traditionally “women’s” pastimes. Armorer Ekaterina Chuikova tells Noggle, “Youth is youth. We made pillows out of our foot cloths and embroidered the PE-2 on them. Everyone embroidered the PE-2 on their pillows.”⁴⁹⁰

The film *Night Witches* (*Ночные ведьмы*) includes a subplot in which pilot Oksana and navigator Galia rescue a young boy who becomes an honorary, if temporary, member of the women’s regiment. Oksana hopes to adopt the child with her husband. The memoirists and filmmakers attempt to send a clear message: being a warrior does not mean that one cannot be a woman, perhaps in an attempt to contradict rumors or a general belief that it is not natural for a woman to wage war. They visually support this merging of the images of epic hero and traditional woman with pictures and illustrations. These pictures illustrate, for those who are incapable of reading, that the women pilots were heroic, brave, capable, determined, beautiful, and feminine. They emphasize their “женственность,” or “femininity,” in response to the assumption that a warrior could not be a woman.

In keeping with the epic mode, these women describe their heroic deeds. J. K. Newman writes, “The epic often focuses on a hero, sometimes semi-divine, who

⁴⁹⁰ Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 145.

performs difficult and virtuous deeds; it frequently involves the interaction between human beings and gods. The events of the poem, however, affect the lives of ordinary human beings and often change the course of the nation.”⁴⁹¹ Unlike those who write about martyrs, authors of works about *polianitsy* include detailed descriptions of battles, of actual warrior experiences. Evgeniia Krutova writes home and describes her experience in battle: “Пули и снаряды не берут меня, а от прожекторов я даже на нашем самолете умею быстро маневрировать,—писала она домой. —Мы договорились заранее со своим, штурманом, что если подобьют и не перетянем к своим, будем пикировать в гущу врагов, чтоб уж погибнуть, так погибнуть с музыкой...” (“Bullets and missiles will not get me, and I can quickly maneuver even from searchlights,” she wrote home. ‘My navigator and I agreed earlier that if we were knocked out and could not make it back to our own, we would dive into the middle of the enemy so that if we were going to die, we would die with a bang...’)⁴⁹² In this passage, we see a pilot’s resolve to contribute as much as possible to the national cause, even in the face of death.

After the training period in Engels, when the pilots are cleared for combat, narrators describe their first battles: “Одна мысль тогда сверлила наш мозг: там, в самолете, подруги ведут отчаянную борьбу за жизнь. И они совершенно беззащитны. Единственная возможность спасения—это маневр, но в лучах прожекторов ослепленные летчица и штурман ничего не видят” (“One thought drilled into our brains: there, in the plane, friends are leading a desperate struggle for

⁴⁹¹ J. K. Newman, “Epic,” in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 361-375.

⁴⁹² Чечнева. *Летали девчата в гвардейском*, 31.

their lives. And they are absolutely defenseless. The one hope for survival is a maneuver, but in the rays of search lights, the blinded pilots and navigators can not see anything..”).⁴⁹³ The memoirists emphasize the danger and difficulty of their missions so that the reader can clearly visualize the heroic situations in which they perform. They stress that the women were surrounded by danger every day and every night, and that every combat flight was a potential confrontation with death.

Chechneva describes battle:

Опасность всюду: над тобой, под тобой, впереди и сзади. Она со всех сторон сжимает тебя тисками, давит, гнетет. И, приземлившись, долго приходишь в себя, пока немного освободится от перенапряжения нервная система. А через три—пять минут опять в бой, опять грохот разрывов, свистопляска орудейного огня и света. К концу полетов, а их за ночь бывало по четыре—шесть, нервы напрягались до предела. И так каждую ночь.

(Danger is everywhere: above you, under you, in front of you and behind. It holds you in a vice from all sides, crushing you, oppressing you. And, upon landing, it takes a long time to come to yourself, a while to get over the overexertion of the nervous system. And after three to five minutes again into battle, again the thunder of explosions, the pandemonium of weaponry fire and flashes. The nerves were stretched to their limits by the end of the flights, and there were four to six every night. And it was that way every night).⁴⁹⁴

The reader is left with a verbal image of the persistent danger of battle and must note the heroism of women who engaged in such activities several times nightly for three years. Larisa Litvinova writes: “Каждую ночь, с вечерней зорьки и до утренней, девушки неизменно появлялись над позициями противника и наносили ему ощутимые удары, изматывали его, сбрасывая бомбы через две-три минуты”

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 227.

⁴⁹⁴ Чечнева, *Самолеты уходят в ночь*, 67.

(“Every night, from dusk until dawn, young women invariably appeared over enemy positions and inflicted palpable blows on him. She wore him down, dropping bombs every two to three minutes”).⁴⁹⁵ She describes the danger that surrounded Tania Makarova’s and Vera Belik’s plane as they fulfilled a bombing mission: “Таня с Верой вошли в зону огня. Впереди над переправой, будто неподвижный, повис самолет, схваченный цепкими клещами прожекторов. Огненные шары-разрывы окружили его плотным кольцом” (“Tania and Vera were into the zone of fire. In front of them, above the crossing, the airplane hung as if motionless, seized by the persistent pincers of the search lights. The fire balls of explosions surrounded them in a dense circle”).⁴⁹⁶ The women, undeterred, proceed on their course, drop bombs, become the target of enemy rockets, then fly away, skillfully maneuvering, to avoid the rockets.

As many of the women suffered combat injuries, they often narrate the circumstances of their injuries, showing that they were capable of fulfilling duties, even while wounded. Anne Noggle records Senior Lieutenant Nina Raspopova’s harrowing experience:

The antiaircraft guns fired at us fiercely from all directions, and suddenly I felt our aircraft hit. My foot slipped down into an empty space below me; the bottom of the cockpit had been shot away. I felt something hot streaming down my left arm and leg—I was wounded. Blinded by the search lights, I could discern nothing in the cockpit. I could feel moisture spraying inside the cockpit; the fuel tank had been hit. I was completely disoriented: the sky and earth were indistinguishable to my vision. But far in the distance I could see the sparkle of our regimental runway floodlight, and it helped restore my

⁴⁹⁵ Литвинова, *Улицы Татьяны Макаровой*, 83

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 88

orientation. An air wave lifted us, and I managed to glide back over the river to the neutral zone, where I landed the aircraft in darkness.⁴⁹⁷

Raspopova's narrative illustrates the danger that surrounded the pilots, night after night, as well as displaying women's abilities to complete missions even after traumatic injuries.

In their memoirs and in children's books, the pilots included hundreds of photos and illustrations of themselves and their sisters in arms: formal picture of the women in uniform, decorated; pictures of the women and their planes; and pictures of themselves in action.

Vladimir Valutskii and Evgeniia Zhigulenko open *In the Sky: Night Witches* (*В Небе: Ночные ведьмы*, 1981) with a battle scene. A small, open cock-pit plane flies through the night, surrounded by smoke, as the women piloting the plane drop bombs on enemy tanks. The viewer sees Nazis scurrying chaotically toward the left, presumably westward, while other Nazis use searchlights to locate the bomber and tanks shoot rockets in vain at the bomber. The scene concludes with the little plane flying back to base, having fulfilled its combat mission successfully, despite the plane's vulnerability to Nazi rockets.⁴⁹⁸

In their memoirs and biographies many of the authors include hard facts and numbers related to accomplishments. These non-literary forms of expression allow authors to quantify exactly what they and their comrades accomplished during the war in the event that a skeptic doubts the women's achievements. In *Girlfriends in*

⁴⁹⁷ Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 3.

⁴⁹⁸ Владимир Валутский and Евгения Жигуленко, *В небо: Ночные ведьмы* (Москва: Горкий, 1981).

Combat (Боевые подруги мои), Chechneva includes each women's combat flight total, for example: "Tat'iana Sumarokova flew 964 combat flights," in presentation of each warrior. She and Aronova conclude memoirs by including the fact that the women of the 46th Guards' unit flew more than 23,000 combat flights as a whole, dropped more than 3 million kg of bombs, 23 were decorated as Heroes of the Soviet Union, and almost all of the women became party members. Litvinova introduces herself and her comrades with these facts on the second page of her memoir, *Tat'iana Makarova Street (Улица Татьяны Макаровой)*. No one can dispute these figures.

To an extent, a nation marks heroes' deeds and preserves its memory of them through symbols. Physical symbols preserve evidence of the *polianitsy*, who changed the landscape of the Homeland. Although the Soviet public did not glorify them to the extent that they glorified martyrs or the men who fought in the war, one can find symbols proving that the women are not completely absent from the nation's memory. These symbols include renamed streets, pioneer circles, and memorials, especially to fallen aviators. Marina Raskova Street occupies the most central place of all aviators' symbols: it is located in Moscow center, not far from Savelovskaia metro station. Officials honored Valeriia Khomiakova, one of the most famous aviators before the war by naming streets in her hometown Sarator, pioneer circles, and a Komsomol brigade in her honor. In 1991, a monument to

Khomiankova was dedicated in Engels Special School No. 5.⁴⁹⁹ Some of the authors, like Aronova, include descriptions and photographs of symbols in their narratives.

Larisa Litvinova detailed a grassroots campaign in the 1950s conducted on the part of the women's 46th Guards unit to have a Moscow street renamed in honor of their fallen comrade, Tatiana Makarova. Makarova had grown up on the street in question and the women believed that she should be honored as an example for her heroic sacrifice for the Motherland and those who survived the war and their children. The aviators felt as though it was their duty to memorialize her and carried out the necessary steps to do so publicly:

Когда москвички—однополчанки 46-го гвардейского Таманского краснознаменного обращались в Моссовет с ходатайством переименовать родную Танину улицу-назвать ее именем Героя Советского Союза Макаровой, в обоснование мы собрали обширный материал. Собирали по крупицам: искали ее родственников, соучеников, друзей по довоенному периоду жизни, разбирались в армейских штабных—теперь уже архивных—документах.

(When Muscovites, the members of the 46th Taman Guards Regiment of the Red Banner gathered in Mossovet with the petition to rename Tat'iana's street, to name it in honor of Hero of the Soviet Union Makarova, we gathered extensive materials for substantiation. We gathered them as crumbs: we searched for her relatives, her classmates, her friends from before the war, and for documents dispersed in army headquarters, now archived).⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁹ Екатерина Полунина, *Девчонки, подружки, летчицы* (Москва: Вестник Воздушного Флота, 2004), 17.

⁵⁰⁰ Литвинова, *Улица Татьяны Макаровой*, 9.

After gathering documents describing her life and deeds, her comrades-in-arms succeeded in procuring the following memorial plaque and renaming of Bolotnaia street, a street in the center of Moscow:

Улица Татьяны Макаровой: Названа в 1960 году в память Героя Советского Союза. Командира звена гвардейского Таманского женского полка ночных бомбардировщиков. Погибла при выполнении боевого задания, жила на этой улице в доме н. 16. 1920-1944.

(Tat'iana Makarova Street: It was named in the 1960s in memory of the Hero of the Soviet Union. Commander of a squad of the women's Guard Taman regiment of night bombers. She died fulfilling combat duties and lived on this street in house number 16. 1920-1944).⁵⁰¹

The plaque resurrects Makarova as an epic hero who perished in the heroic struggle for liberation of the Soviet Motherland. It remembers her skill and leadership, noting that she was a squad leader. The plaque notes that Makarova accomplished her feats as part of a woman's regiment, reminding the public that such a regiment existed and performed exceptionally as to be honored with the guards designation.

Any group communes and celebrates the past through rituals. The pilots keep memory alive through their annual gatherings. Some of the aviators physically relive parts of their service by visiting the places where they were stationed. Others enliven their memories by publicly reconvening as regiments annually and semi-annually. Ol'ga Golubeva-Teres is conscious of her role as a memory keeper in her memoir *Pages from a Flight Log*. She describes how after discovering the long-hidden away flight log, the war returns to her. She tries to be an accurate memory keeper and portray her friends and their experiences. She begins traveling the

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 8.

country, talking to comrades-in-arms about their service. She travels to some of the locations where the 46th Guards unit engaged in battle and notes the memorials, remembers her time at these battle sites, and reevaluates her experience. She considers whether or not the world needs another book on World War II, but after her experiences at the battle sites, she decides to write and publish her memoirs.

None of the women pilots physically relive their combat experience to the extent that Raisa Aronova and Rufa Gasheva do when they embark on a pilgrimage twenty years after their service, visiting sites they were stationed, as well as two sites related to warrior martyrs: the Molodaia Gvardiia memorial in Krasnodon and the Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia memorial in Petrishchevo. Aronova kept a diary of the experience and published it in 1969 in a volume with her memoirs. They visit monuments, graves of fallen comrades, remember their feelings arriving at Engels, the noise of the women's laughter before any of them had engaged in combat, and Raskova's motivational speeches. After traveling all the way to Germany by car, Aronova concludes her diary as the three return to the Soviet Union: "Как хорошо возвращаться на Родину!" ("How wonderful to return to the Motherland!")⁵⁰² During their vacation, the women retraced their war experience, including their homecoming.

Each year, on May 2, into the post-Soviet period, the pilots act out their most important ritual: dressing in uniform and reconvening as regiments in front of the Bolshoi Theater. Other veterans also gather in uniform in front of the Bolshoi, but a

⁵⁰² Аронова, *Ночные ведьмы*, 2nd edition, (Москва: Советская Россия, 1980), 332.

week later, on May 9, Victory Day. U. S. Photographer and WAC pilot Anne Noggle provides an outsider's perspective:

The 46th Guards [Night] Bomber Regiment proceeded to the steps of the Bolshoi for their group picture. They then read aloud letters from fellow members unable to attend, while graciously accepting flowers from, interviews, and attention from admirers old and young. They were very much the center of attention.

The 586th Fighter Regiment formed a tight group farther into the park and began serenading me, singing wonderful minor-key war and love songs and rousing melodies of their aircraft and victory.

The 125th [Guards Dive-Bomber] regiment had gathered on the far side of the park and were quieter, holding flowers, smiling, and embracing one another... At that point we began walking out of the park toward the Moskva Hotel, where the regiment had reservations for our luncheon. When we arrived at the hotel our banquet table was not ready. The regiment waited in a reception area, where they spontaneously began to sing their songs from the war.

They had gathered as a remembrance, a celebration.⁵⁰³

This ritual occupies a central place in the women's lives and war experiences.

Almost every author describes the Moscow meetings at the conclusion of her memoir.

Memory starts with the collective. Upon demobilization, the women swore to remember. Most of the authors, Chechneva in particular, attach almost religious significance to remembering the war, their heroism, their "fiery" youth, and especially their fallen comrades. In the preface to her first book *Airplanes Leave into the Night* (*Самолеты уходят в ночь*) she describes the individuals, both famous and unknown, she met in her aviation career. Each ascended into the sky with the dream to fly (like the author). She claims that she, along with them "mastered the rudiments of their difficult, but beautiful profession. Along with them, she shared

⁵⁰³ Noggle, *A Dance with Dead*, 317.

pride and joy, grew up and became courageous, and together with them she traversed the path of war.” “осваивала тогда азы нашей нелегкой, но прекрасной профессии. Вместо с ними делила горести и радости, росла и мужала, вместе прошла по дорогам войны” (“the aces of our difficult but beautiful profession acclimatized. Along with them, I shared my sadness and joys, I grew and I matured, and together with them, I traversed the paths of war”).⁵⁰⁴ She associates herself with them and in doing so, makes her memoir seem less self-absorbed. In the last paragraph of preface, Chechneva claims that we cannot forget these people, and by extension, her, and that she dedicates this “скромный труд,” or “modest work” in their honor.⁵⁰⁵ She claims that they are forgotten and that her goal is to correct this error in history.

Through the decades leading up to 1990, the women as a group aimed to correct one egregious injustice through the rehabilitation of a truly exceptional woman: Lilia Litviak. Born on Soviet Aviation Day (August 18), Litviak earned her pilot’s license by fifteen and had trained forty-five pilots by the age of nineteen, when the war began. Although initially a member of the 586th Fighter Regiment, she was transferred to a male regiment. Three days after her arrival, she scored two kills and became the first woman fighter pilot to shoot down an enemy aircraft while flying a Lag, not the Yak-1 on which she had trained. She was transferred to another regiment that consisted only of aces or potential aces and distinguished herself in the famous dogfight known as “Four against Twenty-Nine.” Shot down over enemy

⁵⁰⁴ Чечнева, *Самолеты уходят в ночь*, 5.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

territory Aug 1, 1943, while one of nine Soviet fighters fighting forty enemy aircraft, fulfilling Litviak's worst fears. In the event of a crash, she had hoped to land on her territory, knowing she would be classified as "missing in action" if she crashed on enemy territory. She was fighting not only for the Motherland, but also to clear the name of her father, whom had been labeled an "enemy of the people" in the 1930s. Her comrades began a campaign to have her decorated a Hero of the Soviet Union, but a rumor persisted that she had run off with a Nazi. Kravtsova published a children's book in 1979, around the same time journalist Alla Begunova completed a film script, which was cancelled just before filming was to begin.⁵⁰⁶ Her mechanic, Inna Paspornikova, made rehabilitation of Litviak her life's work. Through their awareness, these women hoped to move the public to demand the decoration for Litviak. Her remains were identified in 1986 and she was finally rehabilitated in 1990, through the efforts of her comrades in arms.

At the end of Chechneva's memoir, she describes how the women took an oath to remember each other: She writes:

Судьба разбросает нас по всем уголкам страны, время принесет новые заботы о прошлом фронтовых лет останутся только воспоминания. На долго ли? Нам хотелось, чтобы навсегда, до конца дней каждой из нас. И потому, расставаясь, мы дали клятву не забывать это прошлое, а с ним и нашу фронтовую дружбу, в установленные дни встречаться всем вместе. И словом своим мы дорожим, как воинской присягой.

(Fate will throw us to all corners of the country, time will bring us new concerns and the past years on the front will remain only memories. How long will we remember? We hope forever, until the last day for each of us. And because of this, we swore an oath to never forget this past, and with it,

⁵⁰⁶ Alla Begunova, in discussion with the author, 27 May 2006.

our friendship on the front, and on specified days to meet up as a group. And our word to each other is dearer to us than military commands).⁵⁰⁷

Since they became members of one family during the war, the acts of writing about each other and remembering accomplishments became a type of familial obligation.

Noggle writes:

They are sisters, they will tell you—closer to one another than to their relatives. Ultimately their *memento mori* is one of survival, haunted by the ghosts of those not so fortunate. As they perished, so came others to fill the vacancies, and so the regiments endured. So if you are they, you sing and you remember, and the memories that lie beneath the surface most of the time are living, throbbing realities this day.⁵⁰⁸

Through their meetings and memoirs, the pilots have documented and preserved the memory of their military service to the best of their abilities.

To an extent, the *polianitsy* left their mark on the nation. In addition to the symbols previously noted, the pilots' legacy includes: the names of Ekaterina Vasil'evna Budanova and Klavdiia Andreevna Nechaeva in the hall of Voinskaia Slava, or Military Glory in Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad and street names in honor of Marina Raskova (Moscow, Kaliningrad,⁵⁰⁹ Smolensk⁵¹⁰) and Tat'iana Makarova (Moscow).

Although the pilots did successfully transform their nation's landscape through monuments and street names, only some of those changes proved to be permanent. Some of the streets renamed in honor of pilot heroes now bear their original historical names in the post-Soviet period. For instance, in 1994, city

⁵⁰⁷ Чечнева, *Самолеты уходят в ночь*, 153.

⁵⁰⁸ Noggle, *A Dance with Death*, 317.

⁵⁰⁹ А. Губин, "Марина Раскова и святой Адальберт," *Калининградская правда* (24 июня 1992).

⁵¹⁰ Official site of the city of Smolensk,

http://www.admcity.smolensk.ru/spravocn/streets/streets_town.html (accessed 15 May 2007).

officials restored the historical name of Ulitsa Tat'iany Makarovoi to "Bolotnaia ulitsa," while designating a new street in the suburban eastern part of the city "Ulitsa Tat'iany Makarovoi." Despite the pilots' dedication to Makarova's memory, their letter-writing campaign, and their documentation of her heroic performance, the post-Soviet reevaluation of culture relegated the memory of Makarova to the periphery.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union publishers have released very few memoirs. In 2004, veteran of the 586th Ekaterina Polunina published *Girls, Girlfriends, Pilots* (*Девчонки, Подружки, Летчицы*), a collection of bibliographic vignettes, reproduced letters, journal entries, photographs, and information on pilots' legacies, families, and most recent addresses. In 2006, the publishing house "Patriot" reissued Marina Chechneva's *My Girlfriends in Arms* (*Боевые подружки мои*) under the slightly modified title *Подружки мои боевые*, with an emphasis on the word "combat" (*boevye*). The physical characteristics and publication runs of these recent publications provide evidence of both the Soviet experience and the current status of the aviators: 998 copies of Polunina's volume and 1000 copies of Chechneva's monographs. The monographs were published on quality paper. Clearly, the pilots' memoirs are no longer intended for masses, but they remain precious to a select few, likely the surviving veterans and their families.

In her collection, Polunina includes the following poem written by Maia Lapisova, a veteran of the 586th fighter regiment:

Когда расцветают яблони
Весной у Большого театра.

Приходят к ним в час свидания
Военной поры девчата...
Пусть каждому году хочется
Прибавить им пряди седые,
Девчонки, подружки, летчицы-
Они навсегда молодые!
Не только ребята-соколы
В суровую ночь взлетали,
И девичьи руки тонкие
Штурвал боевой сжимали!
А кто не пришел с задания,
Тем в памяти жить навечно...
Цветите, цветите, яблони—
Девчата спешат на встречу!

(When the apples trees are blooming
In the springtime at the Bolshoi Theater,
The time comes to meet
The girls of wartime...
Let every year want
To add gray hairs
Girls, friends, pilots—
They are young forever!
Not only male falcons
Flew up into the severe night,
And delicate, maidenly hands
Gripped the steering wheel of combat!
And whoever did not come from missions
Would live eternally in memory...
Blossom, blossom, apple trees—
Girls hurry to the gathering).⁵¹¹

This poem captures the pilot's postwar rituals in front of the Bolshoi theater. She celebrates the pilots' contribution to the Soviet war effort and commemorates their annual meeting in front of the Bolshoi. Meanwhile, she rejects the assumption that only men flew combat flights during the war. Through verbal texts like Lapisova's poem, we can see the formative roles that the war and veterans' gatherings played in

⁵¹¹ Полунина, *Девчонки, Подружки, Летчицы*, 197.

the lives of women warriors. Although the nation may have undermined and forgotten their heroic participation after their demobilization, these women remembered their heroic deeds and honored their comrades-in-arms until the ends of their lives.

Conclusion

The woman warrior, the title character in Maxine Hong Kingston's novel, arrives at independent self-consciousness by taking up arms and leading an army. When the need arises for her to wage war, she proves herself to be a strong, self-sufficient leader. During this time, she defines herself primarily by her skills, rather than her familial roles. Of the types introduced in this dissertation, only one however, the *polianitsa*, fits this definition. Why then should one consider the martyr and handmaiden to be warriors? This study includes them because when asked to name examples of "women who were soldiers (*soldaty*) in World War II" or "women who fought (*voevali*)," Russians named women who fall into all three types, leading me to define a Soviet woman warrior as a woman who participates in combat as a uniformed member of the armed services or as a partisan who wages war in the underground.

While researching women warriors, I discovered an interesting linguistic phenomenon, which gave evidence of Russians' ambiguous sentiments toward the archetype. My informants (roughly thirty) were usually uncomfortable with and confused by my attempts to render "woman warrior" into Russian (*Zhenshchina-soldat*, *zhenshchina-voin*, *zhenshchina-boets*, *soldat-zhenshchina*), much preferring descriptions of these women using verbs like "to fight" (*voevat'*) or to participate in battles (*uchastvovat' v boiakh*). Language here indicates cultural discomfort with the idea of a woman warrior, even though images of the archetype exist at least from the

time the Slavs began writing. A few informants hostilely denied that Russian women had ever participated in war.

This attitude shows us that to many Russians, the concept of the woman warrior by itself is a contradiction. Although the woman warrior, an archetype, exists across cultures through the centuries, this archetype has been repressed by the state and most preservers of cultural memory, as she does not fit well with contemporary constructions of gender, which have shifted to more traditional gender roles since the turning point in World War II. Although Russian culture abounds with images of strong women, armed women as independent protectors of their nation, do not fit into a paradigm in which men are expected to defend the Motherland.

The types of women warriors discussed in this dissertation fall into two categories. One category, which contains only the martyr, is central to and relatively fixed in national consciousness. The other category is less deep-seated and gives strong evidence of a debate about gender roles. This category contains the handmaiden and the knight. With these two categories, we find an interesting contradiction between the two primary approaches I use to analyze the woman warrior. Archetypal theory is by definition essentialist, since it claims to be concerned with given human realities on a subconscious level, while gender theory is constructivist, operating under the assumptions that culture and gender roles are created by people and that they shift. The notion that culture is constructed threatens the fundamental core of Jungian theory. While these approaches might seem

incompatible, their complex interaction helps explain some of the fundamental contradictions discovered while researching this dissertation.

From her introduction in Soviet propaganda, the warrior-martyr touched Russians of both sexes and all ages, unified them, and continues to inspire them to this day. The mutilated body of a brave, young partisan who sacrificed herself for her people and ideology appealed to citizens on a basic level and ties into Russians' long history of veneration of martyrs. Even after years of state-mandated literary policies, independent publishers reissue older works that feature the warrior-martyr while writers and directors continue to create new works about her because these books are in demand. In summer, 2007, for example, one could easily find copies of Fadeev's *The Young Guard*, as teachers have reintroduced the novel into the school curriculum. Regardless of the ideological nature of texts produced during the Stalin period, Russians today remember the partisans as loyal, brave girls, who suffered unimaginable death for the nation. They embody bravery, strength, resoluteness, self-sacrifice, and dedication to the Soviet Union, many characteristics that people continue to value as they reevaluate their country's past and its role in the future. 2005 saw the appearance of *Zoia: The Truth about the Legend*, a documentary that addressed rumors challenging the Zoia myth and dismissed each of them, basing their arguments on previously "secret" archival documents, forensic evidence, and the testimonies of witnesses. This documentary, narrated by an authoritative bass voice, aimed to reconfirm Zoia's essential place, and the places of the other warrior-martyrs she represents, in cultural memory of World War II. She is fundamental to

Russian culture, so I am calling her a true archetype, as opposed to a cultural construction.

The handmaidens and *polianitsy* are really a part of a larger and very much alive debate about gender roles in the 1930s. While they are archetypes of a sort, both of them have also clearly been constructed to serve psychological, social, and political purposes. The Stalinist makers of propaganda and enforcers of Soviet military policies created a type of *polianitsa*, a woman armed and ready to “ride” onto the battlefield in the figurative armor of the Red Army. The armed women in the 1930s popular journals are a formidable group. Gripping weapons in their strong hands, they carefully aim at targets. Women pilots stand proudly before their airplanes, looking off beyond the horizon. After the war, the public largely forgot about this construction of the 1930s, as women soldiers were collectively demobilized and women as a whole were encouraged to assume more traditional familial roles. As part of a cultural disarming of women, men responded to the 1930s construction with their own construction, by rejecting the warrior and creating lasting portrayals of romance-minded, nurturing handmaidens, existing in stories as accessories to the “real” heroes: male soldiers.

Publishing houses continue to print large runs of the works of male writers such as Vasil’ Bykov and Emmanuil Kazakevich. These writers diminish the role of fighting women by portraying women as incompetent, reinforcing ideas that war is a man’s realm and that women are somehow unsuitable for combat by the mere fact that they are women. From an essentialist point of view, one might explain the

return to images of primarily nurturing women who attend to men's needs, as confirmation of the primary Russian women's archetype: the archetype of the mother. Nevertheless, when one compares the images of women in literary works and popular magazines in a relatively short period of time (for example 1940 to 1950), the dramatic difference of portrayal indicates that a woman's role in combat, and in a larger sense, in society, is largely constructed by culture.

Although the woman warrior is an ancient image, present in Russian culture since before the beginning of written history, the *polianitsa* does not seem to fit well into postwar constructions of gender, although, like Kingston's title character, they are quite conscious of their roles as defenders of the defenseless. As a result, the women veterans who occupy the smallest role in the mythology of World War II are precisely the women who contributed the most to the war effort through heroic deeds: pilots, snipers, machine gunners, and tank operators. Proud of their combat achievements, frustrated by their nation's virtual silence about their heroic deeds following their demobilization, and insistent that women should have the right to defend their country in combat, these women, most notably the pilots, began writing about themselves in an attempt to reclaim a central spot in Russian cultural memory. Some, like Marina Chechneva, kept a virtual production line of memoirs and biographies about their comrades-in-arms. Through these works, they repeatedly memorialize themselves and their friends by describing themselves as epic heroes and detailing their heroic deeds. Although within five years of the war, most of the female pilots had been demobilized, throughout the passing years, their impressive

military service lived on in their memories. Semi-annually, they would don their uniforms and medals, gather with comrades-in-arms, and sing war songs. The 2006 edition of Chechneva's *Podrugi moi boevye* foregrounds the veteran in her uniform, covered in decorations. In the background, a photograph of an explosion under two PO-2 airplanes shows the reader what Chechneva and her comrades-in-arms accomplished. The back of the book lists Chechneva's accomplishments.

The *polianitsy*'s constructions do not fit with the postwar climate that privileges the image of males as protectors and women as nurturers, as those who give life and fulfill needs. The heroic depiction of Chechneva contrasts dramatically with other post-Soviet images of women in uniform. In the early 1990s, the popular military magazine *The Soviet Soldier (Sovetskii voïn)* also published several pictures of armed women. These images sent quite a different message from the one conveyed in the military magazines of the 1930s, that fit with a temporary expansion of gender possibilities. In the 1990s, editors of military magazines undress women to appeal to the male gaze. For example, one pilot wears a helmet, but her shirt is open to the extent that one can see the side of her breast. Another, armed with a rifle, smiles at the camera from her vantage point next to a river. She sports a camouflage hat and her camouflage shirt is buttoned, but she is wearing no pants.

Constructions of gender shape the manifestation of archetypes. This intersection explains why some archetypes are embraced and while some are rejected, at least temporarily. In the postwar period, Soviet culture as whole, has

rejected the archetype of the self-conscious “female avenger,”⁵¹² and has reattributed rights and responsibilities of warfare to the male population. The photographs in *Sovetskii voïn*, taken by men, intended for the sexual titillation of a male audience, continue a trend somewhat akin to what we saw in official Soviet literature as male writers sexualized and re-feminized female soldiers. Far from accepting them as comrades on the battlefield, these post-Soviet photographs say that military men think women only as the object of their sexual desire. Post-Soviet culture has redefined gender roles to the point that, as with other images of women, a woman in uniform becomes a sex symbol. While the state in the 1930s conveyed the message that all citizens, regardless of gender, should prepare for war, the media in the 1990s reconfirms that the military is a male realm. In the 1930s, official organs of propaganda conveyed the message that women warriors were patriotic daughters in the “great family,” that they were formidable, that they had a role in all aspects of military life, and that motherhood and the military could be compatible. In response to propaganda campaigns and their own personal aspirations, these women became trained soldiers and distinguished themselves in World War II, only to be pushed out of the military in the immediate postwar period. *Sovetskii voïn*, in contrast to *Osoaviakhim*, shows that by 1992, the only roles in the military open to women were the mourning mother, the injured nurse in fiction about World War II, and the sexualized pin-up. There is no room for alternate gender personalities, for strong

⁵¹² Just before killing a baron who had drafted her brother and sexually assaulted young women, the woman warrior in Kingston’s novel proclaims, “I am a female avenger.” See Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (New York: Vintage International, 1976), 43.

women warriors, and their heroic feats. The men's constructions win out over the knights' self-image because the many male writers' works conform to the conservatism of postwar, Soviet culture.

The relative freedom of the post-Soviet period has allowed room for reconstructions of Soviet myths and has highlighted some of the contradictions present already during the Soviet period. Interestingly, likely due to the deep roots of the martyr in Russian culture, the most ideological and mythic examples of women soldiers are celebrated by Russians to this day, while images of handmaidens and *polianitsy* highlight an ongoing debate about gender roles. This study has only begun the discussion of the complicated figure of the woman warrior in Soviet culture and the interactions between essentialist and constructivist concepts.

In conclusion, the myth of the woman warrior and World War II has proved to be quite complicated, with images of these women existing at an intersection of the essential archetypal and constructed gender roles. Although the archetype of the woman warrior, the armed knight, is deeply ingrained in Russian culture, during the postwar period, it was largely repressed and the woman warrior-*polianitsa* mostly forgotten in the Soviet memory of World War II. Instead, many male authors expressed their repression of the archetype by portraying armed women soldiers as incompetent and reshaping the warrior into the image of the beautiful, nurturing handmaiden, who is a life-affirming manifestation of the mother archetype, a caretaker, regardless of her military uniform. Nevertheless, above all, Russians, regardless of age, sex, and background venerated and continue to honor the warrior-

martyr, a pure, brave girl who sacrifices herself for her collective. This veneration of the warrior-martyr is not entirely surprising, considering the role the martyr has played in Russian culture for centuries. While the debate about the *polianitsa* and the handmaiden ebbs and flows, myths about the martyr, in particular Zoia Kosmodem'ianskaia, continue to prosper in the post-Soviet period. This study informs us despite the centuries-long tradition of creating women warriors in folklore and literature, the myth of the woman warrior is surprisingly complex and embattled. The women warriors who continue to “live” into the post-Soviet epoch are precisely those who did not initially fit my definition.

Appendix

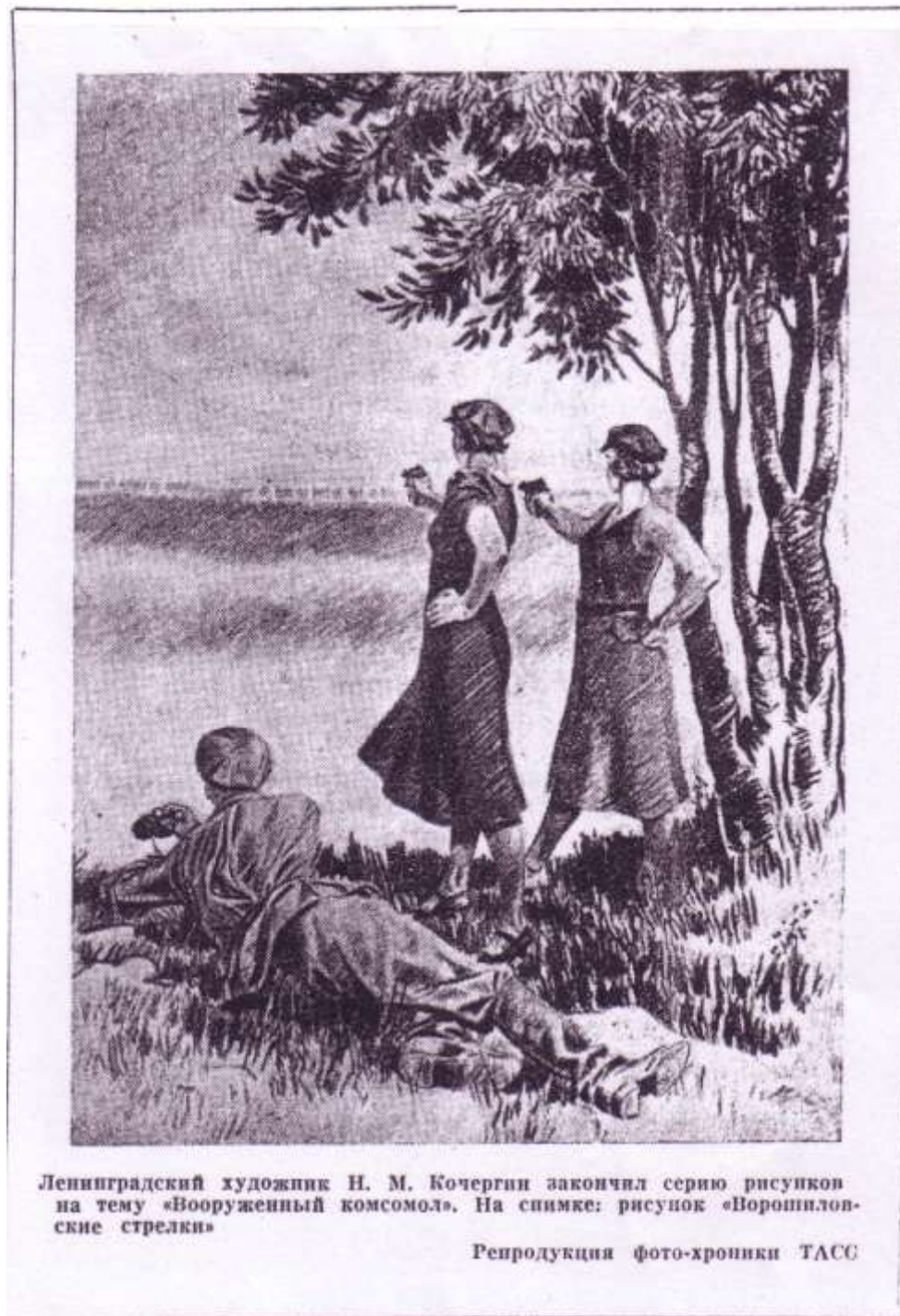


Figure 1. N. M. Kochergin, “The Armed Komsomol” (“Вооруженный комсомол”) in *Voroshilovskii strelok* 1 (1939): 5

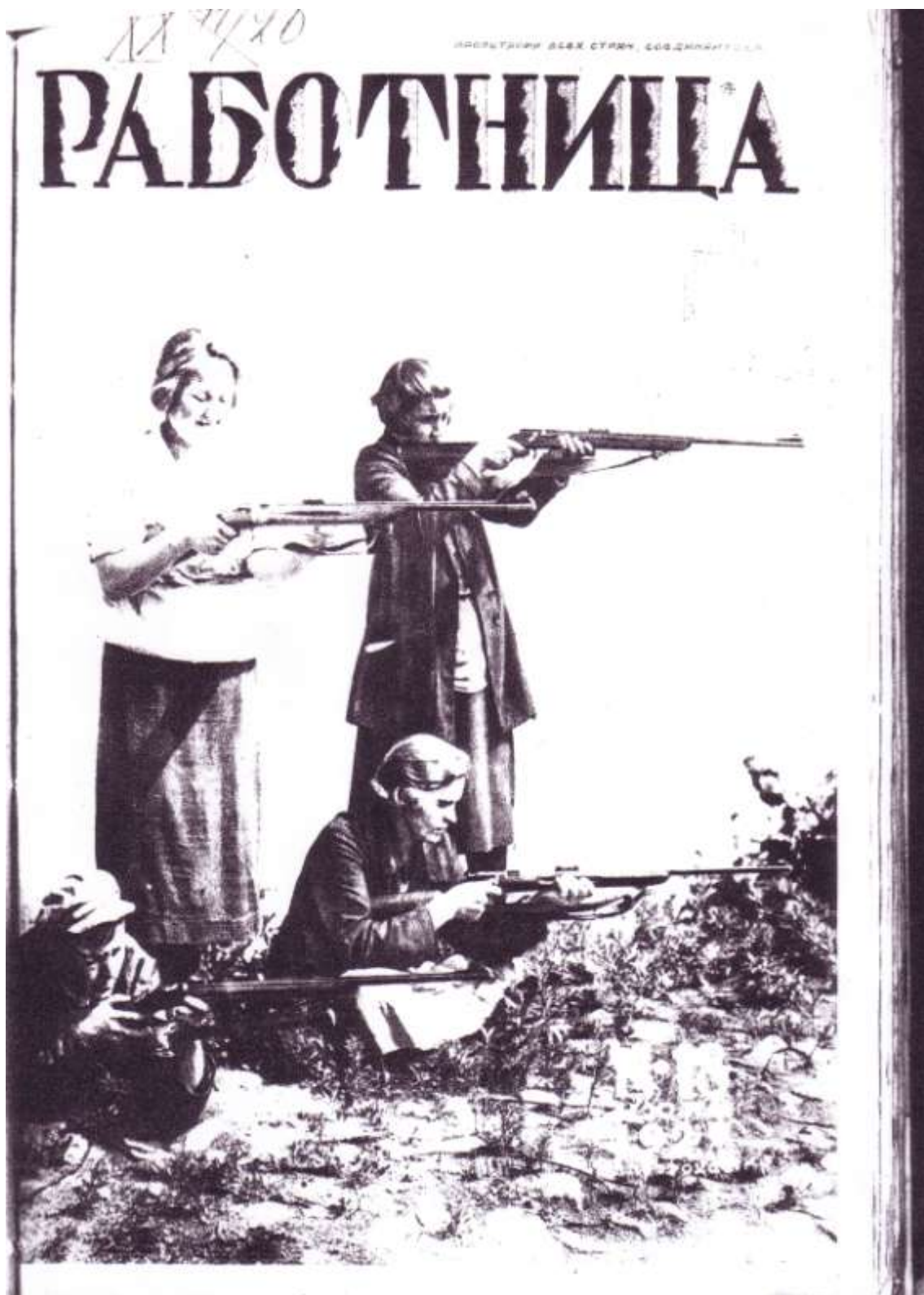


Figure 2. *Rabotnitsa* (July 1927).



Figure 3. *Rabotnitsa* 8 (March 1938): 16.



Figure 4. *Voroshilovskii strelok* 19-20 (October 1939): 16.



Figure 5. *Voroshilovskii strelok* 8 (April 1940): back cover.



Figure 6. *Osoaviakhim* 5 (March 1929).



Figure 7. M. Nikolaev, "Priz-vympel zhenskikh komand," in *Voroshilovskii strelok*. 7 (May, 1936): 5.

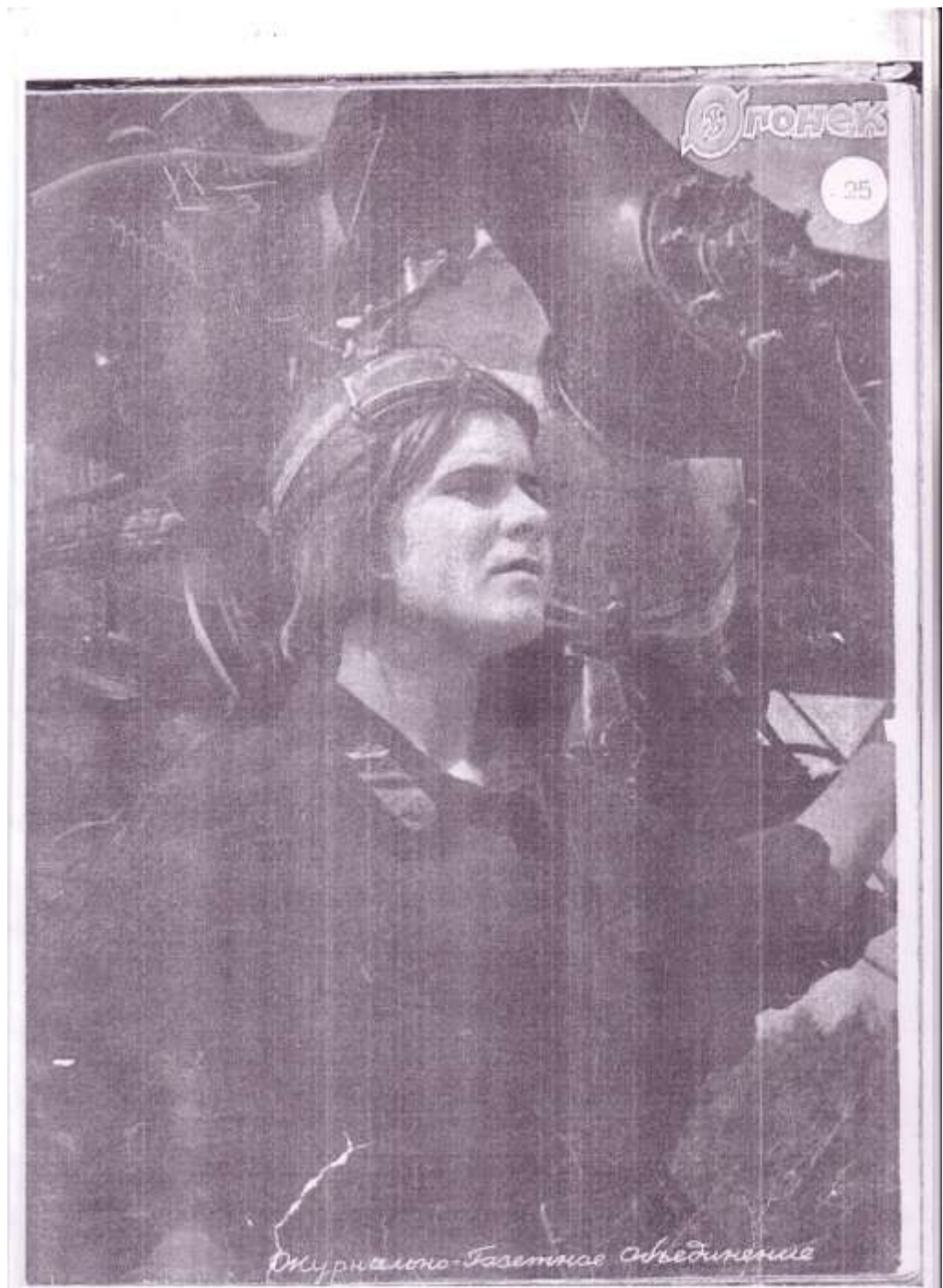


Figure 8. *Ogonek* (10 September 1936).



Figure 9. *Voroshilovskii Strelok* 14 (July 1935).



Figure 10. *Gigiena i zdorov'e rabochei i krest'ianskoi sem'i* (March 1931).



Figure 11. *Osoaviakhim* 7/8 (5 March 1930).



Figure 12. *Rabotnitsa* 27 (September 1939): cover.



Figure 13: *Rabotnitsa 29* (October 1938): 3.



Figure 14: *Samolet 18* (September 1939): 5.



Figure 15: Ina Konstantinova’s Komsomol card in the Liza Chaikina Museum and Exhibition Center, formerly, the Liza Chaikina Museum of Kosomol Glory, Tver’ (July 2007).



Figure 16. The Liza Chaikina Museum and Exhibition Center in Tver' (July 2007).



Figure 17. The Liza Chaikina Museum and Exhibition Center in Tver' (June 2007).



Figure 18. Zoia and Aleksandr Kosmodem'ianskie Street in Moscow (July 2007).



Figure 19. S. Strunnikov, *Pravda* 27 January 1942.

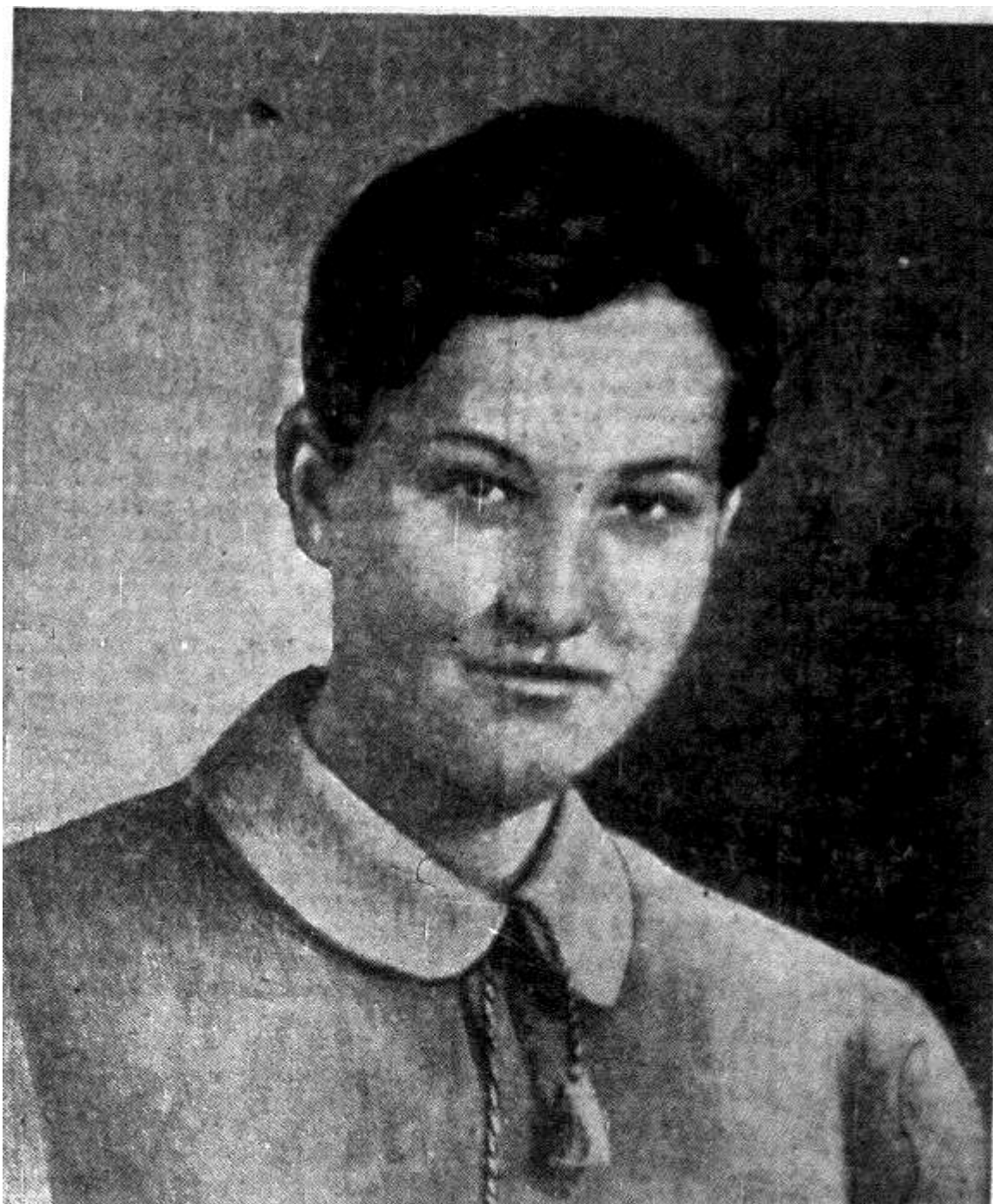


Figure 20. *Pravda* (17 February 1942).



Figure 21. M. Manizer, "Proekt pamiatnika Zoe Kosmodem'ianskoi," *Ogonek* 2 (13 January 1946): between 8 and 9.



Figure 22. Partizanskaia station, Moscow metro (February 2006).



Figure 23. Komov monument in Novodevich'e cemetery, Moscow (May 2006).



Figure 24. Monument in Petrishchevo (July 2007).



Figure 25. *Rabotnitsa* (February 1954), color plate between pages 8 and 9.

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[illustration] *Osoaviakhim* 5 (1 Mar 1929): cover.

[illustration] *Osoaviakhim* 7/8 (5 Mar 1930): cover.

[illustration] *Rabotnitsa* 8 (August 1949): inside cover.

[illustration] *Rabotnitsa* 10 (October 1950): cover.

[illustration] *Voroshilovskii strelok* 14 (1935): front cover.

[illustration] *Voroshilovskii strelok* 8 (April 1940): back cover.

[photograph] “Geroicheskie docheri geroicheskogo naroda.” *Rabotnitsa* 19 (1938):
3.

[photograph] *Ogonek* 25 (10 September 1936): cover.

[photograph] *Osoaviakhim* 25 (Sept. 1930): cover.

[photograph] *Rabotnitsa* 18 (July 1927): cover.

[photograph] *Rabotnitsa* 29 (October 1938): 3.

[photograph] *Rabotnitsa* 27 (1939): cover.

[photograph] *Rabotnitsa* 2 (February 1954): color plate between 8 and 9.

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