TO CHILDREN I GIVE MY HEART

VASILY SUKHOMLINSKY

(Translated from the Russian by Holly Smith)

From the Publishers

Vasily Alexandrovich Sukhomlinsky (1918-1970) devoted thirty-five years of his short life to the upbringing and instruction of children. For twenty-nine years he was director of a school in the Ukrainian village of Pavlysh, far away from the big cities.

For his work in education, he was awarded the titles of Hero of Socialist Labour and Merited Teacher of the Ukrainian SSR; and elected Corresponding Member of the Academy of Pedagogical Science of the USSR.

What is the essence of Vasily Sukhomlinsky's work as an educator?

Progressive educators have long tried to merge upbringing and instruction into one educational process. This dream was realized in the educational work of Sukhomlinsky. To see an individual in every school child - this was the essence of his educational method and a necessary requirement for anyone who hopes to raise and teach children.

Vasily Sukhomlinsky showed in theory and practice that any healthy child can get a modern secondary education in an ordinary public school without any separation of children into group of bright and less bright. This was no new discovery. But he found the sensible mean that enable, the teacher to lead the child to knowledge in keeping with the national educational programme. The main thing for Sukhomlinsky was to awaken the child's desire to learn, to develop a taste for self-education and self-discipline.

Sukhomlinsky studied each of his pupils, consulting with the other teachers and with the parents, comparing his own thoughts with the views of the great educators of the past and with folk wisdom.

To teach children, you must like them. Only then can one help the child discover the joy of working, of friendship, and humanity. The teacher must find his way to the heart of every child. Only then can he or she teach children to love their families, their school, work and knowledge, and their homeland. Precisely this method--finding one's way to the heart of the child--was the foundation of the work Vasily Sukhomlinsky did in education.

To bring out the best in one's pupils-to develop their natural abilities, to determine their moral qualities, to raise honest people devoted to communist ideals-this was what he considered to be the goal of a Soviet teacher.

The educational method of Sukhomlinsky is education to the good, the truth, the world of feeling, and thoughts; it is the formation of a person and Citizen.

In the last twenty years of his life, Sukhomlinsky made notes on his observations and reflections which he then used for his many books and articles, the best known of which are *To Children I Give My Heart, The Birth of a Citizen, The Secondary School in Pavlysh*, and *The Wise Power of the Collective*. They are the synthesis of the rich experience of this excellent educator. Sukhomlinsky himself called his works a "product of Makarenko". He found the educational experience and life of Soviet educator Anton Semyonovich Makarenko (1888-1939) to be of great value.

At the root Makarenko's method was a profound respect for and belief in the individual. He headed a children's work colony during the 1920s, a very difficult time for the Soviet Republic when large numbers of children had lost their parents, families, and homes. To relieve the grief of these abandoned children, it was essential to surround them with warmth and attention, to give them a new family. For the children in Makarenko's custody, the collective became just such a family. To reeducate these children, to break deep-rooted habits, a new approach was urgently needed, and it was brilliantly worked out by Makarenko. But the main element in Makarenko's system, as Sukhomlinsky saw it, was the "constant, inexhaustible ring of humanism", the "captivating beauty of the finest human aspirations".

The contact between teacher and child and the atmosphere of goodwill that Makarenko created was exactly what the school in Pavlysh headed by Vasily Sukhomlinsky sought to secure. The two teachers linked education with a civic vision of the world, with an understanding of the beauty of the individual in his devoted service to his country and people. They thought that to teach young people how to live was much more than just giving them an understanding of good and evil--it was teaching them intolerance of social evil and injustice.

The educational legacy of Vasily Sukhomlinsky focuses upon the following: in choosing an educational method, he acted in accordance with the principles of Makarenko, the essence of which is that any method used in isolation from the others might yield either positive or negative results. The entire system of methods, harmoniously organized, is important.

The theory of collective education, associated first and foremost with the name of Makarenko, was confirmed by the educational practices of Vasily Sukhomlinsky. In the modern world it is impossible to raise and educate children outside the collective, because only such an education teaches children the joy of communicating with other people and giver them the opportunity to discover their own abilities.

The contemporary development of the science of education, the improvement of schools, inevitably requires more attention to the discoveries and achievements of all progressive educators and to their legacy. The excellent results of Sukhomlinsky's work show that all things educational rest on a single foundation and work toward the goal of moulding the rising generation in a spirit of high morality and civic duty.

Vasily Sukhomlinsky died early. His passing on at the age of only 52 is an aftermath of the war. When the Great Patriotic War against fascist Germany (1941-45) broke out, twenty-three-year-old Sukhomlinsky, fresh from the Poltava Teacher Training Institute enlisted in the army. His wife Vera stayed behind in Nazi- occupied Pavlysh, and aided the partisans. While on a partisan mission, she was seized by the Gestapo. In the fascist prison, a son was born to her. The fascists tortured the brave woman, demanding that she name the leaders of the partisan detachment, but she kept silent, they killed her infant son, only a few days old, before her eyes. Vera herself was hanged... At that time, Sukhomlinsky was fighting against the invaders at the approaches to Moscow. Severely wounded, he was carried off the field of battle. Ever since then, deadly shell fragments were embedded in his chest, and there was a great pain in his heart for his loved ones who had perished.

To the very last day of his Life--2 September 1970-- Vasily Sukhomlinsky lived for children.

Years passed, and the country healed the wounds of war. New generations who knew the war only from history books were born. The children of the Pavlysh school had no idea then that they were being taught, led about the fields and for, by a man in whose chest the scars of war still burned fresh.

Medicine was powerless to help him. Sukhomlinsky died at his post at the beginning of the school year, having opened the doors of his school for the last time for a new generation of children.

The educational legacy of Sukhomlinsky, his, experience as an educator, is attracting more and more attention among teachers and parents not only in the Soviet Union, but also all over the world.

FOREWORD

My dear readers and colleagues-teachers, educators, and directors of schools:

This book is the result of many years of work in a school-the result of thought, concern, anxiety and aggravation. Thirty-three years of uninterrupted work in a village school has been a great happiness for me. I have devoted my life to children. So, after much thought, I decided to call this book, *To Children I Give My Heart*, considering that I have earned that right. I would like to tell other educators-- both those who are presently working in schools, and those who will work there after us - about a long period in life, a period of about a decade: from the day a little child--a little rascal as we teachers often call him--first starts school, until that solemn moment when a young man or woman receives his or her certificate of secondary school completion from the hands of the director and embarks on an independent working life. This is the formative period for an individual, but for the teacher it is an enormous part of his or her life. What was the main thing in my life? I can answer that without thinking: my love for children.

Perhaps you, dear reader, will not agree with some of the things in my work; maybe something in it will seem strange to you or surprising, so let me ask you in advance not to consider this book a universal aid for raising children, teenagers, or young men and women. In the vernacular of education, this book deals with out-of-class educational work (or with the task of bringing up children in the narrow sense of the term). I do not intend to cover lesson material or all the didactic details of the process of learning the fundamentals of science. In the language of delicate human relations, this book is dedicated to the heart of the educator. I have tried to tell how to lead the child into the world around him, how to help him learn, and how to make this intellectual labour easier; how to arouse and affirm noble feelings and emotions in his soul; how to impart a sense of human dignity, faith that the human being is good; how to give him love for his Soviet homeland; how to arouse in the perceptive intellect and sensitive heart of the child the first grains of loyalty to the lofty ideals of communism.

The book you are now holding in your hands is devoted to educational work in the elementary grades. In other words, it is devoted to the world of childhood. And childhood, the world of children, is a special world. Children have their own ideas of good and evil, honesty and dishonesty, and human dignity. They have their own criteria of beauty, and even their own way of measuring time: in childhood a day is like a year, and a year is eternity. To gain access to that fairy castle, the name of which is Childhood, I have always endeavored to become, to some degree, a child myself. Only then do children cease to see you as intruder into their fairy-tale world or as a watchman guarding that world and indifferent to its goings-on.

I wish to make yet another reservation about the content of this book and the nature of experience. Elementary school is first of all the creative labour of one teacher. Therefore, I have deliberately avoided mentioning the work of the collective of teachers and that of parents. This book would be of tremendous length if I were to include all that. In a book about childhood, it is patently impossible to avoid mentioning the families from which the children come. After the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), there was a gloomy, sometimes depressing atmosphere in some families. If I were to fail to give a full, truthful characterization of this family atmosphere, the entire system of my educational work would cause bewilderment. I firmly believe in the great power of education, as did Nadezhda Krupskaya, Anton Makarenko, and other outstanding educators.

THE SCHOOL OF JOY

The Director of a School: After ten years as a teacher, I was appointed director of the secondary school in Pavlysh. Here my educational convictions, which took shape in these ten years, assumed their final form. Here I wanted to see my convictions translated into action.

The more I tried to realize them in practice, the clearer it became that leadership is also an educational endeavor: it is solving ideological and organizational problems on a school-wide basis by one's personal example. The effectiveness of the director as the organizer of the educational collective is greatly increased if the teachers see that he is a good teacher himself and participates directly in the task of educating the children.

Education consists first of all of continuous contact between teacher and pupil. K. D. Ushinsky, the great Russian educator (1824-1870) called the school director the head teacher. But in what way does he or she carry out this role of head teacher?

To educate children through their teachers, to teach teachers the science and art of education-- this is important, but it is one side of the multi-faceted process of administering a school. If the head teacher only instructs others in the art of teaching but has no direct contact with children, then he ceases to be an educator.

The first weeks of my work as a director convinced me that the way to children's hearts was closed to me if I had no interests, hobbies, or aspirations in common with children. Without some kind of direct educational influence upon the children, I, as a director, would lose the most important quality of the teacher-educator-the ability to enter the inner world of children. I envied the classroom teachers, for they were always with children. The classroom teacher has heart-to-heart talks with the pupils, goes with them to the forest, to streams, to work in the fields. The children wait impatiently for those days when they go on excursions, cook porridge, fish, or camp out in the open, looking at the twinkling stars. The director is on the sidelines of all of this. He is there only to organize, to advise, to take note of and correct shortcomings, to encourage what is good and forbid the undesirable. Of course, one cannot manage without all this, but for me it was not enough.

I know many excellent school directors who take an active part in educational work. They are genuine masterminds of the educational process whose lessons serve as examples for teachers. They participate actively in the affairs of the Young Pioneer and Komsomol organizations. They have something to offer teachers, class masters and Young Pioneer leaders. But it seemed to me, and this conviction has grown even stronger over the years, that the director can attain the highest degree of skill as an educator by direct and extended participation in the life of the primary school collective. I wanted to be with the children, to share their joys and sorrows, to feel close to them--a feeling, which is one of the teacher's greatest delights. From time to time, I attempted to join in the life of one or another of the children's collectives: I went with them to work or on camping trips, on excursion, helping create those unrepeatable joys without which it is impossible to imagine a well-rounded education.

But both the children and I felt a kind of artificiality in these relations. I was perplexed by the unnaturalness of the educational situation: the children could not forget that I was with them for only a short time. Genuine community is born only where the teacher is a long-time friend, an associate and comrade in common undertakings. I felt that I needed such community not only for the creative joy that it gave, but also to teach my colleagues the art and science of education, Direct everyday dealing with children is the source of thoughts, educational discoveries, joys, sorrows, and disillusionments. Without them, creativity is impossible in our line of work. I reached the conclusion that the head teacher had to be the leader of a small children's collective, a friend and comrade to these children This certainty was founded upon the educational conclusions I had reached before coming to Pavlysh.

In my first years of teaching, I had already decided that a real school is not just a place where children gain knowledge and skills. Studying is important, but it is not the only thing in the life of the child. The more closely I examined all of which have come to be called the educational-upbringing process, the more convinced I became that the many- sided spiritual Life of the children's collective in which teacher and pupil are united by a multitude of interests and hobbies is the real school. A person who meets with his students only during lessons-the teacher on one side of the desk, and the pupils on the other--doesn't know the soul of the child. And a person who doesn't know children, anyone to whom their thoughts, feelings, and aspirations are inaccessible, cannot be

a teacher. The teacher's desk is sometimes like a stone wall from behind which the instructor makes "attacks" on his "enemies"--the pupils; but more often than not, this desk is turned into a fortress under siege, eventually forced into submission by this "enemy", and the "commander" shut up inside feels as if his hands are tied.

Even with teachers who know their subject matter, education sometimes turns into a fierce struggle simply became there are absolutely no spiritual ties binding the teacher and his or her pupils, and so the soul of the child is frequently bruised. The main reason for the poor or impossible relations between instructor and pupils, found in some schools, is mutual distrust and suspicion: the teacher feels no kinship with the emotions of the child. He or she does not experience the joys and sorrows of the children, does not try mentally to get into the child's shoes. In one of his letters, outstanding Polish educator Janusz Korczak (1878-1942) reminds us of the necessity of gaining entrance to the spiritual world of the child, without condescending to it. This is a very subtle idea, the point of which we educators must assimilate the child's perceptions of the world, its emotional and moral reactions to the surrounding reality with all their distinctive clarity, sensitivity, and immediacy without idealizing or attributing some sort of wonderful characteristics to the child. Janusz Korczak's call to raise ourselves to the spiritual world of the child must he understood as a very delicate comprehension and sensation of the child's own perception of the world-a perception of both mind and heart.

I firmly believe that there are qualities without which a person cannot become a genuine educator, and foremost among them is the ability to penetrate into the spiritual world of the child. Only the person who never forgets that he or she was once a child can become a real teacher. The misfortune of many teachers (children, especially adolescents, call them old fogeys) is that they forget that the student is first of all a living human being in the act of entering the world of knowledge, creativity, and human relations.

In education there are no unconnected pieces acting in isolation. The lessons are an important part of the process of coming to know the world for the participants. The entire structure of the spiritual life of children depends upon how they learn about the world and the kinds of convictions they form. But knowledge of the world does not consist solely of assimilation of knowledge. The misfortune of many teachers is that they measure and evaluate the spiritual world of the child only with grades and marks, dividing all their pupils into two categories: those who study well and the rest.

But if a teacher lands in this miserable situation, with only a one-sided understanding of the multiplicity of the life of the human soul, then could not the same be said of the director who only monitors the teachers' work, giving "general instructions" and granting or denying permission? His situation is even more unpleasant. I found such a role confining. I felt nostalgic whenever I came to check on the students and found them and their teacher excited about something. At such times, a person could walk up to them and not even be noticed: children share a rich spiritual life with their teacher; they have their own secrets. Do we need such school directors? No. The form and method of leadership which developed in the schools of Russia before the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, when the director was essentially an inspector placed over the teachers, an administrator whose duty it was to keep an eye on whether or not the educator was expounding the programme correctly, who said nothing uncalled for and never made a mistake, is an anachronism.

The essence of leadership in the contemporary school consists in seeing that within the very difficult task of education, the finest experience, embodying in itself progressive educational ideas, is created, grows, and is strengthened in the eyes of the teachers. And the person who creates this experience, whore work is an example for other educators, should be the director of the school. One cannot imagine the present-day school without such a director, a person who is himself a fine educator. Education is first of all instruction in how to be a person. Without knowledge of the child--its mental development, thoughts, interests, hobbies, abilities, instincts, and inclinations--there is no education. Just as the head doctor of a hospital cannot be a real doctor without patients of his own, a school director cannot lead the other teachers if he has, no pupils himself. His own pupils in the sense that from the first days the child comes to school until it receives its certificate, the director goes with it from one step to the next in the climb toward maturity, and the director is immediately concerned with its

mental, moral, aesthetic, emotional, and physical development. The director must also have interests in common and share his own spiritual richness with the child.

Who is the central figure in the school? In what sphere of the educational process must the director serve as an example for the other teachers? The main figure in the school is the leader of the primary children's collective - the classroom collective. He is simultaneously a teacher, a friend to the children, and a director of their multifaceted spiritual life. Studying is only one of the petals of the flower of education in the broad sense of the term. In education, there are no divisions into important and unimportant, just as there is no chief petal among the many petals that give the flower its beauty. In education, everything is important lessons, the development of various after-school interests, and the inter-relations of the pupils within the collective.

After six years of working as a school director, I became the teacher coordinator of a classroom collective. I wish to note that this is not the only way to achieve direct spiritual contact between director and pupils, but in my particular situation this method seemed to be the most promising. I looked upon being directly responsible for the children's collective as a very extended experiment set up under natural conditions.

Before I discuss exactly what I did over those years, I would like to touch on the characteristics of one important situation, which in a way reveals the content, and aim of practical work. The pre-school and elementary years play an exceptionally important role in personality formation. Lev Tolstoy (1828-1910), the great Russian writer and educator, maintained that from birth to the age of five years, the child acquires much more for his reason, feelings, will, and character than it does for the rest of its life. And Soviet educator Makarenko repeats this: a person will be what he becomes before the age of five.

Janusz Korczak, a person of uncommon moral beauty, wrote in his book, *When I Again Become Small*: no one can tell whether a child gets more from looking at the blackboard or looking out of the window. What is more useful, more important for it in that instant--the logical world squeezed onto the blackboard, or the world floating by on the other side of the window-pane? One must not tie down a person's soul, but must rather pay attention to the laws of the natural development of every child, to its peculiarities, aspirations and demands.

I have remembered the words of this little book in the gray cover all my life. When, soon after the war, I heard of the author's heroic deeds, his words became a commandment for all of my life. Janusz Korczak was the director of an orphanage in a Warsaw ghetto. The Hitlerites condemned these unfortunate children to death in the ovens of Treblinka. When Korczak was offered the choice of life without children or sharing their fate, he chose death without the slightest hesitation. "We know you are a good doctor; there's no need for you to go to the stoves," the Gestapo told him. "I won't act against my conscience," he answered. This hero went to his death together with his children, calming them, trying to mitigate the horror of their impending death. The life of Janusz Korczak and his feat of amazing moral strength and purity is an inspiration for me. I learned from him that to give children a genuine education one must give them one's heart.

Ushinsky wrote that we can love someone we are with all the time without being aware of it until some misfortune shows us the depth of our feelings. A person can live all of his life without knowing how much he loves his homeland if, for example, he is never away from it for a long time. I remember these words every time I don't see children, don't feel their joys and sorrows, for extended periods. Every year I become more convinced that one of the marks of a fine teacher is his or her affection for children. And if, in the words of Stanislavsky (1863-1938), "it's impossible to order feelings about", then bringing out these feelings in {K. S. Stanislavsky-Soviet theatrical theoretician, educator, stage director, and actor. —Ed}. The teacher-educator is the very essence of fine teaching on the part of the director.

Without constant contact between teacher and child, without penetration into the mutual world of thoughts, feelings, and each other's experiences, an emotional basis as the flesh and blood of education is unthinkable. Multi-faceted emotional relations with children in a united, friendly collective in which the teacher is not just an

instructor but a friend and comrade is a major source of emotional revelations. Emotional closeness is unthinkable if the teacher meets with the pupils only in class, and if it is only there that his or her influence is felt.

Of course we must not put the "world squeezed into the blackboard" and the "world floating by on the other side of the window-pane" into opposition with each other. We cannot allow for the idea that required subject matter drapes the person's soul and that the blackboard enslaves children, while the world outside the window is one of real freedom.

In the years before I came to Pavlysh, I was convinced again and again that the elementary school teacher plays an enormous role in the life of the child. He or she must be like a member of the child's family, like a mother. The faith of a small schoolchild in the teacher, the mutual trust between teacher and pupil, the ideal of humanity, which the pupil sees in his teacher, is elementary, and when the teacher perceives these most complex and wise rules of education, he or she can become genuine spiritual tutor. One of the most valuable qualities of a teacher is his humanity, a deep love for children, a love in which the heartfelt caresses and wise strictness and exactingness of father and mother are combined.

Childhood is an important period in the life of a person, not men preparation for future life. Childhood is real, dear, genuine, unrepeatable life. And what went on then, who led the child through these years, what entered its heart and mind from the world around it, will determine to a large extent what kind of person it will become. Formation of the character, the thought processes and speech occurs in the pre-school and elementary years. It is possible that everything that enters the heart and mind of a child through textbooks and lessons does so only because of the surrounding world, which exists alongside the textbook--the surrounding world in which the child took all those difficult steps between the moment of its birth and that time when it could open a book and read.

The long task of learning begins in childhood, the task of learning with one's heart and mind those moral values that lie at the basis of communist morality: boundless love of and a readiness to give one's life for the happiness, greatness and might of the homeland, and irreconcilable firmness to the enemies of one's country.

Over a period of thirty-three years I studied the vocabulary of children of all ages, and of grown-ups as well. The picture was amazing. A seven-year old child from an ordinary collective farmer's (father and mother have a secondary education, and there are about 300-400 books in the home) understands and feels the emotional coloring of about 3,000-3,500 words of his native language and has an active vocabulary of 1,500 of these words at the moment he enters school. Forty-five to fifty-year-aid workers and collective farmers with a secondary education understand and feel the nuances of 5,000-5,500 words of their native language and have an active vocabulary of no more than 2,000-2,500 words. This fact alone is striking evidence of the role the years of childhood play in the life of a person.

The strong conviction that the pre-school and elementary years largely determine the future of the person, does not deny the possibility of re-educating the person in later years. The power of re-education was brilliantly demonstrated in the experience of Soviet educator Anton Makarenko. But he also recognized the exceptional significance of the early years. The proper task of education is not to correct mistakes made in early childhood, but to avoid making them in the first place, thereby eliminating the necessity for re-education.

Working as a school director, I noted with bitterness how the natural life of children can sometimes be misinterpreted when a teacher views education only as an instrument for cramming as much material as possible into the children's heads.

It is impossible to watch without pain how the natural life of the child is crippled, not only during lessons but also in the day-care groups. There are, unfortunately, such schools where, after five or six lessons, the children remain at school for another four or five hours, and instead of playing, relaxing, or going outside for fresh air,

the children continue studying. The time the children spend at school is turned into one endless, tiresome lesson. This practice must not continue! Day care groups are a very valuable form of education. It is precisely here that favorable conditions for continuous spiritual contact between teacher and child, without which education to the higher emotions is unthinkable, exist. But unfortunately many an excellent idea has been turned on its head: all too often the day-care group just gets more of the same old lessons at the same old desks from bell to bell, which is enough to sap the energy of any child.

Why does this happen?

Because it's easier to continue lessons than it is to take the kids out onto the lawn, to the park, or for a walk in the forest. It is a pity that the positive experience of the schools with the finest day-care programmes, which have been thoroughly described in educational literature, has not yet taken root elsewhere. And the main reason for this is the general weakness in education.

We live in a time when, without a mastery of scientific knowledge, neither labour, nor elementary human relations, nor the fulfillment of one's obligations as a citizen are possible. Studying cannot possibly be an easy, pleasant game, which brings only delight and pleasure. And the lives of the younger generations of citizens won't be a bed of roses. We must bring up highly educated, persevering, work-loving people who are prepared to overcome difficulties no less complicated than those overcome by their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. The level of knowledge of the young person of the 1970s to 90s will be incomparably higher than that of the youth of the previous decades. The larger the sphere of knowledge one must master the more one must take into consideration the nature of the human body in the period of rapid growth, development and personality formation—the years of childhood. The person always was and always will be the child of nature, and whatever causes this kinship must be used to join him to the richness of spiritual culture. The world surrounding the child is first of all the world of nature with its un-limited wealth of phenomena and inexhaustible beauty. Here, in nature, lies the eternal source of the child's intellect. But along with this, the role of those elements of the environment connected with the relations of people to society, with labor, are also growing with every year.

But the process of cognition of the realities at hand is no substitute for emotional stimulus of thought. For the pre-school or elementary school child, this stimulus plays a very important role. The truth, in which the examples and phenomena of the surrounding world are generalized, becomes a personal conviction of the children provided it is inspired by dear images, which influence the feelings. It is crucial that the child discover its first scientific truths in the world around it, that the source of thought be beauty and the inexhaustible complexity of natural phenomena, that the child gradually enters the world of societal relations, and of labor.

From the very beginning of my work at the Pavlysh School, I was interested in the younger children, especially those in the first classes. The children entered school quivering with excitement on the first days of their studies, truthfully gazing into the eyes of their teacher! Why does it so often happen that after a few months, or even in a matter of weeks, the light in their eyes goes out? Why is studying such a torture for some children? Especially since all teachers sincerely want to preserve this childish spontaneity, this joyful perception and discovery of the world; they want to make studying an inspiration, interesting task for the children.

First of all, this usually happens because the teacher does not know a great deal about the spiritual world of each child and because life within the walls of the school is confined to studying--regulated by bells, as if to level the children out, to adjust them all to one measure, making no allowances for the richness of the individual world. Of course, I advised teachers of the elementary classes on how to develop the interests and diverse spiritual life of the children, but advice is not enough. What is important is the educational idea, the essence of which is unveiled in the interrelations of children and teachers, and which becomes clear when it stands before the eyes of the teachers' collective like a tall building erected within the school. This is why I began educational work with the classroom collective, to be carried out over a period of ten years.

Life in the classroom collective, which will be discussed below, is not fenced off from the life of the school collective. In many cases I will touch upon the form and methods of educational work within the framework of the school as a whole. But I will resort to this only to show the classroom collective more clearly, since precisely the substance of the educational work in the classroom is the main condition for the success of all in-school education.

The First Year - Studying the Children

In the fall of 1951 three weeks before school started, simultaneously with the first-formers, the six- year-old boys and girls who would begin school a year later were registered as well. I was destined to work with these children for ten years.

When I gathered all the parents and children together and suggested that they send the children to school for a year before the official start of classes, opinions were divided: some parents approved of my intentions, considering that since there was no year-round kindergarten (in those years the village kindergarten operated only in the summer), sending the children to school would help out the families. Others feared that premature studying would have an adverse effect on the children's health. "They'll have plenty of time to sit in a classroom," said Lyuba's mother. "The only real childhood they have is before they start school." These words made me think once again about how harmful the sharp break in the whole tenor of the child's life is when it starts school, how important it is to give it enough scope for the development of its natural strength. I told them that coming to school for a year before lessons started wouldn't mean sitting in the classroom.

I needed this year before the children began their studies to get to know every child well, to study the individual features of its perceptions, thoughts, and intellectual working. Before one can pass on knowledge, one must teach children how to think; to perceive, to observe. One must also be thoroughly familiar with the state of health of every child--without this it is impossible to teach normally.

Intellectual upbringing is not the same as acquiring knowledge. Although it is impossible without education, just as leaves cannot be green without sunlight, nonetheless, the training of the mind cannot be identified with education any more than green leaves can be identified with the sun.

The educator deals with thinking matter, the perceptive and cognitive ability of which depends, to a large extent, on the child's health. This dependency is very delicate and difficult to apprehend. The study of the internal spiritual world of children, especially their thoughts, is one of the most important exercises of the teacher.

My Pupils' Parents

In order to know children well, one must know their families--father, mother, brothers, sisters, grandfathers and grandmothers. In the neighborhood of our school there were 31 six-year-old children-- 16 boys and 15 girls. All the parents agreed to send their children to the School of Joy, as the mothers and fathers shortly began calling our group of preschoolers. Of 31 children, 11 were without fathers, and two had neither father nor mother. The fates of both of these boys, Vitya and Sasha, were tragic. Vitya's father fought as a partisan in the Great Patriotic War, and was killed by the fascists after being cruelly tortured before the eyes of his wife. Vitya's mother couldn't bear the grief and went insane. The boy was born six months after this tragic event. The mother died after giving birth, and the infant was saved with great difficulty. Sasha's father died at the front, and his mother was killed during the fighting to clear the village of fascist invaders.

In the last few weeks before the opening of the School of Joy-, I got to know every family. I was disturbed by the fact that in some families there was not a friendly atmosphere between parents and children, father and mother. The mutual respect without which a child's happy life is impossible did not exist in some cases.

Here stands dark-eyed, olive-skinned, pug-nosed Kolya. He has a guarded look. I smiled at him, and he frowned harder. In these moments I thought of his abnormal family condition. Before the war, Kolya's father had been in prison, and his family was living in the Donbas Region. During the fascist occupation, the father left prison, and his family came to live in our village. His mother and father used people's grief to make money: they profiteered, hiding things stolen by fascist underlings. In these difficult years his mother stole chickens from the collective farm's chicken houses and taught Kolya and his older brother to catch crows to eat. The children killed the birds and their mother fried them and sold them at the market as chickens. I looked at this boy, wanting him to smile, but I saw reserve and fear in his eyes. How can I awaken kind, human feelings in your heart, Kolya, to countervail the abnormal atmosphere of malice and contempt for people you grew up with? I saw the blank, indifferent eyes of his mother, and I am troubled.

I thought a long time before I decided to mention these details in this book, crossing them out tens of times, and then putting them in again. I could have confined myself to general characteristics of course: the father and mother were no examples of moral rectitude for the child... But that would just be smoothing things over. We must not close our eyes to the loathsome things still around us. No stonewall can protect a school from them. To struggle against and overcome this evil, to clean the filth inherited from the old world from young souls, we must bravely look the truth in the face.

Tow-headed, skinny Tolya with his sky blue eyes. He stood beside his mother, holding her hand, staring at the ground, looking up once in a while. His father died a hero's death in the Carpathians; his mother received several of his posthumous medals. Tolya is proud of his papa, but his mother has a bad reputation in the village: she leads a dissipated life, leaving the child to look after himself... What can be done to prevent the heart of this six-year-old boy from being crippled? What steps should be taken to make his mother come to her senses and wake up to the fact that she should care for her son.

The war had left grave scars, wounds that were still open. Before me were children born in 1945, and several in 1944. A few had lost their fathers before they were even born; Yura, for example, whose father was killed two days before the end of the war. His mother loves him to distraction, tries to satisfy his every desire. His grandfather lives with them and is also ready to do anything for the boy. From what I found out about the family, it was clear that this six-year-old child could turn into a little tyrant. The blind love of a mother is just as dangerous as indifference.

Petrik came with his mother and grandfather. I had heard a lot about the hard life of this little boy's mother. Her first husband left her before the war. The woman married a second time, but the union was not a lucky one: it turned out that Petrik's father already had a family somewhere in Siberia, so he left after the war. She decided to tell her son that his father had died at the front from pride. So the boy told the other children about the imaginary deeds of his father, but they didn't believe him. They said his father was a liar. Petrik ran crying to his mother, but it was clear that unkind people had planted bitterness and mistrust in the soul of this child. What could be done so this child would believe in the good?

Kostya was already seven, but he still hadn't started school. His father, stepmother, and grandfather brought him to school. This child, too, had been touched by the tragedies of war. Several weeks after the liberation of the village from the fascist invaders, Kostya's pregnant mother, who was due to deliver any day, found several metal objects and gave them to her seven-year-old to play with. Among the objects was the fuse from a mine. The fuse exploded, and her son died. The mother hung herself. But some people came in time and took her out of the noose, and in the throes of her death, Kostya was born. The child was saved by a miracle: a neighbor breast-fed him along with her own infant. His father returned from the front. He doted on the boy, protecting and cherishing him. His stepmother, a fine woman, and grandfather also loved him. But when Kostya was five, a new misfortune occurred: he found a shiny metal object in the vegetable garden and started to beat on something with it. It exploded and the bloody child was carried to the hospital. Kostya was left an invalid: for the rest of his life he would be without his left hand and eye, and the dark blue grains of powder had eaten into his face forever...

How much must you be given, Kostya, how much heart-felt warmth and kind caresses, for you to become a happy person? How must your father, kind stepmother, and grandfather be spoken to so their love will become wise and exacting? How will you be able to study? Your family says that you get headaches. How can your studying be made easier, your health improved, and your gloomy mood dispelled? Your father says that sometimes you go off by yourself and cry. The games of other children your age don't interest you...

Gray-eyed, pensive Slava sits next to his mother. His mother's is the hard life of a woman alone. She is near fifty. When she was young, she dreamed of happiness, but she was not beautiful, so no one would marry her. Her youth passed, and she was left without personal happiness. Then after the war a man, single like her, returned home covered with scars. He fell in love with her, and they married. But their happiness was short-lived, for the husband soon died. The woman transferred all her love to her son, but she did not raise him properly. They said Slava didn't like people, that he would sit at home for days on end, and that as soon as you asked him to do something, he would begin to glare at you. Even now as I look him in the eyes, they immediately become biting and guarded.

The better I got to know my future pupils, the more I was convinced that one of the main tasks before me was to give back childhood to those who were deprived of it in their families.

In three years of working in the school, I had known dozens of such children. Life shows that if one cannot restore a child's faith in justice and the goal, it will never feel that it is really a person; it will never feel a sense of personal adequacy. Such a pupil will be an embittered teenager; for him nothing in life will be sacred. The words of his teacher will not reach to his heart.

To heal the soul of such a child is one of the more difficult labors of the teacher; this most delicate, most painstaking task is, essentially, the main test of teaching one's students the art of being a person. To teach this art means not only to see and feel the way in which a child comes to know good and evil, but also to protect the sensitive heart of the child from evil.

Looking into the eyes of children--dark brown and different shades of blue--I wondered whether I had enough goodness and kindness to warm their hearts. I remembered the words of Nadezhda Krupskaya: "For the child, an idea is inseparable from personality. It will receive the words of a beloved teacher in quite another way than those of a stranger or a contemptible person." I would be teaching by word and by personal example. The children must read goodness, beauty, and truth in my words and deeds. Warmth, cordiality, and kindheartedness must stand behind every one of my words.

Galya was brought by her father. She and her little sister had experienced great sorrow: their mother had died. A year later, their father remarried, and a strange woman, but one who was kind, honest, and sympathetic, moved into their home. She tried to win the little girls' hearts; she was careful of their feelings, hoping they would grow to like her. A week passed and then a month, but Galya and her little sister Valya didn't even want to talk with their stepmother. It was as if they didn't notice her. The woman cried, asking advice of her husband and relatives what was she to do? She even thought of leaving, but then she had a baby. She hoped that the appearance of the child would warm the little girls' hearts, but her wish was not fulfilled. The girls, especially Galya, didn't want to pay any attention to their baby brother. How could her proud heart be touched? What advice should the mother and father be given, when in fact the father has already come to me and poured out his heart! I answered that I could only advise them what to do after I knew Galya better.

Plump, gray eyed, smiling Larisa sat next to her mother holding a chrysanthemum in her hand. I knew that her mother's heart was heavy with grief. Her husband had left her, and the little girl didn't remember her father. But her mother told her, "Daddy will come home." Later the woman married a good man, and managed to convince the little girl that this was her real father. Larisa loved the man, but her mother lived in fear that a careless word

would reveal her lie. The little girl was happy, but her heart had to be vigilantly protected from the rough cut of unkind words. Could this be done with the aid of her fine parents? He was not her real father, but would that every child had a real father as good as their child's stepfather. The better I got to know the man; the more I was convinced that the one who raises the child is the real father. I dropped by on this family often, and was surprised by one thing in particular: the little girl's eyes had exactly the same kindness, goodwill, and sympathy as her stepfather's. The child's eyes showed the same inspiration and amazement in the face of beauty as the father's. Even her gestures, her expression of astonishment, alertness, sternness--Larisa got all this from him.

Fedya...He didn't have a father either, and he had already heard caustic comments that his mother had once behaved far from irreproachably. His childish soul was confused: how could such things be true of his mother when she says his father died at the front? I knew Fedya's mother long before the war. Her life took unhappy turn during the war. How could this child be led into the complicated world of human relationships so that these tormenting questions would cease to bother him?

We educators tend to forget that for little children, knowledge of the world starts with knowledge of the person. Good and evil is revealed to the child by the tone of voice in which his father speaks to his mother, by his father's expressions and movements. I knew one little girl who went to a remote corner of the garden and cried quietly when her father came home from work gloomy and taciturn, while her mother did everything she could to try to please him. The child's heart was bursting with anger toward her father and with compassion for her mother...

These are just the first, superficial features of human relations of which the child becomes cognizant. But what goes on in the child's heart when a careless word from one of its parents lets it know that they don't love each other and would get a divorce if it weren't for the child?

Nina and Sasha were twin sisters. Their father brought them to school. This family with its many children (there were four more besides Nina and Sasha) had its own troubles: their mother had been bedridden for several years. The older sisters kept house; the father had a very difficult time. Nina and Sasha already knew the meaning of work. Theirs was a joyless home. When the girls saw a green rubber ball in one of the boy's hands, their eyes sparkled with pleasure, but it faded at once into a look of such deep misery that my heart bled for them. How could these children be given the bright placid joy of childhood? Would I be able to do it? Their father had already reminded me that they could come to school for no more than an hour because they had to help out at home.

We were sitting in the grass in the shade of a tall dense pear tree. I told the parents about what I thought education should be like. I said what could be said about these things in front of children, but I could not get the trials and tribulations of every family out of my head. Every person has troubles, but to show them to the whole world, to give advice in the presence of others would be to turn the soul of another inside out, to hold up for observation what is intimately private. I must know all this, but to talk about it in front of all the parents would be wrong. If it becomes necessary to go into the innermost recesses of the parents' hearts, then that must be done only in a private conversation, having weighed every word a thousand times. The wounded hearts, adversities, offences, grief's, anxieties, and sufferings of the fathers and mothers of whom I speak (the overwhelming majority of my pupils' parents were fine people) are individual to the extent that I cannot generalize on the subject. When the complicated interlacing of good and bad in people revealed itself before me, I realized that no parents would deliberately set a bad example for their children.

Perhaps I have shown the reader entirely too much grief and adversity: after all I've just been talking about one children's collective. We mustn't forget, however, that all these are wounds of war. The first years after the war are long past. The heavily wounded souls of those years have been healed; they grew up and became fathers and mothers themselves, those who read their first word by the light of the victory salutes of 1944-45. The children of those who began school in the first years after the war have long since entered school themselves, and some of

them are already teenagers. It would seem that the young families of today should be bright with happiness, but life isn't like that. Even now there is grief, unhappiness, tragedy... There is nothing more to be said of those former years. I was glad that most of the mothers and fathers of that time lived good family lives, in peace and goodwill, as they say, and raised their children well.

Take the father of sturdy seven-year-old Vanya for example. He was a hard worker, an agronomist, who loved the land passionately and worked for the good of other people. Every year he raised dozens of apple seedlings and little grape vines in his garden plot and gave them away. His wife worked as a section leader in a silk breeding enterprise. She was skilled at her trade and was a kind, responsible, warm-hearted person, a caring mother. In the difficult days of 1933-34, she took in four orphans, saving them from starvation. She raised them as her own land they call her "mother".

Lusya, a little girl with magnificent black braids, had a very honest and upright father. There are people you would call the salt of the earth. The overwhelming majority of them don't do great deeds. Their spiritual beauty lies in their relations with their fellow men. More than likely, Lusya's father had never told her that you have to be responsible and sympathetic. He taught sympathy and humanity to his children by his own behavior and his relationship with his wife. Lusya's mother had a bad heart. She worked at the beet plantation on the collective farm, so the father took all the housework upon himself.

Katya's father and mother had turned their orchard into a unique club for the kids. Their four children and the neighbors' kids as well romped and played games in the orchard from early spring to late autumn. Katya's father had even made a little playground for the children. All of the fruit from the orchard was a delicacy the children were allowed to pick. Sanya, a little girl with dark-blue, pensive eyes, had kind, warm-hearted parents. Every summer three little girls from the city, her father's nieces, came to stay with them.

Sanya could hardly wait for them to come. Her father built a little place for them to go swimming on the edge of the pond. And then he built a motorboat so he could give the children one more pleasure in life.

Lida came from a fine family. Her father worked at the factory where railway cars were built. He was a musician and a singer. He was teaching his children to sing and play the violin, and he put together, improvised open-air concerts. As many as twenty children would gather listen to the music and learn folk songs.

Pavel had a friendly family. His mother had been bedridden for more than four years. The father had managed to take her place: he worked in the factory, and did all the housework as well.

There were four people in the family of Seryozha, an olive-skinned, dark-eyed little boy, and they were all very friendly. Every free day, the family went to the forest. There in the meadow, they planted four little lime trees. At home the children planted apple trees, one each for their Mother, Father, Grandfather, and Grandmother. I was not surprised that the children in that family loved their father, mother, grandmother, and grandfather so much. Probably all the kindness their mother and father put into the children's hearts was returned to them a hundredfold in strong, pure love.

Lyuba's mother, father, grandmother, big sister and little brother brought her to school. Lyuba had five brothers and sisters, two grandmothers and a grandfather. A spirit of implicit obedience of their elders pervaded this family with its mutual trust and respect. I had heard a lot about how the older people in the family respected the children, and cared for their feelings.

Excellent folk traditions lived on in the family of Danko, the littlest boy. The three children, six, eight and nine years old, looked after the house while their parents were at work. They cooked lunch and dinner, milked the cow, and looked after the vegetable garden. When their mother and father returned from work on summer

evenings, their bath was ready, clean towels were laid out, and a hot supper and fresh flowers were on the table. Respect for work reigned in this family. One could even say there was a cult of work without hurry or haste.

Valya's father worked in the engineering plant in Kremenchug and her mother at the kolkhoz. Everyone in this friendly family studied--the parents and all three children. The spirit of learning that ruled this home was interesting to the teachers and gladdened us. When Valya entered the School of Joy we learned that the old woman everyone had thought was her grandmother was in no way related to the family--she simply had no relatives anywhere. Her two sons had been killed in the war, and Valya's family took her in. For the children she became one of their own. Valya did not even know that she was no blood relation.

Little gray-eyed Lyuda's parents worked at the kolkhoz. They had taught their children to respect farm work. A sense of honor reigned in the family. "Everything we do for other people must be beautiful," the father told his children. In the summer, the older children worked with their father in the fields. Several times a month, Lyuda and her mother went to visit them. These trips were a holiday for the little girl.

Tanya's parents worked at the kolkhoz stockbreeding farm. She and her sister went there a lot in the summer, and learned to like working. Our teachers saw more than once how their father put up a little fence in one corner of the farm, and put a lamb of calf behind it. Tanya and her older sister took good care of the baby animals. This was their favorite game, and they were attracted to it by the fact that their mother and father played it, too.

Shura was a little boy with tender, searching dark eyes. His father worked on the railroad and came home only once a week. His coming was a big event for Shura and his brother and sister. The children waited impatiently for him, for he always brought them some unusual gift: skillfully carved little wooden figures of animals or people or imaginary creatures. He would bring one for each of the children. The children also loved their father's stories. He had a great penchant for finding good people. And his tales of these good people opened a window for his children to the outside world.

Volodya's father was a bridge builder, and his mother worked at the collective farm. The young parents loved their first-born dearly, but their love showed little wisdom. They'd already given him too many knick-knacks, and always satisfied his whims as quickly as possible. Volodya was sitting next to his mother holding two rubber balls. He wanted to say something to his mother, but she didn't notice, and he immediately pouted, and there were tears in his eyes.

Varya was an olive-skinned, dark-eyed little girl with curly hair, thin as a tender stalk. Her mother was a cleaning woman at the creamery. Her father, severely wounded in the war, was cared for by his family. His health was badly undermined. The three children felt that mother was carrying a heavy burden, and tried to make her life easier. Their mother's wages were modest, and to add to the family budget, she embroidered shirts and towels in the evenings. Varya's older sister had already started doing embroidery to help her mother, and Varya was also learning.

A child is the mirror of the moral lives of the parents. I thought about the good and bad in every family. The most valuable moral characteristic of good parents, which their children are apt to pick up, is kindliness and the wish to do good for other people. In families where the father and mother give a part of themselves to others, taking other people's joys and sorrows close to heart, the children grow up good, sympathetic, and warm-hearted. The greatest evil is the egoism and individualism of same parents. Sometimes it takes the shape of a blind, instinctive love for their children, as in the case of Volodya's parents. If father and mother give all of themselves to their children if they forget that there are other people about them, this hypertrophic love will someday turn into unhappiness.

I thought about this while telling the parents of my ideas for the School of Joy. It was a difficult conversation. I had to take into account all the good and bad that existed in families. As I talked of the traditions of honesty,

truthfulness and mutual confidence that I wanted in the School of Joy, I feel uneasy about Kolya's family. But I couldn't let the other parents know about the serious problems that I knew bedeviled the life of that family. That could turn the mother against the school, and she would not come again. Something else was needed, but I had thought about it for a long time and had not been able to come up with the correct answer.

I sketched out the perspective of a child's growth for the parents. Today they had brought their six- year-olds to the school, but in 12 years these same children would be grown-up, future fathers and mothers. The school would do its best to see that the children became proud patriots, loving their native land and the working people, honest, truthful, hard-working kind, warmhearted, sympathetic, intolerant of evil and injustice, courageous, persevering in overcoming difficulties, modest, morally beautiful, healthy, and physically trained. The children should become people with a clear reason, a noble heart, golden hands, and elevated feelings. The child is a mirror of the family; as the sun is reflected in a drop of water, so the moral purity of the mother and father are reflected in the child. It is the job of the school and the parents to give every child happiness-multi-faceted happiness--happiness so the child can discover its abilities, learn to love labor, and to work creatively to be able to enjoy the beauty of the world around it, and to create beauty for others, to love other people, to be loveable, to be genuine human beings. Only the common efforts of parents and teachers can give children great happiness. The children and parents went home, and I recalled, "Tomorrow, the thirty-first Of August, our School of Joy will come into existence."

What would this day bring me? I saw the children hold their mother's hands, but the next day they would come alone. Every person has his own joys. Everyone has sunny mornings, and an infinite life ahead. On the eve of this day, I was concerned most of all that school not deprives the little ones of their joys. Quite the contrary, one must lead them through the world of school so that new joys would ever open before them, so that learning wouldn't turn into baring studying. And so that, on the other hand, school wouldn't become an endless game, interesting on the surface but empty. Every day must enrich the reason, the feelings, and the will of the children.

School in the Open Air

I awaited the children with excitement. At 8 a. m., twenty-nine of them appeared. Sasha didn't come (her mother was probably not feeling well), and Volodya was absent, to all appearances because he was sleeping, and his mother didn't want to wake him.

Almost all the children were dressed in their holiday clothes and were wearing new shoes. This wearied me because village children have gone bare-footed from time immemorial, and this is excellent physical training, the best prevention of colds. Why do parents try to protect their children's feet from dirt, the morning dew, and the bare ground hot from the sun? They have good motives, but the results are bad: every year more village children are getting influenza, tonsillitis, and whooping cough. Children must be raised to fear neither heat nor cold.

"Let's go to school, children," I said to the little ones and headed for the garden. The children looked at me with bewilderment.

"Yes, children, we're going to school. Our school will be in the open air, on the green grass, under the branches of the pear trees, in the grape arbour, in the green meadows. Take off your shoes here, and let's go barefooted the way you did before." The children chirped with joy; they weren't used to wearing shoes in hot weather, and it was uncomfortable. "And tomorrow, don't come in your shoes. That will be best for our school."

We walked into the alley of the grape arbour. In a quiet corner concealed by trees grew thick grape-vines. Entwined about their metal frame, they made a green hut. The ground inside the hut was covered with soft grass. Quiet reigned there, and through the green dusk it seemed as if the whole world were green. We sat down on the grass.

"And here is where our school begins. From here we will look at the blue sky, the garden, the village, and the sun." The children grew quiet, enchanted by the beauty of nature. Ripe, amber-colored grapes hung between the leaves. The children wanted to taste them. We'll do that as well, children, but first we must admire their beauty. The children looked around them. It seemed as if the garden were in a green fog, as in an underwater kingdom. The surface of the earth--fields, meadows, and roads--seemed to be shivering in a malachite mist, and sparks of sunlight fell on the shimmering trees.

"The sun is scattering sparks," Katya said quietly. The children couldn't tear themselves away from the enchanting world, so I began to tell a story about the sun. "Yes, children, Katya put it very well: the Sun is scattering sparks. He lives high in the heavens. He has two Giant Blacksmiths and a golden anvil. Before dawn the Blacksmiths with their fiery beards go to the Sun, and he gives them two wisps of silver thread. The Blacksmiths take iron hammers; lay the silver threads on the golden anvil, and hammer away. They forge the Sun a silver garland, and silver sparks fly from the hammers and break into pieces, then fall all over the world. Sparks fall on the earth, and you can see them here. In the evening, the tired Blacksmiths go to the Sun and give him the garland. The Sun puts the garland on his golden braids and goes to his magic garden to rest."

I told the story and made drawings at the same time. Fantastic images sprang up on the white sheet of paper--two Giant Blacksmiths bent over the golden anvil, and silver sparks flying from the iron hammers. The children listened to the story enchanted by the magic world, and it seemed that they were afraid to break the silence for fear of breaking the spell. Then they started asking questions: what do the Blacksmiths do at night? Why do they make the Sun a new garland every day? Where do the silver sparks disappear - do they really fall on the earth every day?

"I'll tell you all about that some other day. We have a lot of time yet. Now, let me invite you to taste the grapes." The children waited impatiently while the basket was filled with grapes. I gave every- one two bunches, one to eat and one to take home to mother so she could taste them. The children were surprisingly patient: they wrapped the grapes up in paper. But still I wondered if they would really take them home, and not eat them on the way. Would Tolya and Kolya take the grapes to their mothers' I gave Nina several bunches---one for her sick mother, and more for her sisters and grandmother. Varya took three bunches for her father. The thought struck me that as soon as the children were strong enough, each would plant its own grape arbour... Dozens of seedlings should be planted at Varya's house this fall so they would bear fruit after a year, and that would be good medicine for her father...

We left the green dusk of fairyland, and I told the children: "Come at six o'clock tomorrow evening. Don't forget."

I saw that the children didn't want to leave, but they dispersed clasping the white packages of grapes to their chests. How I wanted to know which ones would take the grapes all the way home! But I couldn't ask them, of course. If they told me themselves, that would be good.

Thus ended the first day of the school in the open air... That night I dreamed of the silver sparks of the sun, and woke up early the next morning and wondered what to do next. I didn't work out a de-tailed plan of what I would tell the children that day or where I would take them. The life of our school developed from an idea, which had inspired me: the child according to its own nature--a keen researcher into the world around it. Let the wonderful world in living colors, clear and quivering sounds, open up before them in fairy tales and games, in personal creativity, in beauty, inspiring their hearts to try to do good for others. Through fairy tales, fantasies and games, through unrepeatable creativity, one finds a sure road to the heart of the child. I would lead the children into the surrounding world which every day reveals something new, in such a way that our every step would be part of our journey to the sources of thought and speech, to the miraculous beauty of nature. I would see to it that every one of my pupils grow up into a reflective and searching person, so that every step to knowledge would ennoble the heart and temper the will.

On the second day, the children came to school towards evening. The quiet September day had cooled off. We left the village and settled down on a tall ancient burial mound. A wonderful view of the meadow ablaze with sunrays, of straight poplars and distant burial mounds on the horizon spread before us. We had come to the sources of thought and words. Fairy tales and fantasy-this is the key which helps to open these sources, and then the words come gushing forth. Remember how Katya had said, "The sun is scattering sparks" the day before? Anticipating the events, I will tell you that twelve years later when she was finishing school, she wrote a composition about her native land, and when expressing her love of nature, repeated this same image. That is how strongly fairy-tale images impress themselves upon the minds of children. I was convinced a thousand times over that while populating the surrounding world with fantasies, while creating these fantasies, children discover not only beauty but also the truth. The imagination of the child cannot live without fairy tales, without games. Without fairy tales the surrounding world is a beautiful enough picture, but one drawn on canvas; fairy tales make it come alive.

Figuratively speaking a fairy tale is the fresh air, which fans the flame of children's thoughts and speech. Not only do children love to listen to fairy tales, but they love to invent them. While showing children the world through the green wall of the grape arbour, I knew I would tell them a story, but didn't know exactly which one. The impetus for this flight of fantasy came from Katya's words, "The sun is scattering sparks..." What truthful, precise, artistic, expressive images children create - how dear they are, how colorful the language!

I tried to get the children, before they opened a book to read their first word syllable by syllable, to read the pages of the most miraculous book of all, the book of nature.

Here in the midst of nature, the thought that we teachers are dealing with the most sensitive, most delicate, most miraculous, which exists within nature-the mind of the child--came to me with especial clarity. When one thinks of the mind of the child, one must imagine a tender rose with beads of dew shivering upon it. What care and sensitivity are needed to pick the flower without shaking off the dew drops. We must be just as careful every minute: for we are touching what is most delicate and sensitive in nature--the thinking matter of the growing child.

The child thinks in images. This means, for example, that hearing the teacher's story about the journey of a drop of water, it imagines to itself the silver waves of the morning fog, the dark clouds, the claps of thunder, and the spring showers. The clearer the images in this picture, the deeper is the meaning the child can give to the laws of nature. The delicate, sensitive neurons in its brain are not yet strong; they must be developed, strengthened.

The child thinks. This means that a specific group of neurons in the cortex of the brain perceives the images (pictures, examples, events, words) of the surrounding world, and the signals move through these very delicate nerve cells. The neurons process this information-systematize, group, compare, and sort it. And all new information is so processed, again and again. To cope with all the new images and with the process sing of information, the nervous energy of the neurons switches from the perception of images to their processing in an extraordinarily short time.

This amazingly fast switch of the nervous energy of the neurons is what we call thought--the child thinks. The child's brain cells are so sensitive, reacting so delicately to the objects of perception that they can work normally only when the objects of perception and interpretation is an image that can be seen, heard, and touched. The switching of thoughts, which is the essence of thinking, is only possible when either a real, vivid example or an extremely dear verbal picture, through which the child can "see, hear, and feel" what is being discussed (this is why children love fairy tales so much), stands before it.

Owing to the nature of the child's brain, it must be educated at the very sources of thought, the obvious and the most important images, so its thoughts will switch from the vivid image to the processing of information

contained in that image. If children are isolated from nature, if from the first days of their studies, children perceive only words, their brain cells will tire quickly, and they will be unable to do the work their teachers set them. Their brain cells must be developed, strengthened, their power accumulated. This is the reason why teachers in the elementary classes often see the child sitting quietly, looking you in the eyes as if listening attentively, but not understanding a word of what is being said, because the teacher talks, and talks. What it hears is about rules, problems and examples, all of which are abstract and general--there are no living images, and child's brain grows tired. This is where the troubles begin. Children's thinking must be developed and strengthened in nature--the natural laws of development of the child's body demand this. It is for this reason that every journey into nature is a lesson in thinking, a lesson in the development of the mind.

We were sitting on the burial mound, and all around us sang a choir of grasshoppers, and the air was filled with the fragrance of steppe grass. We sat silently. You don't have to say much to children, to fill them with lectures and words-not too much fun, but rather verbal satiation, is one of the most harmful satiations. The child needs not only to listen to the teacher's words but also to be silent. It thinks in these instants, trying to understand what it has seen and heard. It is important that the teacher set a limit to how much talking goes on in class. One must not turn children into passive receivers of words. To comprehend an image, graphic or verbal, demands much time and nervous strength. Letting the child think is one of the most subtle qualities of the teacher. And in the midst of nature, the child must be given the possibility to listen, to look around, to feel...

We listened to a choir of grasshoppers. I was glad that the children were carried away by this wonderful music. Let this quiet evening, saturated with the fragrance of the field and the wondrous sounds, be graven in their memories forever. One day they would make up stories about grasshoppers.

But now the thoughtful gazes of the children were fixed on the sunset. The sun had dropped below the horizon, and the sky was covered with the tints and hues of sunset.

"Look! The Sun has gone to rest," said Larisa, her face becoming gloomy.

"The Blacksmiths have brought the Sun his silver garland... Where did he put yesterday's wreath?" asked Lida.

The children looked at me waiting for the continuation of the story, but I hadn't decided what kind of image to use. Fedya helped me out.

"The garland is spread out over the heavens," he said quietly. Intense silence--we were all waiting to hear what Fedya would say next. It was in fact a continuation "yesterday's story upon which he has, obviously, already elaborated. But he fell silent, perhaps from shyness. I gave him a hand:

"Yes, the garland is spread out over the heavens. After a day it is heated up on the fiery braids of the Sun and gets soft as wax. The Sun touches it with his fiery hands, and pours the gold stream over the evening sky. The last rays coming from the Sun as he goes to rest are the light of this stream-look, you can see them--and it plays with the rosy colors, then it shimmers and darkens. The Sun goes farther and farther away. See! Soon he will go into his magic garden in the sky, and the stars will begin to twinkle...."

"What is a star? Why does it twinkle? Where does it come from? Why can't you see it in the day-time?" the children asked. But one mustn't overpower children with a multitude of images. That was enough for one day, and I turned the children's attention to something else.

"Look at the steppe. See how it's getting dark in the valley, on the meadow, in the lowlands? Look at the mounds, how soft they seem, how they seem to drift into the haze of the evening. The mounds are getting gray. Look at their surface--what do you see there?"

"Forest... Bushes... A herd of cows... A shepherd with his sheep. People getting ready to spend the night in the field, lighting a bonfire, but you can't see it; you can only see the smoke..." These were the things born in the children's fantasies when glancing was the darkening hills. I told the children it was time to go home, but they didn't want to. They asked if we could sit for a few more minutes. In the evening hours when the world is enveloped in mystery, children's fantasies run rampant. I mentioned only that the evening twilight and the darkness of night flow like a river from the far off valleys and forests, and images of fantastic creatures-Darkness and Dusk--had already sprung up in the children's imaginations. Sanya told a story about these creatures: they live in a distant cave behind the farthest forest. In the daytime they crawl down into this dark bottomless pit. They sleep and sigh when they dream (why they sigh is apparent only to the story teller...). But as soon as the Sun enters his magic garden, they come out of their hiding place. Their huge paws are covered with soft wool, so no on can hear their steps. Dusk and Darkness are kind, peaceful affectionate creatures who don't hurt anyone.

The children were ready to make up a story about how Darkness and Dusk lull them to sleep, but it was enough for one day. As we left for home, the children asked if they could come the next evening as well, "when it's easy to make up stories", as Varya said.

Why do children listen to stories so eagerly? Why do they love the twilight, when the very atmosphere supports flights of the imagination so? Why do stories develop the speech and strengthen the thought processes of any child? Because the images of stories are dearly emotionally colored. The words of a story live in the child's imagination. The child's heart stops when it hears or pronounces the words painted by fantasy. I cannot imagine school and studying without not only listening to, but inventing stories.

These are some of the stories and fairy tales the children made up in the first two months of the School of Joy. The world of children's thoughts, feelings, desires, and glances is in them.

The Little Rabbit (Shura)

Mama gave me a little plush rabbit. That was before New Year's. I hung him on one of the branches of the Christmas tree. Everyone went to sleep. A tiny, tiny light was shining on the tree. I looked, and the rabbit hopped off of his little branch and ran around the tree. He circled and circled and then hopped back onto his branch on the tree.

The Sunflower (Katya)

The sun came up. The little birds woke, and a Lark appeared in the sky. Then finally even the sunflower woke up. She roused herself and shook the dew from her petals. She turned to the sun and said: "Hello, Mister Sun. I've been waiting a long time for you. See how my golden petals have faded without your warmth. But now they have revived and are happy. I am round and gold just like you, Mister Sun."

How They Ploughed the Field (Yura)

After the combines had mowed down the wheat, the hedgehog crawled out of his burrow and saw that there was no wheat, and that their shafts weren't making any noise. He rolled like a stone over the stubble. An enormous monster crept toward him--a metal beetle. It made noise and thundered. It had ploughs behind it. Only the black plowed earth remained behind it. The hedgehog sat in his burrow and looked around with surprise. He thought: "Where did they get that giant beetle?" But it was really a tractor.

Two Portraits of Lenin (Vanya)

My big sister Olya joined the October Children. She has a little red star. And on this little star is a tiny portrait of Lenin. Now we have two pictures of him. One on the wall and another on Olya's star. Lenin struggled for the workers' happiness. Papa said that Lenin was a very good student. I am also going to study well. I will be a young Leninist.

The Acorn (Zina)

The wind was blowing, and an acorn fell from the oak tree, yellow and shiny like it was made out of copper. It fell down and thought: "How nice it was up in the branches, but now I'm on the ground. And from here I can't see the river or the forest" It grew sad. It asked: "Oak tree, take me up into your branches." But the oak tree answered: "Silly acorn. Look, I also grew up out of the ground. Let your roots down faster and grow. Then you'll be a mighty oak."

Children are not only excited by what goes on in nature. They want there to be peace on earth. They know that there are powers that are planning war. This is a story in which these dark powers are depicted in the fantastic image of a Dragon.

How We Beat the Iron Drogon (Seryozha)

He lived in a swamp far, far over the ocean. He hated our people. He made atomic bombs. He made lots and lots of them, put them under his wing and flew off. He wanted to throw them at the sun. He wanted to put out the sun so we would die in the darkness. I sent swallows to fight against the Iron Dragon. The swallows took a spark of sunlight each in their beaks and caught up with the Dragon. They threw the fire in his wings. The Iron Dragon fell into the swamp and burned up along with his bombs. But the sun is still playing. And the swallows chirp merrily with joy.

This story shows the unique worldview of the child. The child cannot imagine the struggle of good forces against evil without the participation of birds and animals. The kind little rabbits and swallows are not just figments of the child's imagination-- they are the incarnation of the good.

Every day brought some new discovery from the world around the children. Every discovery was turned into a story, the creators of which were the children themselves. Fairy-tale images helped the children feel the beauty of their native land. The beauty of their home came to them thanks to stories, fantasy, and creativity--this is the source of love for one's homeland. Understanding the grandeur and greatness of one's homeland comes gradually and has its sources in beauty. I wish to advise the young teacher who works with small children: thoughtfully, circumspectly prepare the child for that moment when you say your first words about this great, powerful land-the Soviet Union. These words should be inspiring, exalted with noble feelings. (Let them call it grandiloquent if they wish-- don't worry about that if your soul is filled with pure and elevated feelings.) But so these words will make the children's hearts beat faster, it is imperative that they be colorful, carefully planted, and sewn with the seeds of beauty from the children's field of knowledge.

Let the child feel the beauty and be enraptured with it. Let its heart and memory save forever the image in which its homeland is incarnated. Beauty is the flesh and blood of humanity, kind feelings, warm relationships. I felt gladness when I noticed how the hardened hearts of Tolya, Slava, Kolya Vitya, and Sasha were gradually thawing out. A smile, inspiration, amazement in the face of beauty, appeared before me as a path along which I must lead the heart of the child.

The School of Joy was not hampered by strict regulations. How much time the children spent out-of-doors was not fixed. The most important thing was for the children not to tire of this school, that a dreary waiting for that moment when the teacher says, "It's time to go home", not creep into their hearts. I tried to end the work of our school at a moment when the children were intensely interested in what we were doing. Let them eagerly await tomorrow; let the coming day promise new joys. Let the night bring them the silver sparks that the sun scatters over the earth. One day the open-air school would last one or one and a half hours, the next day four. It all depended on how much joy I could give the children that day. It was also very important that each child not only feel joy but create it, introducing a grain of its own creativity into the life of the collective.

The weather was warm late into autumn that year; it was dry, and the leaves on the trees didn't turn yellow until the middle of October. It thundered several times as if summer was returning, and there was dew on the grass in

the mornings. This created favorable conditions for my work. We went to the burial mound several times and "journeyed" about the clouds. These hours made an unforgettable impression on the children. The white, fluffy clouds were a world of surprising discoveries for them. The children saw animals, and fairy-tale giants in their whimsical, quickly changing outlines. The swift-winged flight of the children's fantasy reached for the world beyond the clouds, for the blue sea and the forest, for far-off unknown lands. And the individual world of the child was opened wide in this Right. Look, a whimsical cloud is floating across the sky.

"What do you see in it, children?"

"An old shepherd in a straw hat leaning on a cane," said Varya. "See, next to him is a flock of sheep. A big ram with round horns is in front, and the ewes are behind him... He has a bag with something peeping out of it."

"That's not an old man," retorts Pavlo. "It's a snowman like we build in the winter. Look, there's a broom in its hand, and that's not a straw hat on its head; it's a bucket."

"No it's not a snowman either; it's a haystack," says Yura. "And there are two shepherds with pitch-forks beside it. See- they're throwing the hay down into the cart below. And that's not a ram, it's a cart. That's an arc, not little horns..."

"It's an enormous, enormous rabbit. I saw one like that in a dream. And I don't see a cart at all; it's the rabbit's tail."

I wanted everyone to fantasize, but Kolya, Slava, Tolya, and Misha were silent for some reason. My heart bled when I saw the condescending scorn on Kolya's face--the kind of look you see on grown ups who consider children's games beneath their dignity. But at the same time, I had already seen the spark of delight at beauty in the boy's eyes... I hadn't thought about it a lot, but feeling prompted me to the conclusion that until a child is carried away by joy, until real delight is awakened in its eyes, until it is lured into childish pranks, I would not have the right to say I had any educational influence on it. Children must be children. If, while listening to a story, it doesn't experience the struggle of good and evil, if, in place of joyful sparks of admiration, there is indifference in its eyes, it means the child's soul has been broken down, and it will take a lot of effort to put right the damage.

A cloud with a whimsical outline appeared on the horizon. It was similar to a marvelous palace surrounded by high walls and lookout towers. Fantasy filled in the unclear places in the contours of the palace, and Yura was already telling a story about a magic kingdom at the other end of the world, and of evil Baba-Yaga and a brave hero saving a beautiful maiden. Vitya imagined quite another fairy tale. Somewhere far away, beyond the borders of our country, a horrible creature lived in the mountains, and it was planning war. The wings of fantasy carried the little boy on a magic carpet which took him in an instant to the heights above the cave where dwell the powers of darkness. So he could destroy evil and strengthen peace on earth.

Then I spoke of the far-off tropical lands, of end less summer and the quaint constellations, of the Azure Ocean and tall palm trees. Here the fantastic was interwoven with the real as if I had cracked a little window on the distant world. I talked about the land and the people, the seas and oceans, the richness of the plant and animal kingdoms, about natural phenomena.

I began to talk about a world in which some people enslave others. A clear picture of the sufferings of the laborers, especially the children, awakened in the children the alarming thought that a cruel struggle between good and evil is going on in the world, and that our people are struggling for happiness, honor, and the freedom of the person. I tried to give my students an intolerance of social evil from an early age, so they would be repulsed by the exploitation of person by person, so that our country would be infinitely dear to them as the first country in the world free from exploitation. One of the most important educational tasks is to give the child the

idea that evil is something real, not abstract, something hostile to all honest people. I told the children about countries where the wealth is controlled by a small group of capitalists and landowners, and the laborers have only the bare necessities. But I didn't rush to give the children an abstract understanding of the deeper meaning of the term "imperialism". When the time came, they would think it over. At that age, they have a clear idea of the decisive meaning in their emotional makeup.

A necessary condition for fully mental development of the child, for its rich inner life, is the stories the teacher who shares joys and sorrows with it tells. The educational significance of these stories is that the children heard them in a situation in which the representations of fantasy are born: in the quiet of the evening when the first stars come out, in the forest around a campfire, in a coy cottage, by the light of smoldering charcoal briquettes, while an autumn shower was falling outside, or when the cold wind was singing its doleful song. Stories should be clear, picturesque, and not too long. One must not pile up a heap of facts and give the children a mass of impressions, or their sensitivity to stories will become deadened, and it will be impossible to interest them in anything.

I advise teachers to exert their influence on the feelings, imagination, and fantasies of children. Open the window to the limitless world gradually; don't throw it wide open all at once--don't turn this window into an enormous door through which, in spite of all our good intentions, the child's attention to the story rolls out past us like a ball. Children will lose their heads if they are confronted with too many things at once, and then these same things unfamiliar in essence, will become no more than empty sounds.

The school in the open air taught me how to open a window on the surrounding world for children, and I tried to explain this idea to all the teachers. I advised them not to deluge with knowledge the child, not to attempt to tell everything they knew-- children's keenness and curiosity can be buried under an avalanche of knowledge. Be able to present only one or two things from the surrounding world so that a piece of life begins to sparkle before the children in all the colors of the rainbow. Always leave something unsaid so the child will want to return again and again to what it has found out.

The achievements of human thought are unlimited. We have, for example, written a multitude of books. Show the children the beauty, wisdom, and depth of one book, but show it in such a way that every child will fall in love with reading forever, and will be prepared to swim independently through the sea of books. I shared my thoughts on these "journeys" to the sources of the living word, as I called the clear, short, emotion-filled stories the children told about the events and occurrences they saw with their own eyes in the world around them. The teachers of the elementary classes followed my example and started to take the same kind of "journeys". The classroom doors were thrown open and the children started going out onto the lawn to sit among the fresh breezes. Lessons in reading and arithmetic, especially in the first and second forms, were conducted in the open air more and more frequently. These open-air lessons were neither a rejection of lessons nor a denial of books or science, but quite the opposite--they enriched the lessons, and made books and science come alive.

After lessons, all the teachers of the elementary classes would meet in the staff room and exchange tips on how the children could gain knowledge of the world around them and master the fundamentals of nature and society without this task's turning into a boring exercise in futility. A new idea occurred within the context of this collective creativity: to acquaint the children to agricultural labor and technical professions, gradually to introduce them to the best workers. The teachers of the elementary classes, while dreaming of their student's "journeys" to the sources of the living word, determined, at my suggestion, a circle of natural events and connections which were most advisable for use in the development of thought and speech in each of the four seasons.

Our Corner of Dreams

Beyond the village, not far from the school was a large ravine overgrown with bushes and trees. For the children this was an overgrown forest full of secrecy and uncertainty. One day I noticed the entrance to a cave in the wall of the ravine. The inside of the cave seemed spacious and had strong, dry walls. This was quite a discovery! Our Corner of Dreams would be located here. It's difficult to express the children's delight when I first took them to the cave. They squealed and sang, shouted to each other and played hide-and-seek. That same day we covered the floor with dried grass.

At first we simply enjoyed this secret corner, made ourselves at home, got everything nice and comfortable. We put little pictures on the walls, widened the entrance, and made a little table. The children gleefully agreed to build a little stove there to heat the cave from time to time.

We hollowed out a place for the stove and then made a place for the pipe. We carried out the extra dirt and brought clay and bricks. It wasn't easy work, but we had a dream--a stove for the cave. We built the stove in two weeks. Everyone was caught up in the work; even Kolya, Slava, and Tolya couldn't stand on the sidelines. These children who were indifferent to everything our collective did worried me a lot. But now their eyes were lighting up more and more often, and the flame of enthusiasm didn't go out for a long time. This interesting event inspired even such timid, bashful, indecisive children as Sasha, Lyuda, and Valya. I became even more certain that the emotional state of the collective, a state of joy and inspiration, was a great inner strength uniting the children, arousing interest in what the collective was doing even in indifferent hearts.

Finally we lit a fire in the stove. The dry twigs blazed up gaily. Evening fell over the land, but our little hideout was bright and cozy. We looked at the trees and bushes covering the slope of the ravine and there, from the secretive thickets, fairy-tale images came to us. They seemed to ask, "Tell a story about us, please." The trees and bushes were enveloped by the semi-transparent haze of twilight, bluish at first and then lilac. The trees took on unexpected outlines in this haze.

Children fantasize eagerly at such moments, making up stories.

"What do the trees piled over there on the slope of the ravine look like?" I asked, addressing myself not so much to the children as to my own personal reflections. To me they looked like green waterfalls, which had fallen swiftly, down a precipice, now hardened into carved images of basalt or malachite. I wondered if any of the children would see what I saw there, for the evening hours are also the time to observe how children think.

And then I saw that one child's thoughts were flowing wildly and swiftly, giving birth to new images, and another was thinking like a broad, deep, mighty river, slow but secretive in its deep places. Whether or not the river had a current was unclear, but it was strong and irrepressible. This river could not be easily re-routed as could the swift, light current of the thoughts of the other children, or blocked off, as it would look for a way out at once. Shura saw a herd of cows in the treetops, but as soon as Seryozha asked, "But where do they graze? There's no grass there", Shura changed his mind. They're not cows: they're clouds that floated down to earth to rest for the night. Yura's thoughts soared and changed just as quickly. But Misha and Nina watched silently with concentration. What did they see? Dozens of images born in the children's imaginations had already swept past us, but Misha and Nina were silent, and Slava was, too. It couldn't be possible that they hadn't thought of anything. It was already time to go home when Misha, the quietest boy of all, said, "It's an angry bull pounding at the rock face with his horns. He can't conquer the rock, so he stops. Look how he's straining--look, look, he's shoving the precipice over..."

And suddenly all the images, which had crowded around us flew away. We saw that the pile of trees was in fact surprisingly like the hardened fury of a bull. The children started to twitter: look how he set his legs against the bottom of the ravine. Look how his neck was bent--his tendons were probably trembling, and his horns were stuck into the earth...

Look what Misha thought up! At that instant, while clear living images floated above our heads, his train of thoughts went their own way. He had listened attentively to the words of his comrades, but not one image had fascinated him. His fantasy was the dearest, the earthiest. The child had caught sight of something he had probably seen, which had made an impression on him. And yet such taciturn, slow-witted children suffer dreadfully during lessons. The teacher wants the child to answer the question, more quickly; it matters little how the child thinks-he must have an answer then and there so he can give a mark. It has never occurred to the teacher that it is impossible to speed up the flow of this slow but mighty river. Let this river flow in accordance with its nature; her waters will surely reach the destination, but don't hurry. Please don't get nervous; don't beat this mighty river with birch switches of bad marks--nothing will help.

...Every teacher should think about the fact that the period of the development of the human body from birth to maturity is the longest of all the various representatives of the animal kingdom. The human body grows, develops, and becomes stronger for twenty years or longer. Why the period of development of the human body is so long is one of the great mysteries of nature. It is as if this period were necessary for the development, strengthening, and education of the nervous system--the cortex of the brain. The person, precisely because he or she becomes a person, experiences an extended *infancy of the nervous system, a childhood of the brain*.

The child is born with many billions of cells, which respond immediately to the surrounding environment, and are able, under certain circumstances, to carry our mental functions. These cells are the material foundation of consciousness. It will not develop even one new brain cell from birth to maturity, from maturity to old age. In infancy, the gray matter must be trained daily to function actively, and the foundation of these exercises is living perception, observation, and contemplation.

Before he learns to penetrate deeply into the essence of the connections of cause and effect in the surrounding world, the person must go through a period of mental exercises in childhood. These exercises are visual instances and occurrences; the child first sees the living image and then imagines it, assimilating that image into its range of concepts. Seeing a living situation and creating an image in the imagination - then are no contradictions in these two steps of mental activity. The fantastic images of the story the child perceives and thinks about are as vivid to it as reality. The creation of fantastic images is the most noble soil in which the turbulent sprouts of thought can develop.

In the period of childhood, the thinking process must be as closely connected with living, clear, graphic examples from the surrounding world as possible. In the beginning, don't worry the child with the relationship of cause and effect. Simply let it examine an object, discovering something new there. Little Misha saw an angry bull in the pile of trees enveloped in the haze of evening. This is not simply a game of fantasy, but an artistic and poetic element of thinking as well. Another child saw something else in the same trees-it adds something individual to the image perceived, imagined, and thought about. Every child not only perceives but draws, creates, and composes as well. The child's vision of the world is a unique artistic creation. The image simultaneously perceived and created by the child has clear emotional overtones. Children experience stormy joy when they perceive images in the surrounding world and add something to them from their own imaginations. Emotional saturation of perception is the internal supplier of children's creativity. I am quite sure that without emotional enthusiasm, the normal development of the child's brain cells is impossible. The physiological processes which go on in the child's brain are also connected with the emotions: in moments of tension, enthusiasm, and interest, the amount of food going to the cells in the cortex of the brain is increased. The cells expend a lot of energy in these periods, but on the other hand, they also get a lot from the body. Observing the intellectual labor of the students in the elementary classes over period of many years, I decided that in periods of great emotional enthusiasm, the thoughts of the child become particularly clear, and memorization occurs with more intensity.

These observations throw new light on the process of teaching children. The thoughts of the pupils in the elementary classes are inseparable from feeling and experience. Emotional saturation of the teaching process,

especially of perceptions of the surrounding world, is a demand put forth by the laws of development of the child's thought processes.

Surprisingly warm autumn days set in. We didn't sit in one place but walked about the fields and groves, stopping by the Corner of Dreams only once in a while. Two kilometers from the village the children found a little hill from which there was a nice view of the village's verdant gardens, of the distant fields, the dark blue burial mounds, and the forest-plantations. The air was surprisingly clean and transparent, and silver spider webs drifted above the ground. Flocks of birds appeared in the sky more and more often. A grove, along the edge of which were a number of sweetbrier bushes, spread out not far from our hill. We were fond of the bright red beads of the berries and the silvery cobwebs suspended from the branches; we memorized the outline of every little bush, and looked closely at the gardens and rows of tall poplar trees at the edge of the village. Every day the children discovered something new. The green grove turned crimson before their eyes; the leaves arrayed themselves in a surprisingly rich variety of colors. These discoveries gave the children a great deal of pleasure.

The sources of the living word and creative thinking were so rich and inexhaustible that if we had been able to make only one discovery every hour, these discoveries would have lasted for many years. Before us, spread out among the bright red bunches of sweetbrier berries, were the silver cobwebs, stretching from berry to berry, trembling with the dewdrops of morning. The droplets were the color of amber. We stood near the bushes charmed, and we saw an amazing thing: the droplets slid as if they were alive from the ends of the webs to the center, making them sag. They merged one into another, but didn't get bigger and fall to the ground. We were absorbed in our observations: it seemed that the dewdrops evaporated quickly. They decreased in volume before our eyes and then disappeared altogether.

"It's the Sun that's drinking the little dewdrops," whispered Larisa. The image created in her imagination caught the children's attention, and a new story was born. Here near the sweet berry bushes, near the source of the living word, a new, wonderful booklet opened up before the children. Perhaps it was by chance, but it was bound to happen sooner or later: Larisa noticed that the endings of the words "rosinki" (dewdrops), "pautinki" (spider webs), and "businki" (beads), sounded alike. The children seemed to light up at this surprising coincidence. They had heard poems that their older brothers and sisters read from books before, of course, but here the poem was born from the living word, from the world around them:

At night fell the "rosinki" (dewdrops) on the silver "pautinki" (spider webs),

said Larisa, and her eyes sparkled with joy. Everyone was quiet, but I could see that the thoughts of every child had shot up like a rocket from the feeling of wonder at the force of the words.

"And then began to tremble the amber businki (beads)," Yura continued.

This is what happens when you draw close to the origins of existence, when words are not just names of things to you, but the aroma of flowers, the smell of the earth, the music of your native steppes and forests, personal feelings and experiences.

According to the rules of education, I probably should have suggested that the children continue the poem, but these rules flew from my head, and I got involved in the flow of the children's creativity and blurted out:

The Sun drunk up the "rosinki", washed the silver "poutinki", smiled the crimson "businki".

We cried out and ran around the bush, repeating the little poem. I wanted to tell the other teachers about this burst of inspiration, the source of which was the world around us, as soon as I could. I wanted to advise them that the first lessons in thinking should be conducted not in a classroom, not in front of a blackboard, but in nature. I also wanted to say that the genuine thought is always imbued with trembling feeling; if only the child feel the aroma of the word, its heart will be seized by inspiration. Go to the fields, to the park. Drink from the source of thought, and this living water will make your pupils wise researchers, inquisitive, curious people and poets. I am convinced a thousand times over that without poetic, emotional-aesthetic outbursts, it is impossible fully to develop the intellectual capabilities of the child. The very nature of the child's thoughts demands poetic creativity beauty and living thought are as organically interconnected as the sun and flowers poetic creativity begins with a, vision of beauty. The beauty of nature sharpens perception, wakes up creative thought, and adds individual experience to the word. Why does the person master so many words of the native language during the years of childhood? Because during this period the first discoveries of the beauty of the surrounding world are made. Because not only is the idea visible in every word, but the delicate overtones of beauty are seen as well.

Nature--the Source of Good Health

Experience has taught us that about 85 per cent of all students who fail or lag behind do so because of ill health, some sort of indisposition or illness, which generally goes unnoticed; bur could be cured with the united efforts of parents, doctor, and teacher. Latent indispositions and diseases of the cardio-vascular system, respiratory system, gastro-intestinal system, which quite often do not appear to be illnesses, but rather deviations from the normal state of health, can be masked by childish vivacity and liveliness. Many years of observation have shown that so-called slow learning is often the result of some general indisposition, which the child itself doesn't even notice, and not some kind of physiological changes or interference in the functioning of the cells in the cortex of the brain. One notices a sickly pale complexion and poor appetite in some children. Even minor attempts to improve eating bring on a reaction: blotches appear on the body. The most careful analyses show nothing: everything checks out all right. In most of the cases it seems that we are dealing with some sort of disturbance in the metabolism, which has appeared as a result of long hours of sitting indoors. In such a case, the child loses its power of concentration and ability to do intellectual labor. The number of cases of such indisposition's rises during periods of rapid growth of the organism and during puberty. The only radical cure in such cases is a change in the regimen of work and play: more time out-of-doors, sleeping with the window open, going to bed and getting up early, and a good diet.

Some children seem to be healthy, but upon closer examination, their work gives evidence of some latent illness. And this is what is interesting: latent illnesses and indispositions are especially evident when the teacher tries to fill every minute of the lesson with intense intellectual labor. This "attempt not to lose a minute" simply taxes some children beyond their strength. I am sure that this "rushed" pace is harmful even to perfectly healthy children. Excessive mental effort makes the children's eyes grow dull, their expressions foggy, and their motions listless. At this point, the child isn't fit for anything; the only thing it needs is fresh air, but the teacher holds it in check and drives on faster and faster.

During the first week of operation of the School of Joy, I paid close attention to the health of the children Despite the fact that all the children had grown up in the country, in the palm of nature, some of them were pale or weak chested. And Volodya, Katya, and Sanya were, as they say, nothing but skin and bones. They were so thin, they were weak. Most of the children ate well enough at home; the main reason for the weakness in some of them was that they lived like plants in a hothouse -their mothers guarded them against the slightest puff of wind. The children tired quickly the first few days of the School of Joy; it was hard for them to walk a kilometer. Their mothers complained about their poor appetites.

I convinced the parents that the more they tried to protect the children from colds, the weaker they would be. At my insistence, they all agreed to let the children come to school barefooted on hot days - that was a great joy for the children. One day, a warm shower overtook us in the field. The children walked through the puddles all the

way home; in spite of their parents' fears, not one of them got sick. It was with great difficulty that I convinced the parents not to smother their children with clothing, to leave off the extra sweaters and jackets "in case anything happens". We had a rule: the children should be outside all the time on fall, spring, and summer days. The first three of four weeks of the School of Joy, the children walked two or three kilometers a day; the second month, four or five; the third, six. And all of this was in the fields and meadows, in the groves and in the forest. The distance that they covered in a day went unnoticed because they didn't have a set goal of walking so many kilometers; the movement, the walking, was the means to other ends. The child wants to go places because it feels it is discovering the world. The children went home tired but happy and cheerful. Good health is impossible without tiredness. Good health flows into the child's body with its life-giving sources when the child is resting after exertion of energy.

After having walked in the fresh air for several kilometers, the children returned home "hungry as bears", according to their patents. When we went to the forest, I advised the children to bring bread, onions, salt, water, and several raw potatoes with them. The parents were skeptical at first; they doubted that the children would eat such things, because at home they rejected nourishing dishes. But in the forest, this same bread, onions, and potatoes seemed to be the most tasty food of all. The children's appetites developed to such a point that they ate the bowl of soup or borsch offered to them at home with pleasure. After just a month the cheeks of even the palest children had become rosy, and the mothers couldn't get over how well the children ate. No more picky eaters: the children would eat anything you put on their plates.

To be in motion is one of the important conditions for physical training. Children love to run and play. We made a playground for them. Everything necessary for games and entertainment out-of-doors was there, but I wanted more. I wanted to make carousel--a merry-go-round; I wanted their active games to be connected with fairy tales, fed on fantasy. I already imagined to myself the figures of the little humpbacked horse, an elephant, a gray wolf, a sly fox, standing on the wooden circle of our carousel. The children would not only ride but would also experience excitement from the fact that they were sitting on the little humpbacked horse or the say wolf. All this was only a dream, but I firmly believed that in six months or a year, it could be done. I collected the materials and assemblage for the carousel. And I thought about how to get the children ready for winter so that they would be able to stay outside longer and get more fresh air.

Many years of observing the physical development of younger schoolchildren have convinced me that nutritious, wholesome food is important. Many of the children weren't getting enough of the substances necessary for growing bodies, prevention of illnesses, and normal metabolism. Only eight families had honey, and honey is, figuratively, a piece of sun- light on a plate. I talked with the parents about this, so convinced was I that honey is necessary for growing children. By the end of September, thirteen parents had bought beehives. By spring, twenty-three families already had bees.

In the fall, I advised the mothers to make lots of jam from sweetbrier berries, sweet berries, and other fruits rich in vitamins. I had to talk with the parents about planting a sufficient quantity of fruit trees, especially apple-trees. They needed enough trees to have fresh fruit all winter long, and in the country this is very easy to arrange--all it takes is a little bit of work.

Good health is fresh air saturated with the phytoncides-wheat, rye, barley, buckwheat, and meadow grasses. I often took the children to the fields and meadows to breathe the fresh air filled with the aroma of grain that bread is made from. I advised the parents to plant several nut trees under the window of their children's bedrooms. They fill the air with phytoncides that kill many pathogenic microbes. Harmful insects can't stand the smell of the nuts. Where there are nuts, there are no flies and mosquitoes. I also urged every family to have a summer shower in the yard.

For several years I had wondered why many children have poor eyesight. Why were so many third formers wearing glasses? Observation of many young children led me to the conclusion that the reason is not eyestrain

from reading but a vitamin-poor diet and insufficient physical exercise, which makes children more susceptible to colds. Several childhood illnesses have a harmful effect on eyesight. Wholesome food, sleep and physical exercise protect the child from illness and give it happiness and delight at the world around it.

Years of observing children brought me to the alarming conclusion that in spring, beginning in March; all children's health gets weaker. The child seems to be worn out; its body loses its resistance to colds, and capacity for work is reduced. The worsening of vision is especially noticeable in the spring months.

Doctors and psychologists explain that this is due to the extreme changes that occur in the rhythm of the interaction of the systems of the organism. The reason is that the organism's vitamin supply runs out at the end of winter as a result of the sharp drop in solar radiation and long intellectual activity, which tires the nervous system.

I thought of how to lessen the effects of these factors. The parents began to pay more attention to the supply of fruit and vegetables rich in vitamins, especially in the spring months. Every sunny day in winter and spring we tried to use for walks out-of- doors. I was concerned that the strain on the children's intellect should be lessened in the spring months. The thinking processes should occur out-of- doors as much as possible, rather than in the classroom, and be connected with physical activity. Gradually, this became one of the rules for the spring months.

In the first years after the war, many children were predisposed to neuroses. Some of my pupils, especially Tolya, Kolya, Slava, and Fedya, were subject to depressions and some sort of estrangement from life. I tried to fight their timidity, indecisiveness, and painful shyness from developing into neuroses. I often sought advice on how to make the life of the collective give the children joy, and we teachers in the elementary classes reached the conclusion that it was especially important to smooth out the misfortunes, grief's, and conflicts which the child saw in its family. The teachers tried to find out what was going on in the soul of every child, the inner problems it brought to school with it, so they wouldn't inadvertently add any pain to its sensitive heart. Everything deserving special attention in the inner life of one child or another, we discussed at our meetings, which we referred to as "psychological seminars". The school collective had to dispel the child's sorrows.

Those children who were already overtaxed by the experience of grief demanded special attention. The nerves of Kolya, Sasha, Tolya, Petrik, and Slava had been strained to the limit. We had to be careful when touching any of their hearts because they might "explode at any minute. Some days you couldn't ask the children anything. The methods by which one could influence and effectively educate the others were totally inapplicable to them. I came across the concept of "medical pedagogy" and it more or less precisely expressed the essence of educating children whose psychological unhealth had left an imprint on their behavior. The main principles of medical pedagogy are: (1) go easy on the vulnerable, ill psyche of the child; (2) in every way possible, school life should try to distract the child from gloomy thoughts and experiences, awaking in it a cheerful feeling; (3) under no circumstances should you let the child know that you consider it to be ill.

There was one child in our school, Volodya, who was predisposed to hysterical neurosis. I was disturbed by the fact that his parents thought that their son was an exceptional child. I was afraid that with the approach of their inevitable disappointment, the boy might come to hate his parents and his elders in general. The main means of curing such children, in my opinion, is educating them to be modest and to respect other people. I tried to get Volodya to feel that everyone close to him was a person. Children with slow, depressed thinking occupy a special place in medical pedagogy. Listlessness and inertia of the cells in the cortex of the brain must be as thoughtfully and patiently cured as cardiac or intestinal diseases. But curing them demands a thousand times more care and educational skill, a deep knowledge of the individual features of every child.

The Artist in Every Child

Just a week after the beginning of studies at the School of Joy, I told the children: "Tomorrow bring a pad of paper and a pencil. We're going to draw." The next day we made ourselves comfortable on the lawn of the school's farmstead. I suggested to the children: "Look around you. Then draw whatever seems the most beautiful, whatever you like the most."

Before us lay the school garden and experimental station lit by the autumn sun. The children began to twitter: one liked the red and yellow pumpkins; another, the heads of the sunflowers bent low to the earth; a third, the dove cote; and a fourth, the bunches of grapes. Shura was fond of the light, huffy clouds floating across the sky. Seryozha liked the geese on the mirror-like surface of the pond. Danko wanted to draw a picture of fish--he had told us enthusiastically how he and his uncle had gone fishing one day. They hadn't caught anything, but nonetheless they had seen how the fish "play". "And I want to draw our friend the sun," said Tina.

The children drew attentively. I had read a lot about how to teach drawing, but now there were live children before me. I saw that children's drawings, the process of drawing is a piece of the inner life of the child. Children don't simply put something from the surrounding world down on paper, approaching it as creators of beauty; they enjoy this beauty. Vanya was absorbed in his work, drawing a beehive with a tree next to it. There are huge flowers on the tree, and above one of the flowers was a bee almost as big as the hive itself. The little boy's cheeks were flushed with the effort, and his eyes burned with the fire of inspiration, which brings great joy to any teacher.

The creativity of children is a profound, unique sphere of their inner life, self-expression, and self- affirmation, in which the individual originality of every child is clearly uncovered. This originality cannot be classified by any sort of universally applicable criteria.

Kolya didn't say what he liked, but I was very excited by what he drew. In the little boy's drawing pad I saw a tree with many branches covered with round fruit. That meant it was an apple tree. The tree was surrounded by a swarm of little stars in a halo of light high above the tree around the moon. How I wanted to read the innermost thoughts and feelings of the child from this interesting drawing, for I saw such a spark of inspiration in his eyes in these minutes when we were observing the world.

"What are those little stars above the apple-tree?" I asked Kolya.

"They're not stars," said the boy. "They're the silver sparks that fall on the garden from the moon. There are Giant Blacksmiths on the moon, too, aren't there?"

"Of course there are," I answered, amazed at the thoughts, which had excited the child in the quiet evening hours. That meant he had looked at the sky at night, admired the radiance of the moon, and noticed the pale quivering aureole above the apple-trees.

"But what kind of threads do these Giant Blacksmiths forge at night?" thoughtfully asked the boy, and it seemed to me that he wasn't so much addressing himself to his teacher, as to his memories of the night sky, the pale radiance of the moon, the round dance of the stars. I was afraid to disturb his creative inspiration. My heart beat with the joy of discovery: creativity opens the innermost corners in the soul of the child, those corners where the sources of kind feelings slumber. In helping the child to feel beauty in the world around it, the teacher unnoticeably touches these corners.

Following Larisa's example, I began to draw the Giant Blacksmiths. It seemed to me that I drew rather well. The Blacksmiths looked real; the anvil was exactly like the ones in the collective farm's smithy. Forgetting that I was a grown person, I experienced a feeling of joy: my Blacksmiths would naturally be better than Larisa's. But the children hardly paid any attention at all to my drawing while they crowded around Larisa's with genuine interest. "What in the world has she drawn?" I thought to myself. I looked over the heads of the children: there didn't

seem to be anything special about the child's drawing, so why were they all admiring it so and totally ignoring mine? The more closely I examined her picture, the more clear it became to me that the young have their own vision of the world, their own language of artistic expression, and no matter how much you try, you can't imitate their language. My Giant Blacksmiths were in ordinary caps and aprons with long beards and boots. But hers had a halo of sparks around their fluffy hair, and the mighty Blacksmiths' beards weren't simply beards, but whorls of fire. Their enormous hammers were almost double the size of their heads... For the child, this is not violation of the truth, but a clear truth in and of itself--the truth of the fantastic strength and adroitness, of the fairy-tale community of a powerful person and the element of fire. We must not try to adjust the wonderful language of children's fantasies to the language of adults. Let children talk with one another in their own language. I advised the teachers in the elementary classes to teach the children the rules of proportion, perspective and balance--this is all well and good, but at the same time, to leave room for the children's imagination; not to break the child's ability to depict the world through fairy tales...

Every child wanted to tell me what it had drawn. In these stories, clear images and comparisons sparked like semi-precious stones. Drawing helped develop the children's speech.

We began taking our paper and pencils with us on almost all our walks in the fields and meadows. The older pupils made the younger ones little drawing pads they could put in their pockets. In the spring, several months after our school had begun, I made a big album in which every child drew what- ever it wanted from its favorite corner of the surrounding world. I wrote little stories in it as well. This album was an entire chapter in the life and spiritual development of our collective.

Caring for Living Things and the Beautiful

The indifference of some of the children to living things and the beauty in the world around them disturbed me. I was troubled by the actions, which appeared at first glance to be inexplicable childish cruelty. We were waking through the meadow, and butterflies, bumblebees, and bugs were flying above the grass. Yura caught a beetle, took a piece of glass from his pocket and cut the insect in half to "see what it looked like" inside. Several families of swallows had lived in a dense corner of the school farmstead for many years. We had barely arrived, and I hadn't said two words about the swallow nests when Shura threw a stone at the birdhouse. All the children took care of the beautiful canna lilies that grew in the courtyard, but Lusya went up to the flowerbed and broke off the flowers. All this occurred in the early days of the School of Joy. It struck me that the children's admiration for beauty combined with indifference to the fate of the beautiful. Long before I met my pupils, I was convinced that admiration for the beautiful is nothing more than the first sprouts of goodwill, which must be carefully cultivated. I was especially disturbed by what Kolya and Tolya did. Kolya had a passion for destroying sparrows' nests. They said that he would take the fledglings that fell from the disemboweled nest and throw them into the sewer pipe of the creamery. The baby sparrows would cheep for a long time, and Kolya would put his ear to the pipe to listen. Cruelty was evident not just in Kolya who came from a troubled family, but also in children who lived in a normal environment. And what was most alarming was that the children did not understand that these "petty" appearances of evil and indifference to beauty and living things, of which heartlessness is the eventual result, were reprehensible.

How could bright, kind feelings be awakened in the children? How could kindness and thoughtful attention to living things and the beautiful be maintained in their hearts? During one of our walks in the field, we found a lark with broken wings in the grass. The bird flitted from one place to another, but it could not fly away. The children caught the lark. The little clump of life began to palpitate in their hands with its frightened eyes like little beads looking up at the blue sky. Kolya squeezed it, and it began to squeak plaintively. The children began to laugh. "How can it be that none of them have compassion for this bird that was left in the field by its fellows?" I thought and looked at the children. There were tears in the eyes of Lida, Tanya, Danya, Seryozha, and Nina.

"Why are you tormenting the poor bird" Lida said to Kolya in a sorrowful voice.

"What's it to you?" asked the boy. "You take it and look after it," he said and threw the bird at Lida.

"I feel sorry for it, and I'm going to take care of it," said the girl, petting the lark. We were standing on the edge of the forest. I told the children that in the fall, flocks of migratory birds fly great distances. Some solitary birds were left in empty fields-those whose wings were broken, those who had torn themselves free from the clutches of birds of prey... And the harsh winter with snowstorms and hard frosts lay ahead of them. What did this lark have in store far it? The poor thing would freeze to death. But how beautifully it could sing, filling the steppes with bewitching music in spring and summer. The lark is a child of the sun. In the fairy tales it says, "This bird was born from the fire of the sun". That's why our people named it the "fire raven". And you all know how much it hurts when your fingers get stiff from the cold, and when the freezing wind takes your breath away. You hurry home to the warm stove... But where will this poor bird go? Who will shelter it? It will turn into a frozen lump.

"But we won't let the poor lark die," said Varya. "We'll put it in a warm corner, make it a little nest, and let it wait for spring..."

The children started arguing with each other about how to build a little house for the lark. Every one of them wanted to take the bird home for the winter. Only Kolya, Tolya and a few other boys were silent.

"Why take the lark home, children? We can make it a warm little nest at school. We will feed it and help it get well, then set it free when spring comes."

We took the lark to school and put it in a cage, which we had in the children's room. Every morning one of the children came to look after the lark. They brought food for it.

Several days later, Katya brought a woodpecker that her father had found in the forest. It probably had been caught by a wild animal and survived by a miracle. The woodpecker's wings hung lifelessly, and there were clots of blood on its back. We put it in with the lark. No one knew what to feed the woodpecker-bugs, perhaps? And where should one look for them, under tree bark?

"I know," Kolya boasted. "It doesn't just eat bugs and flies. It likes willow buds and grass seeds. I saw..." He wanted to say something else but got embarrassed. Probably he had hunted woodpeckers.

"Well, since you know what to feed the wood-pecker, you can get its food for it. See how pitiful it looks."

So Kolya began to bring food far the woodpecker every day. He still felt no pity for living things, but did it simply because he got pleasure from the admiration of his comrades. Look what kind of boy our Kolya was--he knew what to feed birds. But let the awakening of kind feelings in him start with self-respect; that's not at all bad. Let good deeds become a habit; they will awaken good thoughts.

I remember hundreds of answers children have given to the question what kind of person do you want to be? - Strong, brave, courageous, intelligent, resourceful, fearless. But no one ever answered "kind". Why isn't kindness on a par with such virtues as courage and bravery? Why are children sometimes embarrassed by their own kindness? Yet without kindness, the genuine warm-heartedness which one person shows to another, spiritual beauty is impossible. I also thought about why boys are less kind than girls. Perhaps it only seems that way? No, it is hardly so. Girls are kinder, more sympathetic, more tender, probably because from an early age some sort of unconscious maternal instinct lives in them. A feeling of concern for living things is strengthened in a girl's heart long before she becomes the creator of new life. The root, the source of kindness lies in creativity, in the affirmation of life and beauty. Kindness is inseparably linked with beauty.

It was a holiday for the children the morning Fedya brought an oriole to school. This bird was also unable to fly for some reason, and the boy had found it in a bush near the livestock farm. The children couldn't take their eyes off the beautiful, multi-colored feathers of the oriole. We met in the "bird hospital" (as the children called this corner of our room) in the morning and again to part until the next day. Kostya brought a puny, feeble little sparrow he had picked up on the side of the road The sparrow didn't want to peck either grain or bread crumbs. The little boy was grieved by the bird's illness. We all grieved when our sparrow died. Kostya cried. The little girls cried. Kolya was gloomy and uncommunicative.

I remembered the words of Janusz Korczak: "The bright democracy of the child knows no hierarchy. Long before the child feels sorrow for the sweat of a farm laborer or the hunger of children its age, it will suffer over the children's story about the wicked fate of the poor horsie and the chicken that got its head cut off. Dogs and birds are close to it; butterflies and flowers are its equals. It sees a brother in stones and shells. The haughtiness of an upstart is alien to it, for the child does not know that only people have souls." This is all true, but the kind child doesn't fall from the sky. It must be educated. During a walk in the ravine, the children found a little hare with a mutilated leg. They took it to their room and put it in a new cage. And thus appeared yet another hospital-one for animals. A week later, Larisa brought an emaciated kitten trembling from the cold. They put it in the same cage with the hare. The children had a lot of work to do: they brought carrots for the hare and milk for the kitten. It's difficult to describe the children's admiration when we found the kitten and the hen sleeping curled up together one morning. The children spoke in whispers because they were afraid to waken the animals...

Over the winter, several blue titmice appeared in the bird hospital. The children picked them up near the feeder for birds that stayed through the winter...There was one more thing that made me happy: several of the children set up their own "bird hospitals" and animal corners at home. And after we got an aquarium with little fish for our room, the children began to beg their parents to build aquariums at home. A lot of the parents came to school to find out how to do it. It was difficult to get plants and fish for the aquariums, and it was even harder to get fish food, but all these difficulties were overcome thanks to the persistence of the children who gave neither their parents nor me any peace until it was done. Slava's and Tina's mothers came to school complaining that the children wouldn't let them alone, because some of the others had goldfish and they didn't. We had to ask the older students for help. In those years, there was no school workshop, but building the aquariums forced us to set up the first workshop for our pupils.

I will never forget those evenings when we sat with only the tiny light of the aquarium and admired the goldfish. I told the children about the depth of the ocean, about the extraordinary lives of the inhabitants of the sea. My pupils who finished school long ago and have grown up remembered those evenings all their lives. Kolya told me not long ago:

"That tiny lamp often appears in my dreams. Its light was the first source of knowledge. I wanted to learn more about the secret depths of the sea, about the remarkable fish..."

If a 24-year-old remembers the fish with such warmth, that means it was not something to make light of, for it was one of the avenues to kindness. I waited with bated breath for the beauty of the surrounding world to awaken kind feelings, tenderness and compassion in the hearts of the most indifferent. I will never forget the first fall frost of that year. We went into the garden and walled up to the rose bush. We saw a brightly blooming rose with drops of dew on its delicate petals: the flower had miraculously survived the cold night. We looked at it and became gloomy: soon the cold would kill this beauty. I caught Kolya's glance with my eyes and for the first time saw sadness and alarm there --a purely childish feeling. Then we went into the greenhouse where several flowerpots with flowers seldom found in our locality-rhododendron and cactus-were standing. One of the little scarlet flowers had opened-a cactus was blooming. We admired the flowers for a long time.

Concern for living things and the beautiful gradually came into the lives of the children. Late in the autumn of 1951 when the leaves had fallen from the trees, we went to the forest and dug up a little linden tree. We brought

it to the school farmstead and planted it there. The little tree became our friend. We dreamed, and made up stories about it, as we would have about some living creature that could feel and experience our concern and worry. The children rejoiced when there were warm showers, for our little friend needed moisture. We worried when the earth was covered with frost and when piercing winds blew over the fields, because our friend might be cold. The children gathered snow and packed it around the trunk of the little linden tree. The girls brought several reed stems and wrapped the trunk of the tree. With the coming of spring, we went to see our friend often and waited with excitement for buds to appear. The first green leaves made the children go wild with joy: the tree was alive. In the summer we watered our linden tree.

What enormous power the collective feeling of concern and kindness, collective goodwill, has. It is like a stormy stream that carries away even the most indifferent. I was overjoyed to see how Kolya, Tolya, Slava, and Petrik went excitedly to see their friend, the little green linden tree, how their eyes glowed when they fed the fish in the aquarium.

Those whose hearts trembled at the thought that the little linden tree was cold in the winter frost have grown up. Our friend became a big tree with many branches, and even now girls and boys, young people, and young fathers and mothers come to see it and are flooded with waves of warm feelings when they remember that golden autumn from their childhood.

Experience shows that kind feelings have their roots in childhood, while humanity, goodness, concern, and benevolence are born of work and concern and excitement about the beauty of the surrounding world. Kind feelings and emotional upbringing are the focal point of humanity. If kind feelings are not implanted in childhood, they will never come to be, because genuine humanity is affirmed in the soul simultaneously with the cognition of the first and most important truths, simultaneously with the experience and feeling of the subtlest nuances of the words of one's native language. The person must attend the school of emotion in childhood--the school in which one is educated to feelings of kindness.

Our Journeys into the World of Labor

The question of how to make work an inner need of the children was one that concerned the whole of our school staff. From the first days of classes, the elementary school teachers had the children at work in the school garden, doing whatever they could as part of their lessons in work. We built a little greenhouse so the children would have a place to work in winter. In devising ways to raise the children's labor to a high ideological level, the teachers decided to have them plant an oak tree each year on Victory Day.' This would be a living testament to our joy. To this day, we have continued planting "century trees", as the children call oaks, in our Victory Day Oak Grove.

We considered it important that the children should be surrounded not only by nature but by the world of labor, creativity, and construction. The beauty of the person is revealed most dearly in labor.

Thus our School of Joy began to make "journeys" into the world of work. The children will never forget their first "journey" into the kolkhoz granary. The children saw heaps of wheat--thousands of centners of bread. Vanya's father told us about the people who did their jobs well on the collective farms. Combine driver Grigory Andreyevich took the children to the field, which is right next to the village and immediately behind the granary. "From this one hundred hectares," he said, "I gathered four thousand centners of bread this year. And over the ten years I've gathered grain with my combine, I've collected enough wheat to make bread for a city as big as Alexandria."

This recognition of the world was not only intellectual, but also emotional. The children were amazed by the beauty of the person as worker. They experienced a feeling of pride in the person. This feeling was all the more profound when they met up with their parents on these "journeys". They found out at the dairy that Tanya's

mother gets enough milk for fifteen hundred people. We went to the engineering factory on a warm day in autumn. There we met Valya's father. He took the children to the foundry shop. The most interesting of all the stories the children had heard or made up themselves was the one of how we transform a solid substance into a fiery red river, a river transformed by our labor and will into metal ingots. I watched how the children assimilated this new information with great joy: they made up stories about warriors creating a fiery metal river and drew pictures of metalworkers. This first visit to the foundry shop made an unforgettable impression on them. The children saw things through new eyes: the person would be unable to live or work even one day if it were not for metal. Workers, metalworkers, machine builders--these were the real creators of life. A profound respect for these people was firmly established in my pupils.

Our "journeys" to the workshops of various skilled workers, the fitters and turners of the Machine and Tractor Station were also interesting. There the children saw how parts for tractors and combines were bent from pieces of metal. They watched with bated breath as the deft hands of Larisa's father turned a screw, without which engines won't work.

Personal relations, societal life, is discovered first of all in labor done for the benefit of humanity. The person's humanism develops in step with what he or she does for others. One of my first concerns was to envelop the children in an environment, which would open up for them precisely this side of our socialist reality. I tried to get the children to take delight not only in what was connected with the beauty of nature but in the very essence of the new person being created in our country, and this person's service to the homeland, society and other people. The children's love for working people was the source of human morality.

We Listen to the Music of Nature Music

Melody, the beauty of musical sounds, are all an important means of moral and intellectual development, a source of nobility of heart and party of spirit. Music opens people's eyes to the beauty of nature, to moral relations, and to labor. Music awakens ideas of what is sublime, majestic, and beautiful, not only in the surrounding world but also in ourselves. Music is a powerful means of self-education.

Many years of observation of the spiritual development of one and the same pupils from their early years until they grew up convinced me that the uncontrolled, unorganized effect of film, radio, and television does not make for proper esthetic education, and is harmful more often than not. An abundance of uncontrolled musical impressions is especially injurious. Children should be taught music appreciation against a background of nature which would allow them to understand, to feel the beauty of music in the quiet fields and meadows, in the rustle of oak groves, in the song of a lark in the blue sky, in the whisper of ripe sheaves of wheat, in the buzzing of honey bees and bumble- bees. All this is the music of nature, the source from which the person draws the inspiration to create a melody.

In esthetic education in general and especially in the realm of music, the psychological aims the educator has in mind in accustoming children to the world of the beautiful are quite important. The chief aim for me was to teach them the ability to relate emotionally to the beautiful and to give them a need for impressions of an esthetic nature. Beauty must become an integral part of people's lives, and this task is accomplished by education.

In the School of Joy, we gave a lot of attention to listening to music--to works of music and the music of nature. The first task which stood before us was to call forth an emotional reaction to the melody and then gradually to convince the children that the beauty of music had its sources in the beauty of the surrounding world; the melody called on the person to stop and listen to the music of nature, to enjoy the beauty of the world, to feel for that beauty and increase it. Many years of experience demonstrate that the person masters both the native language and the fundamentals of music appreciation--the ability to perceive, understand, feel, and experience the beauty of a melody--only during the years of childhood. What is omitted in childhood is very difficult or even impossible to compensate for in the adult years. The child's soul feels in equal measure the native language, the

beauty of nature, and melody. If the beauty of music reaches its heart in childhood, if the child feels the subtleties of the human emotions in sound, it will reach a level of culture, which cannot be obtained by other methods. Feeling the beauty of a melody opens the child's personal beauty to itself-- the little person realizes its own dignity. Musical education is not training someone to be a musician, but first of all teaching it to be a person.

...Early in the autumn when every sound was heard distinctly through the transparent air, the children and I sat on the green lawn one afternoon. I suggested that we listen to the melody, "Flight of the Bumblebee" from the opera The Tale of the Tsar Sultan by Rimsky-Korsakov. The music drew an emotional response from the children. They said: "The bumble-bee comes closer and then goes farthest away. You can hear little birds chirping." We listened to the melody again, then we went to the grass filled with nectariferous flowers. The children heard the harping of bees and the buzzing of bumble-bees. They saw how a big, fuzzy bumble-bee hovered above a flower and then dropped down inside. The children were delighted: it was just like the music on the record, but the musical composition had a kind of unique beauty, which the composer had heard in nature and transmitted to us. The children wanted to listen to the music again.

A day later, we went to a spot with lots of flowers in the morning. The children listened attentively to the sound of the bees and tried to catch the buzzing of the shaggy bumble-bees. They discovered beauty in what had seemed ordinary before-- such is the power of music.

I tried to pick out pieces of music with clear images the children would understand and which reproduced what they heard around them: the chirping of birds, the rustling of leaves, the clapping of thunder, the babbling of a stream, the howling of the wind... In addition to this, I guarded the children against an abundance of impressions. I will repeat that an abundance of musical images is not good for children. It can be confusing and dull emotional responsiveness entirely. I didn't use more than two melodies a month, but I conducted a lot of educational work in connection with these melodies, the goal of which was to awaken in the children the desire to listen to music again and again until we reached the point when the children would discover new beauty in a work every time they heard it. It is important that there not be any spontaneous, confused impressions between listening to the melodies which impart a definite meaning to the mastery of the fundamentals of music appreciation. After listening to the melody, the children should listen in the quiet of the fields and cane to know the beauty of nature in the perception of the two melodies.

We went to the oak grove. It was a quiet sunny day in summer; the multicolored attire of the trees burned under the rays of the sun. The singing of the fall birds could be heard along with the noise of a tractor. A flock of geese was flying away through the azure sky. We listened to Tchaikovsky's "Autumn Song (October)". The melody helped us feel the unrepeatable beauty of those things the children had not yet noticed in their natural surroundings-the quiet rustling of the leaves which had turned yellow on the oak trees, the aroma of the transparent air, daisies withered on the side of the road.

The children were cheerful but the major melody cast a slightly gloomy mood over them. The children felt that cloudy days, cold snowstorms, and early twilights were at hand, prompted by the music, they talked about the beauty of summer, the first golden days of autumn. Every child recalled something clear and expressive, and the images of summer and fall appeared before the children's imaginations in all their beauty. For example, Larisa said, "My father and I went to the ravine. There was a green wall on its slopes - forest, forest, and more forest flooded with sunlight. A turtle-dove was cooing somewhere. It was so beautiful in the forest, so beautiful... You wanted to walk and walk, and for the sun to shine all the time. When there are turtle-doves around, it seems as if the leaves on the trees stand still to listen with all their might"

Shura recalled: "Mama took me to the field. She was working near the combine. I rode with my uncle the combine driver. And then I wanted to sleep. Mama put me in a stack of fresh hay. I looked up at the blue sky, and the haystack swam high, high above the earth. I came near a little bird that was trembling in the sky, and

then it flew away from me. Grasshoppers floated with me, a whole choir of them was singing, flying to meet the bird. This was how I fell asleep. I woke up, and the bird was still trembling in the sky, and the grasshoppers were singing even louder."

We listened to the Tchaikovsky again, and I felt that the children had found memories of the unforgettable beauty of summer and autumn days, which were close to their hearts in the music. The children were hearing new reminiscences.

"My father and I were riding in the hay cart. I was lying in the hay, and the stars were twinkling in the sky. Quails were singing in the field, and the stars came so close that I could put out my hand and take the stars like a little lantern."

This was Zina's reminiscence. I listened to the little girl amazed. She had always been so quiet; you could never get a word out of her. But the music had gotten her to talk.

It's a joyful thing that music intensifies emotional responsiveness, awakening the ideas brought about the beauty of the musical image. I wanted every child to dream and make up fantasies under the influence of music. Music deepens the poetic, the dream-like in the nature of children, and that's a very good thing. I was glad that both Kolya and Tolya sat reflectively listening to the emotion-charged stories of Tanya and Larisa--they, too were remembering something.

Music is a mighty source of thought. Genuine mental development of the child is impossible without music appreciation education. Music has its origins not just in the surrounding world, but in the person, in the inner world of thought and speech. The musical image reveals the peculiarities of objects and the phenomena of reality anew. The attention of the child is fixed upon the objects and phenomena which are revealed to it in a new light by music, and its thoughts draw a clear picture; this picture requests verbal expression. With words the child creates, drawing from the world around him the material for new notions and thoughts. Music, imagination, fantasy, fairy tales, creativity—this is the path along which the child can develop its inner strengths. Music awakes clear ideas in the children is the best method for educating the creative powers of the reason. Listening to a melody by Edward Grieg, the children imagined magic caves, impenetrable forests, and good and evil creatures. Even the quietest wanted to talk; the children's hands reached out for their pencils and drawing pads, wanting to capture these fairy-tale images on paper. Music awakened energy for thinking even in the most inert children. It seemed that music poured some kind of miraculous power into the cells of the gray matter. I saw the emotional sources of thought in this development of intellectual strength under the influence of music.

On winter days when all our paths were buried by snow, we sat in our schoolroom listening to music by Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Schubert, and Schumann. The children got especially great pleasure from listening to the fairy-tale melodies at twilight. I told them the Ukrainian folk tale about the wicked witch Baba-Yaga, and then we listened to Tchaikovsky 's "Baba- Yaga". It is difficult to put into words the richness of the fantastic images and ideas which were born under the influence of that music. The children traveled to distant mountains in their dream, far away beyond the forest, beyond the blue sea, to secret caves and gorges. I listened with amazement to the absolutely unbelievable stories the children made up. I have remembered some of them all my life. In Yura's imagination, the evil witch Baba-Yaga became a misanthrope encroaching upon the joy of humanity--upon songs. "She took a big pot, sat in her mortar (Baba-Yaga rides in a mortar instead of on the traditional broomstick) and flew all over the world. As soon as she heard a song, she flew to the place where the singing was coming from and making people happy, beat the pot on the side of the mortar, and the people fell silent, forgetting how to sing because she had hidden the song in her pot. This is how Baba; Yaga hid all the songs. In all the world only one little shepherd boy was left singing. He played on his pipes and sang songs. No matter how much the wicked witch beat the pot on the side of the mortar, she couldn't do any thing: the boy's pipes were enchanted. So wicked, wicked Baba-Yaga sat in grief, with all the songs in her pot. The whole world was quiet; no one was singing, and there was no joy anywhere. There was only this shepherd boy playing. He lay

down to sleep. Baba Yaga stole his pipes. The boy woke up and gathered his brave friends together to go to Baba-Yaga. . ." Then Yura made up a story about how the shepherd boy freed the songs, how joy was returned to the people. It's amazing how, under the influence of music, the images of fairy-tale creatures the child creates are so much dearer, how the incarnations of good and evil stand out and the child seems to become a participant in the struggle for justice. Music equips fairy-tale images with living, beating hearts and trembling thoughts. Music brings the child into the world of the good.

Every time I noticed inertness in the children's thinking, I took them to the oak grove or the garden and we listened to music, which would wake up clear ideas of good and evil. Music seemed to open up the wells of thought.

More and more new dreamers were discovered during the winter days in our school. Little Danya was so shy you couldn't get a word out of him. But then he told his own story about Baba-Yaga. True, it sounded a lot like Yura's story. In Danya's story, Baba-Yaga flew all over the world in her mortar and picked all the flowers. She flew into her hellish kitchen and put the pot on the stove. She cooked all the flowers to death. "But I,"--the child often makes itself the positive hero of the story--"gathered seeds from all the flowers and planted them in the earth. The flowers bloomed once again. When Baba-Yaga found out about it, she smashed her mortar and her chicken bone from malice, and now she can't hurt anyone."

After these stories, I talked with the teachers about the difficulties and inadequacies of education. We all reached the same conclusion: that our educational system forgets that for a good half of all the years the student is in school, he or she is a child first of all. Sometimes, while cramming truths, perceptions, and conclusions into the child's head, the teacher doesn't give the child time to draw close to the sources of thought and the living word, tying the wings of dreams, fantasy, and creativity. The child frequently turns from a living, active, actual creature into what seems to be a memory aid. This must not be. One must not cut children off from the world around them with walls of stone. One must not deprive the student of the joys of spiritual life. The spiritual life of the child is genuine only when it lives in the world of games, fairy tales, music, fantasy, and creativity. Without this, the child is but a dried flower.

It goes without saying that studying cannot be a simple game consisting of pleasure alone. Studying is labor first of all. But in organizing that labor, one must take account of the inner world of the child at every stage of its intellectual, moral, emotional, and esthetic development. The intellectual labor of children is different from the intellectual labor of adults. For the child, unlike the adult, the final aim of assimilating knowledge cannot be the main stimulus of its intellectual efforts. The source of the desire to learn is located in the very character of the child's mental labor, in the emotional coloration of thoughts, in intellectual experiences. If this source dries up, there is no way to force the child to sit with its books.

I will never forget the first winter of the School of Joy. If there had been no music, fantasy, or creativity, the warm, cozy classroom would soon have become a bother. Music filled the world around us with an amazing charm. In the gloom of January evenings, in the shining of the silver carpets under the moon, in the whirlwinds of blizzards, in the cracking of the frozen pond--everywhere we saw fairy-tale creatures spring up in our imaginations.

The first spring of the School of Joy arrived. The little streams began to babble; the crocuses began to bloom, and the buzzing of bees was heard among the torrents of white apple and pear blossoms. We listened to the music of the spring forest, the blue sky, the meadows and steppes.

We went to the meadow in the quiet of early evening. A pensive pussy-willow with tender foliage stood before us, and in the pond was the reflection of the endless firmament. A flock of swans flew across the clear azure sky. We listened attentively to the music of the beautiful evening. We heard a surprising sound from somewhere in the pond, as if someone were softly striking the keys of a clavichord. It seemed that the pond itself, the bank, and

the firmament were all ringing with the sound. "What in the world is that" whispered Vanya. "It's the music of the spring meadows," I told the children. "You see the reflection of the blue sky in the pond. Deep in the pond is a huge bell made of crystal. There, in a wonderful palace lives the beautiful maiden, Spring. She rings the crystal bell with a golden hammer, and the sound spreads through the meadows."

The sound was heard again. Kolya smiled: "Yes, it's a frog croaking." I was afraid that the children would start laughing and the fascination, which had seized everyone, would disappear. But no one said a word. "Maybe it's a frog, and maybe it's not a frog at all," said Sasha. "And if it's a frog, then so be it. The meadow is still singing."

As if in answer to his words, the sound rang out somewhere above the neighboring pond, and after several seconds the far-off meadow replied. We stood fascinated by the surprising music of the spring meadows. This music was a life-giving source of an optimistic worldview. It helped the children understand, discover, feel joy at the existence of beauty. For me, the harmony of beauty is that radiant halo which surrounds the memories of the unforgettable days of childhood.

On the first sunny April day when the ancient burial mounds quivered in the haze, we went to the steppe to listen to the song of the lark. And there, trembling in the azure firmament was a little gray puff of life. The tender sound of a silver bell reached our ears, and suddenly the bell stood still. The gray puff fell to earth. Above the tender shafts of winter wheat, the little bird spread its wings and slowly, as if stretching out an invisible thread, rose higher and higher. We then heard not the ringing of the little bell, but the reverberation of a silver string... I wanted this wonderful music to touch the children's hearts and open their eyes to the beauty of the world around them. Then I told a story about the lark.

"The lark is a child of the sun. In winter, the sun goes far, far away from us. The earth is covered with snow and frost. Slowly, slowly the sun comes back to us; it's hard for him to melt the snow. He throws hot sparks at the snowdrifts. The thawed patches where the sparks land come to life, and wonderful bird is born--the lark. It rises into the blue sky and flies to meet the sun. It flies and sings while the sun scatters silver sparks. The lark flies through the azure sky looking at the earth, looking out for the very brightest spark. When it sees such a spark, it drops to the earth like a stone and picks it up and it is instantaneously transformed into a delicate silver thread. The lark puts one end of the thread on the earth, hanging it on a shaft of wheat, and pulls the other end higher and higher to the sun, to the blue sky. See how hard it is for the bird to rise, how its gray wings beat. It plays the silver thread like a string, and the higher the lark goes, the higher the sound the string makes. The lark stretches the thread out all the way to the sun and returns to the earth once again looking far another spark."

Doesn't knowledge of the laws of nature hinder the fairy tale! No, quite the reverse, it facilitates the telling. The children understand quite well that a chunk of earth cannot become a living creature, just as they understand that there are no Giant Blacksmiths, no Baba-Yaga, and no Deathless Dragons. But if children didn't have all these things, if they didn't experience the struggle between good and evil, didn't feel that truth, honor, and beauty are reflected in fairy tales, then their world would be crowded and uncomfortable.

The story about the lark helped the children understand the music of nature, prepared them to listen to melodies. We returned to school and listened to Tchaikovsky 's "The Song of the Lark". The children admired the sound of the silver bell, which was captured in the sounds of the music and the modulations of the delicate silver string connecting the green cornfield and the sun. We listened to this song more than once, on both fine clear mornings and gray rainy days, but the children always remembered the wonderful, sun-filled world, the blue sky, a gray puff of life, and the wide-open fields. The children wanted their ideas of the bird to be embodied in clear fairy-tale images. They drew fairy-tale pictures of the lark, the silver sparks, and the string stretching from the earth to the sun.

Gradually we built up an album of musical works the children liked. From time to time we went to our room and listened to music. I called the album our "musical jewelry box"; the children liked this and said proudly, "We

have a musical jewelry box. The idea occurred to me that from year to year, we would take the very best from the treasure-house of music and create a music room in which we would enjoy the beauty created by the person and by nature. We would sing and learn to play the violin and the piano. But that was all in the future; for the time being we would try to play our pipes.

One cloudy day we went to the grove and cut a pipe from an elderberry tree. We polished it and made holes. I played the tune to a Ukrainian folk song about a merry little shepherd. It is difficult to describe the children's delight. Every child wanted to try its luck, and they all dreamed of having their own musical instruments. They all made their own pipes. Lida, Larisa, Yura, Tina, Seryaha, and Kostya had a good ear for music, a sensitivity to melody. In a few days the children were playing the tunes to folk gongs and dances. I will never forget the quiet evening hour Tina reproduced the melody of an old Ukrainian folk song. The little girl's eyes burned and her cheeks were flushed. Her mother told me that Tina would sit for a long time in the garden at home and "make up" tunes on her pipes, playing melodies, sometimes glancing dreamily at the sky and the trees.

One day I came to school early in the morning. It was quiet all around. Suddenly the soft sound of the pipes came to me from somewhere far back in the garden. I went looking for the music. Someone was playing a melody, which was obviously improvised. Throughout the melody was woven a red thread of sadness, bright and pure. Carefully, so as not to disturb the musician, I walked over to the rose bushes. Tina was sitting there on the grass. It seemed the pipes had become a part of her existence. The girl was looking at a rose with soft, caressing eyes. Then I began to understand the melody: she was playing about the beautiful flower, about the blue spring dry. What had seemed to be sadness was really uneasiness: Tina was putting her thoughts of the future into music.

Kostya also grew to like the piper. It was hard for him to play with only one hand, but he quickly learned to reproduce the tuner to several folk songs and then started to make things up--to fantasize, to transform his thoughts, feelings, and experiences into music. One day during a thunderstorm, we were sitting in our Corner of Dreams. The thunder died down, and there was a rainbow in the sky. Everyone was silent, admiring the beauty of this picture. We heard a quiet melody: Kostya was playing. The music captured the swirling of a brook charged with an anxious roaring. Thunderheads drew close, and peals of thunder were heard in the distance. The little boy forgot that we were listening; he poured everything into his creation. He suddenly became aware of the pensive faces of his comrades and grew shy... Few from all of them would become musicians, but I deeply believe that the feeling of appreciation for music can be developed in every person.

Being-carried away by this simple folk music was a deeply personal affair for each of us. At times, a unique "musical mood" came over us: the children wanted to sit and play. More often than not, this happened in the quiet of evening after sunset during those few moments when the reflections of the sun, which had already dropped below the horizon, still lit up the earth. It was a great happiness for us that music already gave us joy and satisfaction.

Kolya had a good ear for music, and he quickly learned to reproduce the melodies of fell songs. One day when we were coming back from the forest I said to Kolya, "Remember how you drew the Blacksmiths that forge the silver garland! Why don't you try to describe these Blacksmiths on your pipes-the way they hammer, the way the cold sparks fall to the earth.."

"But the sparks aren't cold," the boy objected strongly. "They're hot--unbelievably hot..."

Yes, of course they were hot... Nothing cold could fly out from under the hammer when it strikes the anvil. I would also try to tell about the Blacksmiths on my pipes - the Blacksmiths of the Sun.

A day later we went to the school garden in the morning. We told about the marvelous Blacksmiths with the guiltless melodies of our pipes. We not only understood each other, but felt the moods under the influence of

which our melodies were born. I listened attentively to the music of Kolya's "Blacksmiths". Not only did he delicately put across the resounding of their hammers, but he admired their strength. He was amazed at the beauty of the silver sparks falling on the fields and gardens, sad that he couldn't gaze at the whole earth. He wanted to see the beauty he felt vaguely in everything. Now I had surely seen a path to the heart of this child. Music educates the soul, makes human the feelings. In music as in words, genuine humanity is expressed. In developing the child's sensitivity to music, we are ennobling its thoughts and aspirations. Music must open the life-giving spring of human feelings in every heart, Music, as do the living trembling words of one's native language, reveals the beauty of the surrounding world to the child. But music is the language of human feeling, and it brings more than just the beauty of the world to the child's soul. It reveals human greatness and dignity to people. In the minutes when it is enjoying music, the child feels that it is really a person. The child's soul is the soul of a sensitive musician. In it are tightly stretched strings, and if you can touch them, enchanting music will begin to ring out, not just figuratively, but literally. Childhood is just as impossible without music as it is without games or fairy tales.

Experience shows that music is the noblest background against which spiritual community between teacher and pupils can arise. Music opens up people's hearts. Listening to a melody, experiencing and admiring its beauty, teacher and student draw closer together, cease to be strangers.

In the moments of this common experience which only music can give, the teacher sees things in the child, which could never be seen without music. Under the influence of music, when the soul is elevated by lofty experiences, the child entrusts its fears and worries to the teacher. It was at such a time that Kolya told me that he had a notebook at home in which he drew everything that excited him and made him happy. Then the little boy showed me his drawings. A world of dreams opened up before me. Kolya wanted to be a tractor operator and then a frontier guard.

Winter Joys and Cares

Winter... What excellent educational and developmental opportunities are hidden in this delightful time. Those who say that children can be kept healthy only in the summer are gravely mistaken. If you don't make use of winter with its moderately cold temperatures and soft, plentiful snowfalls to strengthen the children's health, then summer won't help either. I trained the children to tolerate the cold, to breathe the clean, cold air.

In the morning we went to the school greenhouse to greet the sunrise, which came pouring in and decorated the frozen panes of glass in the greenhouse corridor with whimsical scar- imaginations drew a surprising the greenhouse let patterns. Our world on every pane of glass: we saw fantastic animals, secret mountain passes, clouds, and flowers. Here, by the frozen glass, the children made up lots of stories. Here they learned to read about which I will speak later.

After meeting with the sun, the children opened the door from the corridor to the greenhouse and stepped into the world of flowers. Chrysanthemums were blooming in one of our greenhouses that winter. Every child had its own flower there-its own special friend. The children watered the flowers. These were joyful minutes: rainbows caught fire in the little drops of water... The children admired them and dreamed of summer. Hue the story of the bridge of sunlight--the golden rainbow--was born.

After every snowstorm when the earth was once again covered in white, we went to look at the snow-drifts in the school garden. The world of snowdrifts was a surprising one: it was just as secret and unexpected as the world of clouds. The children found fairy-tale castles on high and insuccessible mountaintops in the whimsical snowdrifts, and the frozen waves of the sea and a white swan, and a gray wolf, and a sly fox. One day it was as if nature had created a fairy-tale ship especially for us, with sail's and a captain's bridge, with an anchor and pirates looking far off into the distance. Several days in a row, before the wind and sun destroyed the ship, we went to

look at it. In the evenings, the children came to school to listen to my story of pirates and kind people, defenders of the weak and unjustly accused, of the struggle between good and evil, of the victory of truth over injustice.

We didn't go on walks when it was very cold. The children went outside in mild weather, and when there was a thaw, it was a real holiday. The Young Pioneers helped us build a snow fortress. Something like a cave was constructed of slabs of snow. And here work and play were also accompanied by stories and games. We pretended we were polar explorers. I told the children stories about the great glacial silences. The fantastic was interwoven with the actual, heroic deeds of humankind. The children parted with their fortress, which was melted by the rays of the sun, with sadness.

We went to the forest twice that winter, once by car and once in troikas. Our cheeks were bright red from the light frost, but no one complained about the cold. The children have never forgotten the days we spent there. We listened to the music of the winter forest and observed the life of the birds. We found a spring that was not frozen in the forest ravine. We warmed ourselves by the fire and made kasha. We admired the beauty of the sunset, which changed the color of the snow-covered branches before our very eyes. They were pale pink, then orange, then crimson, the violet blue. The fairy tale about the Sun was enriched with new images as the children were caught up by this fantastic, uncommon beauty. Here we made up poems in which the children expressed their impressions of the winter forest. Katya, admiring the beauty of the pine trees all dressed in snow, said: "The pine tree is sleeping."

Zina drew an even clearer image: "The pine tree has fallen asleep until summer..."

"The pine tree has fallen asleep until spring," said Seryozha, and everyone felt the melodiousness of these words. The children wanted to continue the thought of their comrade.

"She sleeps, and sleep, and sleeps, and dreams," one of the others said.

The pine tree has fallen asleep until spring, she sleeps, and sleeps, and dreams,

sang the little boys and girls, experiencing a feeling of pride because they had made up the song themselves. That winter evening opened the entire world of spiritual riches of the child before me. I was finally convinced that to teach children study and think, to develop their intellectual strengths and abilities, one must bring them into direct contact with the sources of thought and language.

What child doesn't like to build a snowman or go sledding! In moderately, cold, quiet weather, especially when the sun is shining brightly, we spent whole days outside. At the edge of the village, we built an ice mountain. We didn't like sleds, wooden or metal, because they didn't go fast enough. So we made about twenty ice sleds: we took straw and mixed it with dung, then threw cold water on it, and made it into the shape of a little nest. These sleds were absolutely safe.

I remembered my own childhood... We took a wagon wheel and put the axle into a hole in the ice of the pond. The hole froze over fixing the axle in an upright position and the wheel became a carousel on the ice. The children held onto sticks tied to the wheel and slid on the mirror-like surface of the pond. We spent whole days at these pastimes. The weak children--Sanya, Volodya, Katya and Kostya became ruddy and rosy-cheeked.

The unique beauty of nature in winter revealed itself to the children especially dearly in the quiet, cloudless, frosty evenings. We stood in the garden, looking at the scarlet sunset and waiting for the first stars to come out. The snow seemed to be pink in the evening light, and then bright violet. In these moments, the feelings, which overcame the children, found expression in words and music. They remembered the tunes to folk songs, which resounded with unrepeatable beauty. Charmed, we went to the school building, lit the fire in the stove and sang.

The children admired the sunrises on quiet winter mornings. They stood silently, contemplating the beauty. They wanted to find the words-to express their admiration, and I helped them in this search. Every discovery not only awoke joy but was also a new source of energy for thought.

The First Holiday of the Lark

All through the winter, sitting by the cages of the bird and animal "hospitals", we dreamed of the warm spring day when our little friends would fly off into the blue sky, scamper in the grove. And finally the long-awaited holiday arrived. The day after the first lark appeared in the sky, we carried the cages with the birds and animals to the top of the hills. The steppe resounded with bird song. The children opened the cages and the lark, the woodpecker, the oriole, and the rabbit were set free. We saw our lark fly singing to the heaven and then return to the ground... We stood charmed by the beauty and were glad that we had saved the lives of living creatures.

I imagined the future during these moments: every year we would come to the top of the hill to celebrate the holiday of the lark.

The holiday of the lark became the boundary line between spring and summer. The children considered it an honor to have saved the lives of the birds. A "corner of life and beauty" appeared in the home of every child. The image of the lark with its unrepeatable melodies ringing above the sun filled meadows had forever become a part of the inner world of the children. The children eagerly awaited this holiday for yet another reason as these days were connected with the excitement of artistic creativity: their mothers helped them make little larks, swallows, starlings, bullfinches, magpies, nightingales, and tit-mice of white dough. They brought their products to school with them. The children put their love of nature into their little creations. Every child expressed its idea of beauty in its own way.

In the fall, the children sadly said goodbye to the migratory birds. This sadness ennobles human hearts; without it them is no goodwill.

How We Learned to Read and Write

I will explain how the children learned to read and write. Please do not look upon what I relate as a new method of teaching reading and writing. I did not think about the scientific base of our creativity, but it is precisely the creativity of children which assists educational work and studies, all of which is far from that which may, to some extent, replace the tried and true methods pf teaching reading and writing. This creativity was born among the fields and meadows, in the shade of the oak grove, at summer sunrises and winter twilights.

I had been thinking for many years about how difficult, tiresome, and uninteresting reading and writing become for the child in the first days of its life at school. How could children be placed upon the thorny path to knowledge without having studies become a purely bookish affair? I saw how children tried to distinguish between the different letters, how these letters would jump about before their eyes, merging into a pattern which was impossible to understand. And at the same time, I saw how easily children remembered letters and made them into words when this task was lit up by something interesting, connected with games, and especially important, when no one demanded anything of the child-"Remember this or else! If you forget, you'll really be in trouble."

From the first days of school life, grades appear along the thorny path of studying which the child faces. For one child, this idol is kind and condescending, while for another, it is cruel, merciless, and inexorable. Why is this so? Why this idol is patronizing to one and tyrannical to another is something children don't understand. A seven-year-old child cannot understand that grades depend upon work, upon putting forth one's best efforts; all this is incomprehensible to it for the time being. It aims to please, or at the very worst, to lie to the idol,

gradually becoming accustomed to studying not for personal satisfaction, but for grades. I am far from thinking that grades should be banished from school life. No, there's no getting around grades. But children should be given grades only after they are able to understand that the quality of their intellectual labor depends on the amount of energy they spend in their studies.

And the main thing, in my opinion, which is demanded of grades in elementary school, is their optimistic, cheerful beginning. The grade should be a reward for hard work and not a punishment for laziness and neglect. If the teacher sees a low mark as a whip, which can be used on a lazy horse and a high mark as a cookie, then the children will soon come to hate both the whip and the cookie. Low marks are a very sharp, fine instrument, which the wise, experienced teacher of the elementary classes always keeps in reserve and never uses. If you wish to know, this instrument should exist in the elementary grades precisely because it is never to be used. Educational wisdom consists in making sure that the child never loses that faith in its own strength, never feels that it isn't getting anywhere. Every task must be a step forward for the student, even if the step is a tiny one. A seven-year-old child that has just entered school and has hardly learned to distinguish between "A" and "B" suddenly receives a failing mark. It doesn't understand what this all means and at first doesn't even feel grief or anxiety. It is simply stunned. "Sometimes a clever child is brought to a standstill in amazement at aggressive, caustic, old-fashioned stupidity," wrote Janusz Korczak. "Respect children's ignorance." I have remembered the words of this Polish educator all of my life. Only when the teacher has mastered the subtleties of understanding the person and the ability to respect children's ignorance will a failing mark become the sharpest, finest instrument, but one which is never used in elementary school.

Something interesting occurred several years before the beginning of the School of Joy. I went to the edge of the forest with some six-year-and pre-school children. I began to tell them about the butterflies and beetles. We noticed a horned beetle crawling through the grass. It tried to fly away several times but couldn't get off the ground. The children studied the beetle in great detail. I had a drawing pad with me and drew the beetle. One of the children asked me to write, "beetle", so I printed BEETLE in big letters. The curious children began to repeat the word and to examine the letters, which to them appeared to be a drawing. Someone drew the letters in the sand, and someone made the word out of blades of grass. Every letter reminded the children of something. For example, in the letter (Russian alphabet) they saw our unsuccessful beetle flapping its wings trying to fly. A few months later, after they had already started school, I attended one of these children's lessons. The teacher complained that they were having trouble with reading. Purely by coincidence, they were studying the letter (Russian alphabet) at that lesson. The children's faces lit up with smiles and the classroom began to buzz with excitement. The children repeated the word "beetle" (Russian alphabet) and picked out the letter (Russian alphabet). They raised their hands, and the teacher was bewildered by the fact that they could all write the word "beetle" The lesson was a joyful and merry one... And for me as an educator, it was a lesson that life taught the teacher.

And now in the School of Joy, I remembered this. Children should live in the world of beauty, games, fairy tales, music, drawing, fantasy, and creativity. This world should surround the child even when we wish to teach it to read and write. Its whole attitude to knowledge and learning will depend on the first few rungs it takes up this ladder. It is terrible to think that these rungs become stumbling blocks for many children. If you look at school life, you will see that precisely at the time when they are learning to read and write, many children lose faith in their own abilities. Let us make these rungs such that the children don't feel tired, so that every rung to knowledge is like the proud flight of a bird, and not the dull plodding of a weary traveler exhausted by the excessive burden he is carrying.

I began to take the children on "journeys" to the sources of words: I opened the children's eyes to the beauty of the world and at the same time tried to show their hearts the music of words. I tried to make it so that words were not just names of people, places, things, or phenomena, but carried with them emotion- al coloration--their own aroma, subtle nuances. It was important that the children listen attentively to the word as if to a wonderful melody, so that the beauty of the word and the beauty of that part of the world to which the word referred would

awaken interest in those drawings which put across the music of the sounds of human speech--the letters of the alphabet. Until the child feels the aroma of words, sees their subtle nuances, it is not prepared to begin to study reading and writing. And if the teacher begins this too early, he or she dooms the children to a difficult task. (In the end, the child will overcome this difficulty, but at a great price!)

The process of learning to read and write will be easy if it is a clear, exciting bit of life for the children, a filling out of living images, sounds, and melodies. That which the child must remember must be interesting. Learning to read and write must be closely connected with drawing.

On our "journeys" to the sources of the word, we went walking with paper and pencil. This is one of our first journeys. I wanted to show the children the beauty and subtle nuances of the word "meadow." We were sitting under a pussy-willow tree, which bent over the pond. There was a green meadow lit up by the sun in the distance. I told the children: "Look at the beauty before us. There are butterflies and bees flying over the grass. There's a herd of cows so far away they look like little toys. The meadow looks like a bright green river, and the trees are like the dark green shore. The cows are standing in the river. Look how many beautiful flowers are scattered about in early fall. Listen to the music of the meadow: do you hear the delicate buzzing of the little flies, the song of the grasshoppers!"

I drew a picture of the meadow in my drawing pad- the cows and geese scattered about like bits of white fluff, and the barely discernible smoke, and the white clouds above the horizon. The children were charmed by the beauty of the quiet morning and also drew. I wrote the word "meadow" below my drawing. For most of the children, the letters were part of the drawing. And every drawing reminds them of something, but what? Blades of grass. I bent blades into the shape of the letter M. I took four blades and made an E. The children also wrote "meadow" under their drawings. Then we read the word. Sensitivity to the music of nature helped children feel the sounds of the word. It reminded them of how every letter is written, and they put living sounds into every drawing, so the letters were easy to remember. A word which is drawn can be perceived as a whole; the word can be read, and this reading is nor the result of detailed analysis and synthesis of the sounds of the word, but is rather a deliberate reproduction of arranging musical image which corresponds to a visual image, which is nothing more than a drawing to the children, In such a unity of visual and audio perceptions, imbued with rich emotional colorings located both in the visual image and the musical sounding of the word, the children will remember the letters and the little word simultaneously. This is not a discovery of new method of teaching reading. It is a practical realization of what science has demonstrated: it is easier to remember what you don't have to remember. The emotional coloring of the images perceived plays an exceptionally important role in memory.

The unity of the visual image, sound, and emotional coloring of a word in no way ignores the independent, separate analysis of the sounds. Quite the reverse, when the children listened attentively to the way the word "meadow" sounded, they picked out every sound, understanding that the word is composed of separate sounds, and that there was a letter corresponding to every sound.

Several days later, we went on a new "journey". We went to the school garden early in the morning to greet the sun. The grass, the leaves on the trees, the bunches of grapes, the yellow pears and purple plums were all covered with dewdrops. A spark of sunlight glistened in every drop. The sparks would disappear and reappear in other places. It was as if the sun drank up one drop and put another in its place. The sparks appeared in the dewdrops when the sun shined on them. But where did the dew disappear to? Some drops evaporated and others slowly rolled down the blades of grass and were swallowed up by the earth. If there were no dew, the grace and flowers would wither up. Then we looked at the sparkling drops of dew on the asters, nasturtiums, canna, lilies, and roses. I drew a blade of grass, a nasturtium, the sun, and a dewdrop with flashing sparks. The chicken also made drawings. Under the pictures we wrote "drop". These letters reminded the children of the sun and the dewdrops. We mad the letter-drawings. Every child drew the letters in its own way, transmitting its own impression of the surrounding world in the letters. Seryozha said to his comrades: "This is a dewdrop hanging on

a blade grass." Thus he-imagined the letter D. "Soon it will roll down to the-ground. This drop is waiting, but it won't wait for the sun." Thus the little boy saw the letter R. "And the sunshine is already inside of this little drop." Seryozha went over the letter O again with his pencil.

I suggested that all the children draw blades of grass with dewdrops. The children made their own drawings of the word "drop". It's easy to say: "The children drew and wrote." For them, both drawing and writing were whole worlds of images, sounds, colors, and feelings. Every letter in the consciousness of the child is connected with graphic images, so it's easy to remember both the word as a whole and the separate letters.

Over a period of several days we admired the dew-drops again and again, and continued drawing and writing. And every new drawing was not simply the next exercise, but creativity. Our creativity with the word "drop" was spread out over a period of two or three weeks. Every child drew those twig or blades of grass it liked several times, then it listened to the way the word sounded, picking out the separate sounds and the letters that corresponded to them. The similarity of the letters to objects from the surrounding world was essentially fantasy, fairy tale, and creativity to the children.

I wrote the title "Our Native Language" on the cover of the drawing pad. "We will save it for many years," I told the children, "until you all grow up and finish school. You will all have your own pads with drawings and words, but this will be our class drawing pad."

Days and weeks passed, and we made ever-new "journeys" to the sources of the living word. The children found their acquaintance with the following words most interesting: *village, pine grove, oak tree, willow, forest, ice, mountain, rye, sky, hay, grove, linden tree, ash tree, apple tree, cloud, hill, acorn, falling leaves. In the spring, we devoted "journeys" to the words flowers, lilac, lily-of-the-valley, acacia, grapes, pond, river, lake, edge of the forest, fog, rain, thunderstorm, sunrise, doves, poplar and cherry.*

Each time that child in which the word awakened the clearest impressions, feelings, and memories drew a picture in the drawing pad "Our Native Language". No one remained indifferent to the beauty of our native tongue. By the spring of 1952, eight months after the beginning of our work, the children knew all the letters of the alphabet, and could read and write.

Here I must warn against attempts mechanically to adopt this experience Learning to read and write by this method is creativity, and any kind of creativity will not tolerate a mold. Something new may be adopted only creatively.

It is very important not to tell the children that they have to memorize all the letters and learn to read. The child climbs the first few steps to knowledge in the process of playing game. Its intellectual life spiritualizes beauty, fairy tales, music, fantasy, creativity, and games of the imagination. Children deeply remember what excites their feelings, what fascinates them with its beauty. I was staggered by the ardent desire of many children not only to express their experiences in words but to write.

One day we took cover from a shower in a forest lodge. The thunder rumbled and lightning flashed. Little hailstones began to fall. They lay on the green grass for a little while even after the rain had ended. The sun came out from behind the clouds, and the little hailstones looked seen. The children cried out with admiration at how beautiful it was. The next day children wanted to draw what they had seen the day before. And Yura, Seryozha, Shura, and Galya even wrote titles for their drawings. They could already read well, and here I saw their first compositions. This is what they wrote: "Storm clouds scattering hail on the grass", "White hail on the green grass", "The sun melting white hail", "The thunderstorm pouring out white hail stones".

This reconvinced me that the closer children are to the first sources of thought and language, to the world around them, the richer and more expressive their speech will be. I believed that soon all the children would be making

up mini-compositions. My belief was confirmed in the summer of 1952. Poppy seeds had been sown in one corner of the school farmstead. I took the children there when the poppies were lit up by hundreds of different-colored flames. The beauty awoke waves of joyful experiences in the children's hearts. We admired the flowers for a long time and listened to the buzzing of the bees. The next day we went to this corner with our drawing pads and colored pencils. The children drew, and I told them a story about a poppy seed and how the rainbow had given it all the beauty of seven colors. Many children wanted to express their admiration in words and wrote clear, expressive compositions: "The carpet of poppies is blooming" (Tanya), "A carpet of poppies covered the earth" (Nina), "The poppies began to bloom, and the sun was glad" (Zina), "The bees buzzing over the carpet of poppies" (Galya), "The sun scattered flowers over the earth: blue, pink, red, and light blue" (Larisa), "A shaggy bumblebee on light blue petals" (Seryozha), "Flowers swaying on slender stalks" (Shura), "The sun is playing in the poppies" (Kolya), "Blue petals fell from the sky and blossomed into a carpet on the ground" (Katya). The children took these compositions and drawings out of their pads and put them into the "Our Native Language".

The children's imaginations played with the living spring, with clear images, during our "journeys" to the sunflower, to the fields of blooming buckwheat. The more the beauty of the surrounding world excited the children, the more deeply they remembered the letters, although this was not the goal put before all others. I became more convinced that the imagery of the visible world and the attempt to express the feeling of beauty in words was the heart of children's thinking. Children think creatively, vividly, in images saturated with emotion. For the child to become intelligent and bright, it must be given the happiness of the artistic vision of the world in early childhood.

What inexhaustible springs of fantasy, and creativity open up living thoughts in the child's consciousness when the child sees and feels the beautiful! I will never forget one of our "journeys" to the sources of the living word. One summer day we went to the apiary on the collective farm. The beekeeper gave us fresh honey and cold spring water. The children sat under the apple trees admiring the blooming buck- wheat in the fields. The bees, returning to the hives after their flight to the steppe, circled above the little brook with cold spring water and buzzed quietly. "They're telling each other about the flowers and groves, the buckwheat and sunflowers, the bright heads of the poppies and the purple flower," said the children.

Five years later my little ones were already fourth formers, and I suggested that they write a story, "What Do the Bees Buzz About?" The unforgettable impressions of that June day took the shape of clear images in the living stream of thought. Whatever one admires in early childhood is never forgotten. Let the years of childhood always impress upon the consciousness of the children the beauty of their native language and the world around them. Let the first steps along the steep, difficult ladder of knowledge be instilled with beauty!

The better the children learned to read, the bigger the role books came to play in their inner lives. We created a little library of picture books. Unfortunately, there was nothing good in the bookstores, and I had to write and illustrate the books myself. The first picture book I made was of the Ukrainian folk tale of Grandfather Frost, the wicked stepmother, the kind stepdaughter, and the lazy daughter. The book was rather long--more than thirty pages with a picture and several sentences on each, although sometimes there would be only one phrase. By spring of 1952, most of the children could read fluently. Varya, Kolya, Galya, Larisq Seryozha, and Lida read especially well. We sat on the grass and one of the children would open the picture book and begin to read... This was not simple reading of words and making a sentence of them. It was creativity. While reading the fairy tale, the child seemed to be in the world portrayed in the drawings. The intonation of its reading put across the subtle nuances of feeling and aspirations of kind Grandfather Frost, the wicked step-mother, the hard-working and warm-hearted step-daughter, and the lazy, heartless daughter. The children deeply experienced what they read: they hated evil and rejoiced at the triumph of the good.

And this is what is interesting: the children had read the story dozens of times, but nonetheless listened each time with great interest. I remembered the anxiety of educators: why do children read so monotonously and without expression? Why does one rarely hear emotional coloring in children's reading? Because in many cases reading

is disconnected from the inner life, thoughts, feelings, and ideas of the children. The child is excited about one thing but reads about some- thing else. Reading enriches the lives of children only when the words affect the hidden places in their hearts.

We began to make new picture books Yura, Seryozha, Katya, Lida, Lyuba, and Larisa drew the pictures. There was not a single child who didn't want to help with the drawing. The difficulties in mastering reading and writing were overcome mainly thanks to the interest in drawing.

In the summer of 1952, the children began to read short printed children's books: Tolstoy's versions of folk tales and short stories from The Native Language, by Ushinsky. They also read poems by Pushkin, Lermontov, and Nekrasov, and Ukrainian poets Shevchenko, Lesya Ukrainka, and Franko. All I had to do was read Ushinsky's poem "Children, Get Ready for School", from The Native Language, and the children had it practically memorized. Overjoyed by this, I excitedly began to make up clumsy poems with which to make an abundance of books for reading, beginning with the primer. Dry verses written in clerical language are more likely to kill poetic feelings than to teach love for the written word.

I shared every success and every difficulty with the other teachers. Preparing the pre-schoolers for the first form became a collective concern of all elementary teachers at our school. The creative experience of the teachers grew better, the educational methods more profound, especially out-of-class and out-of- schoolwork, with every passing year. This facilitated unified intellectual development of the children, who acquired the elementary practical skills, which are necessary for successful studying. Reading is first among these skills.

Within a couple of years, the teachers of pre-schoolers had them reading before they entered the first form. This lightened the whole task of education to a significant degree not just in the elementary classes but in the upper forms as well. Our many years of collective experience allowed us to come to a very important conclusion concerning the role of fluent, expressive, reading with comprehension and the intellectual development of the child for creative mental labor within the process of reading. This conclusion is as follows: the earlier the child begins to read, the more naturally reading is connected with its entire inner life, the more complicated are the thinking processes which go on during reading, and the more reading gives to intellectual development. The child that begins to read before it is seven has gained a very valuable skill: its visual and mental perceptions of words and parts of sentences go beyond mere pronunciation of sounds. When reading, the child is not chained to the word. It can divert its gaze from the book and drink through the meaning of the sounds. In such a fashion, the child reads, thinks, and imagines simultaneously.

Our collective experience convinced us that precisely such fluent reading is one of the most important elements of reading with comprehension.

You Live Among Other People, My Child

The Young Pioneers planted chrysanthemums in a remote corner of the school farmstead. As autumn approached, white, blue, and pink flowers began, to bloom there. One clear, warm day I took my youngsters there. They were delighted by the abundance of flowers. But bitter experience has shown that children's admiration of beauty is often egoistic. The child can pick the flowers not seeing anything reprehensible in it. So it was on that day. I saw first one, then two, then three flowers in the children's hands. When only half of the flowers were left, Katya let out a cry:

"Is it really alright to pick the chrysanthemums?"

There was no surprise or indignation at her words. The little girl was only asking I didn't answer. Let this day be a lesson for the children. They picked a few more flowers; the beauty of the corner had disappeared, and the

lawn looked deserted. The gust of admiration of the beauty, which had blazed up in the children's hearts, died down. They didn't know what to do with the flowers.

"Well children, is this corner beautiful now?" I asked. "Are the stalks you picked the flowers from beautiful?" The children were silent. Then several began to answer: "No, they're not beautiful..."

"And where are we going to look at the pretty flowers now?"

"The Young Pioneers planted these flowers," I told the children. "They will come here to look at the pretty flowers, and what will they find? Don't forget that you live among other people. Everyone wants to enjoy beautiful things. We have a lot of flowers here at school, but what would happen if every student picked just one' Nothing would be left. There would be nothing pretty for people to look at. We have to preserve beauty, not destroy it. When autumn comes and the days are cooler, we will transplant the chrysanthemums and put them in the greenhouse. There we will admire their beauty. To pick one flower, you have to plant ten."

Several days later, we were in another part of the lawn with even more chrysanthemums. The children didn't pick the flowers; they admired their beauty.

The child's heart is sensitive to the call to create beauty and joy for other people. It is important that these calls be followed by work. If the child feels that there are people next to it, that its actions can give them joy, it will learn to harmonize its desires with the interests of others from an early age. And this is exceptionally important for the development of kindliness and humanity. Those who don't know the limits of their personal desires will never become good citizens. Egoists, self-seeking people, those indifferent to the trials and tribulations of others, never learned to control their desires in childhood and paid no attention to the good of the whole. The ability to control one's desires is the simplest, and at the same time, a very complex habit--it is the source of humanity, sensitivity, warm-heartedness, and self-discipline, without which the individual has no conscience and is not a genuine human being.

And here it is once again necessary to stress the importance of the early years in teaching the child to be a real person. Moral convictions, attitudes, and habits are all closely connected with feelings. Feelings, figuratively speaking, futile soil for actions of high moral standards. Where there is no sensitivity, no acute perception of the surrounding world, people grow up soulless and heartless. Sensitivity, the impressionability of the soul, are formed in childhood. One can never compensate for these things if they are not inculcated in childhood.

To conduct the child through the complex world of human relations is one of the most important tasks of the educator. Children cannot live without joy. Our society does all it can so childhood will be a happy time. But joy need not be carefree. When the child, plucking the fruits of joy from the tree carefully tended by its elders doesn't think about what is left for others, it loses one of the most important characteristics of the person conscience. Before the child realizes that it is a future citizen of a socialist society, it must learn to return good for good, to create happiness and joy for other people with its own hands.

In the years before the creation of the School of Joy, I was worried that many parents, blinded by instinctive love for their children, saw only the good in them, and ignored the negative features. I remember how a four-year-old boy, rather than taking the time to go to the toilet, did his business in front of his mother and his neighbor. The mother was not indignant but was touched: "Look what a clever son we have, he's not afraid of anything." The boy looked at her with a sassy expression, first pouting then grinning contemptuously; he had already become something loathsome, from which a scoundrel was likely to be the result if left unchecked, if no one were to make him look at himself through the eyes of others.

I had to talk with Volalya's mother more than once. As soon as she started to say something, her son pulled on her dress and grabbed her by the hand. He always had something urgent to tell her. Obtrusiveness and

demanding attention are the child's varieties of selfishness, the sources of which are excusing it everything, lisping, and impunity. Some parents (and unfortunately some teachers as well) think that when speaking with children, one must always use a childish tone of voice. The child takes this tone for lisping. The inexperienced heart of the child responds to this childish babble on the part of the adult with misbehavior. I am always wary of the dangers lurking in that tone of voice and do not forget for an instant that a future adult citizen lies within every little person. Such a treatment seemed exceptionally important to me when doing work for other people was under discussion. The worst thing, which frequently accompanies children's work, is the idea that they are doing the grown-ups a big favor, and therefore deserves great praise or even some reward.

...In the fall we dug up the chrysanthemums and planted them in the greenhouse. This was reasonable work for village children. Every day the children watered the transplanted bushes and waited impatiently for the first flowers to appear. The greenhouse became a wonderful corner. "And now let us invite guests," I advised the children. "Whom shall we invite?" Many of them had younger brothers and sisters. They brought these little ones to the greenhouse, leading them by the hand. They reached out for the chrysanthemums, but my children wouldn't let them pick them.

"If we can grow enough flowers, then on International Women's Day, 8 March, we will give all of our mothers a chrysanthemum," I told the children. This goal inspired the children, and by the beginning of March, we had enough flowers. We invited the mothers for the holiday, showed them the greenhouse, and gave them all beautiful flowers. Galya's stepmother came with her, and the little girl gave her a chrysanthemum. I had talked with Galya many times about her relations with her stepmother, convinced that she was a good person and my words reached her heart. I was glad that Kolya and Tolya's mothers, Sasha's grandmother, and Kostya's stepmother came to our party.

There is much that cannot be explained to a Little child. Fine words about nobility often don't reach its consciousness, but even a child can feel the beauty of humanity in its heart. From the first days of the School of Joy, I tried to make every pupil experience the joy, grief, sorrow, and adversities of other people. In the fall and spring we often went to visit the kolkhoz bee-keeper, Grandfather Andrei. The old man had no family, and being alone was a great sorrow for him. The children felt that Grandfather Andrei enjoyed all our visits. Before we went to see him, I told the children to gather apples, grapes, plums, and wild flowers for Grandfather: they would bring him joy. The children's hearts became more sensitive to the experiences, and feelings of others. The children themselves started to look for any kind of joy they could give the old man. One day we made kasha in the forest. How many joyful experiences the children had when the fire began to burn... And at that very moment of joy, Varya thoughtfully said:

"But Grandfather Andrei is alone now."

The children became thoughtful. This may seem sentimental to some adults; someone may be thinking: are seven-year-olds really capable of such spiritual impulses' Yes, my dear fellow teachers, if at precisely that age, the spiritual sensitivity of the child is sharpened, if the great truth that it lives among other people is brought to its heart, the child will want to share its joy with others. The thought that it is having fun while its friend is alone will sadden it.

The children decided to share their joy with Grandfather Andrei. "Let's take him some kasha with fat-back..." said Kostya. These words were met with excitement. The children brought him so much kasha that a hungry bear couldn't have eaten it all. We ate once again at the apiary, this time with Grandfather.

Sensitivity to joy and sorrow can be inculcated only in childhood. At that age, the heart is especially sensitive to human suffering, misfortune, depression, and aloneness. The child seems to be transformed, putting itself in the place of the other person. I remember how we were returning from the forest one day and passed by a solitary hut open to the wind. I told the children that an invalid from the Great Patriotic War lived there. He was ill and

couldn't plant apple trees or grapes. The children's eyes filled with tears. Every child felt the solitude of the sick man. We planted two apple trees and two grape vines as a present for him. And we felt the most valuable joy in response-the joy of creating happiness for another person.

The inculcation of sensitivity and sympathy for the grief and suffering of others is an important task for the Soviet school. A person can become a friend, comrade, and brother to another only if the other's grief becomes his or her own. The child must feel what is in the heart of the other person. Thus the important educational task I set for myself can be formulated.

If what its comrade, friend, mother, father, or compatriot feels is a matter of indifference to the child, if the child does not see in the eyes of another human being what is in his heart, it will never become a real person. I tried to sharpen the sensitivity of my students' hearts so they would see the feelings, experiences, joys, and grief's not just in the eyes of those they met every day, but in those that they met by chance as well. We were returning from the forest and saw an old man sitting on the grass by the roadside. He was upset about something. "Something has happened to him," I told the children. "Perhaps he has fallen ill on a trip, or maybe he lost something." We went up to the old man and asked: "How can we help you, Grandfather?" The old man breathed heavily. "Thank you, children," he said. "No matter how much you wanted to help, you wouldn't be able to. My wife is dying in the hospital. I am going to her. I'm just here waiting for the bus to come. You can't do anything to help, but you have made it easier for me. Now I know them are still good people in the world." The children grew quiet; their careless twittering stopped. They went their separate ways home with the impression of the old man's sad words. They had wanted to play a little more, but they forgot about the game and went home.

The most difficult task of education is to teach feelings. The school of warm-heartedness, sensitivity, sincerity, and compassion is friendship, comradeship, and brotherhood. The child feels the most delicate experiences of others when it does something for their happiness, joy, and inner peace. The love of a little child for its mother, father, grandmother, and grandfather, if it is not inspired by the creation of good, is transformed into an egoistic feeling. The child loves its mother only because she is the source of its joy, and it needs that joy. But one must instill genuine human love in the heart of the child - anxiety, excitement, care, and concern for the fate of the other person. Genuine love is born only in the heart of the person who is concerned for the fates of others. It is important that children have a friend to care for. Grandfather Andrei, the bee-keeper, became such a friend for my students. I was convinced that the more the child cares about others, the more sensitive its heart becomes toward its comrades and family. I told the children about the difficult life of Grandfather Andrei: two of his sons were killed in the war, and his wife had died. He felt as if he were all alone in the world.

"We will go to see Grandfather more often, children. Every time we must bring him some kind of joy."

When we went visiting, everyone thought about what we could do to make Grandfather happy. The children brought him a drawing pad in which each of them had drawn a picture. They gathered many variegated stones along the riverbank and gave them to Grandfather Andrei. Grandfather made a little box of wood, put the stones inside it, and gave them to us... The children made a hat of straw for their friend. Grandfather carved several figures of animals from wood for us--a little rabbit, a fox, a sheep...

The more spiritual care the children gave their friend, the more adversity, sadness, and anxiety they noticed about themselves. They noticed that Nina and Sasha sometimes came to school gloomy, with sadness and pensiveness in their eyes. They questioned the sisters: how does your mother feel? Their mother felt bad, so the girls were sad... Kind feelings were strengthened in the children's hearts when they did something to lessen the grief of their comrades. Several times we went to Nina and Sasha's to weed the garden and help gather potatoes. Every time we went to the forest, the children wondered whether or not Nina and Sasha could go, for sometimes they had to stay at home and help their father. So the day before our common joy, we went to Nina and Sasha's and helped with whatever we could.

To live in society means to be able to waive one's joys in the name of the well-being and peace of others. We have probably all met with such occurrences: there are grief, unhappiness, and tears in front of the child's very face, but all the same it continues to enjoy its own pleasures. It also happens that a mother will try to divert the child's attention from anything gloomy or dreary, trying not to let her child spill even one drop from its full cup of joy. But that is the school of barefaced egoism. Do not lead the child away from the gloomy side of human existence. Let it know that there is not just joy in life, but grief as well. Let the grief of other people reach into its heart.

The moral cast of personality depends, in the final analysis, on the kinds of sources from which the person drew his or her joys during the years of childhood. If the joys were thoughtless and selfish, if the child did not learn what grief, offense, and suffering are, it will grow up to be an egoist, deaf to other people. It is very important that every child learn the highest joy- the joy of the exciting experience aroused by caring for another person.

Our Collective - a Friendly Family

From the first days of the life of the School of Joy, I tried to bring a spirit of family-like warmth, sincerity, sympathy, and mutual trust and aid to our collective. In September, three children had birthdays: Vitya, Valya, and Kolya. We celebrated them collectively. The school dining hall baked a cake, and we gave the birthday children drawings and books. I was surprised to learn that birthdays were not celebrated in Kolya's family-neither for parents nor for children. Our party was the first holiday in the little boy's life. The attention of his comrades excited him.

In the years of childhood every person needs kindness, to feel a part of something. If a child grows up under heartless conditions, it becomes indifferent to beauty and kindness. School cannot take the place of a family, particularly of a mother, but if the child is deprived of care, warmth, and concern at home, we educators must pay special attention to it.

Our little collective soon had its own material values, secrets, cares, and grief's. We stored toys, pencils, and notebooks in the closet. There was a "food storage place" in the Corner of Dreams. There we kept potatoes, groats, vegetable oil, and onions -everything necessary for rainy autumn evenings. All the members of our family were small children, but them were several especially little ones among them-Danko, Tina, and Valya. On walks and in the forest, everyone considered it a personal duty to help these little ones.

If some children stayed home for unknown reasons, that evening their comrades went to them to find out if they were ill. This became a fine tradition. The feeling of affection is the foundation of important inner needs without which it is impossible to imagine communistic relations between people-meeting the needs of the other person. I tried to make the sources of joy, completeness of feelings, and experiences common to all the children in their contacts with their comrades, a mutual exchange of inner values. Every child had to bring something of its own to the collective, to create happiness and joy for other people.

I met with many difficulties in the process of my work with the upbringing of the children's collective, and to overcome them, I sought the advice of and conversed with experienced educators, with elementary school teachers who felt the soul of the child, the pulse of the collective, precisely. From time to time we gathered in the evenings when the children's voices had died down in the school building and on the farmstead, and we all shared the feeling that each of us had some idea of the multi-faceted life of the children's collective. We all knew very well that knowledge of the person begins in the family--it begins at that moment when the child first smiles at its mother as she sings a lullaby. How important it is that the first thoughts of the good, the warm-hearted, that which is best in the world--the love of one person for another --be awakened by personal experience, and the child's mother and father become what is most dear to it. But if there is an insufficient amount of genuine humaneness in the family, or if it is lacking entirely, to what measure can the collective provide this? How can

one open the way to kindliness and the beauty of the human soul before the sensitive, impressionable heart of the child?

During the hours of these evening conversations we gradually reached what is, in my opinion, an important educational idea, which became the conviction of our educational collective: the children's collective only has strength as an educational force when it ennobles each person and strengthens the feeling of personal adequacy and self-respect in everyone, for genuine maternal and paternal love lead to this feeling of self-respect and to the desire to be good people. The most valuable grain of creativity I found in these experienced educators was the idea of how to make the child proud of itself and its actions, to make it defend its honor and dignity.

Cautiously collecting these gems of educational wisdom from the best teachers in our school, I tried to see that the desire to be good found its way into the heart- felt, sincere relations between the children in their collective. Sincerity and warm-heartedness of relations in the collective became an object of my constant concern. I began to think of the multi-faceted life of the children's collective not just as a cooperative of like- minded people united by common goals and labors but as a mutual sensitivity to one another, a spiritual ability to come to know the mind and soul, joys and sorrows, of another person. For in this warm-hearted- ness and sincerity of relations within the collective lies the noble aspiration to be a good person, not to show others, not to win praise, but rather from the organic need to feel one's own dignity. In all the following years, my educational work was, in essence, years of concern for the elevation of humanity in the child, teenager, a young man or woman. This is what intra-collective relationships continue to be based on. To the task of elevating the person, I always tried to subordinate the life of the children's collective as a part of society. To this I subordinated the children's creativity and the development of their inclinations, abilities and talents.

We Live in the Garden of Health

A month remained before my pupils would start school. The wonderful summer month of August drew near. During the hot July days, the children came to school either early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Some of them lived too far away to go home for lunch, so sometimes six or seven children would eat lunch at the school dining hall. The thought occurred to me to let the children live somewhere in the garden on the bank of the pond rather than at home for the month before school started. We chose a site next to the pond; the Young Pioneers helped us build several huts in a thicket of trees. The collective-farm melon field watchmen live in just such huts all summer long. We put hay in the huts and made little tables for drawing. The big collective farm garden was next to the site of our huts. The gardener allowed us to use the garden as our main resting place. We built a kitchen next to the huts. The kolkhoz gave us food and arranged for us to have a cook. Sanya's father built a bathhouse, and when the little boys caught sight of the motorboat standing next to it, their eyes lit up with excitement.

Thus began the life of our collective in the Garden of Health, as the children's parents called our dwelling place and rest area. We lived in the open air for a whole month. We rose at dawn before the sun had come up. We bathed in the pond, did our morning exercises, ate breakfast, and went for a walk in the forest, the garden, or the field. During this month we made the most interesting "journeys" to the sources of language. We observed the sunrise from the top of the hill in the steppes. We saw how hundreds of swallows got ready to fly to warmer regions, gathering themselves into a flock. We saw how the sun and the morning breezes drove away the shroud of fog covering the river. In the field, in the meadow, or in the forest, the children breakfasted a second time: they ate apples, pears, plums, young boiled potatoes with fresh cucumbers, watermelons, melons, corn-on-the-cob, or tomatoes. August is the month of fruits and vegetables; during these days, every child ate no less than two kilograms of apples and pears. Every day, Grandfather Andrei brought us honey. The children drank fresh milk every morning and evening. The cook made us fine borsch with fresh vegetables.

The suntanned children ran around barefooted in T-shirts and shorts. They went on journeys every day in the motorboat. The combination of nourishing food, sunshine, fresh air, and water, mixed with a reasonable amount of work and recreation were the irreplaceable sources or good health.

Thoughts on the Eve of the First Year of Studies

The life of our School of Joy was coming to an end. My pupils would soon enter school, and that thought made me both joyful and anxious: joyful because I would walk along the path of life, work, and knowledge with these children for several years more, and because during that year my little ones had grown stronger and turned brown as little berries.

As the days of our School of Joy drew to a close, in my mind I compared the way Volodya, Katya, Sanya, Tolya, Varya, and Kostya were a year ago with what they had become. They had been pale and sickly with dark circles under their eyes. But now they were ruddy and suntanned; they were the kind of children you could say were in the bloom of good health. I was glad also that without chalk or blackboards, without pale tracings and cutout letters, the children had climbed up the first step of knowledge. They had learned to read and write. Now it would be incomparably easier for them than it was for those for whom that step begins within the rectangular frame of the blackboard.

I have a deep respect for didactics and hate hare-brained schemes. But life itself demands that the mastery of knowledge begin little by little, that studying-- the most serious and laborious task of the child--be at the same time a joyful labor, strengthening the spiritual and physical powers of the child. This is especially important for children who cannot understand the goal of labor, the essence of difficulties.

It has been said a thousand times that studying is hard work, and it cannot be turned into a game. But neither should one put up an insurmountable barrier between work and play. If you take a close look at the role of play in the life of the child, especially the pre-schooler, you will see that for the child play is the most serious business. The world is disclosed to the child through games, as are the creative abilities of its personality. There is not, and cannot be, full mental development without play. Play is an enormous, sunlit window through which a life-giving stream of ideas and understandings of the surrounding world pour into the inner world of the child. Play is the spark, which lights the fire of inquisitiveness and curiosity. What is so terrible if the child learns to write while playing, if at some level of intellectual development, play is combined with work, and the teacher says to the children less often, "You've played long enough. Now let's get down to work!"

Play can be understood broadly and in many ways. Children play not only when they see who can run the fastest. Play can be included in a major effort of ability and imagination. Without games of mental strength, without creative imagination, it is impossible to imagine real studying, especially during the pre-school years. Play, in the broad sense of the term, begins wherever there is beauty. But since labor without an esthetic beginning is unthinkable for a young child, it follows that work activity must be closely connected with games in the early years. On the festive day that marked the beginning of the harvest in the school plot, the children dressed up. The first sheaves of wheat, which were reaped, stood in a vase on the table, which was dressed up with a tablecloth. This game was filled with deep meaning. But games lose their educational value when artificially "connected" to labor, for then the emotional value of the surrounding world and the person doesn't express itself in the beauty of the game.

The question of how most expediently to begin the study of reading and writing remains unanswered-- when the child has taken its seat and become a first former, or perhaps a little earlier in the year before it starts school. Experience convinced our educational collective that school must not make a strong break in the life of the child. When it becomes a pupil, let it continue to do today what it did yesterday. Let the new appear in its life gradually and not stun it with an avalanche of impressions.

I am convinced that learning to read and write is closely connected with drawing and games, and that they can be one of the bridges which connect pre-school upbringing and studies with school. The beauty of sunlight in drops of dew was laid open before my pupils in their drawings of letters, as was the majesty of a mighty, hundred-year-old oak, the grace of a willow tree bending over the pond, a flock of cranes in the azure dry, and the meadow fallen asleep after a hot July day. It's alright if the children can't draw the letters very well as yet--that's not the main thing if in return they feel the pulse of life in every drawing. I was glad that the children had begun to understand the value of color and the music of the word: in their consciousnesses lay the solid foundations of clear, expressive, poetic thinking. Drawing became part of the spiritual lives of the children. They tried to express their feelings, thoughts, and experiences in drawings. Listening to music became an inner need of my pupils.

I was also excited that the children had made the first step in moral development: they had stepped into the world of the beauty of humanitarian deeds. Sensitivity to the joys and sorrows of other people had been awakened in their hearts. They already knew the happiness of creating beauty and joy for another. The process of education occurs over a period of many years, from the time the child first steps into the school building until it enters the adult world with a well-developed personality. The main thing for me was how to teach the person to feel: those whom we educate must feel deeply that those who live alongside them may be feeling the same grief's, sufferings, pains, and adversities as they are. I tried to see that the good deeds of my pupils were founded first of all upon the person's feelings. I was glad that the children learned to sympathize, quickly to be filled with the feelings and excitements of their playmates and the older children, of their parents and grown-ups in general. The greatest happiness for me was the fact that the children saw everyone with whom they came into contact as a person first of all.

Along with all these good feelings, I also experienced some anxiety. Everyday intellectual labor is the main duty of children--could I keep up the living interest in the surrounding world? Every child sees this world in its own way, perceives things and phenomena in its own way, and thinks in its own way. Would I be able to bring both the swift, impetuous streams and quiet, deep rivers in which the current is hardly noticeable into the world of knowledge!

I was even more concerned about the inner world of each child. I had sensitive, tender, impressionable hearts before me. The more I came into contact with the children, the more distinctly I saw how the receptivity of the hearts and minds of every child to my words, opinions, to the tone of my advice and criticisms was sharply increased by this contact. There were thirty-one children before me-thirty-one different worlds.

How different they were already, even in the pre-school years Kolya and Kostya, Varya and Tina, Danko and Larisa, Volodya and Slava... And their individuality would grow deeper and more noticeable with every passing day and week. Each child had its own string somewhere deep in the most secret corner of its heart. This string sounds in its own way, and for the heart to resound at my words, I would have to tune myself to the pitch of each string. I had already noticed what difficult experiences are born in the child's heart when it is alarmed or grieving about something, and the teacher doesn't know about it. Would I be able to know what was in the heart of the child each day, what it was living through? Would I always be fair with the children?

But the most important question, and one which gave me no peace during all the years of my work, was how to lead the little schoolchild into the big world of societal life, how to make it so that every child would see not only its own village, the beauty of the river on the banks of which it spent its early childhood, but the enormous, boundless world of its homeland. Would it be prepared to defend the achievements of the Soviet people--the socialist construction, freedom, honor, and friendship between the peoples of our country? How could I connect civic education with all-around development? The education of young schoolchildren is a very complicated problem. Would I succeed in solving it as was required by their tender years?

THE YEARS OF CHILDHOOD

What Is Elementary School?

On the quiet, sunny morning of the last day of August 1952, all the students, teachers, and parents gathered on the green lawn in front of the school building. This solemn day preceding the beginning of the school year had long ago become a traditional holiday of school and books. This morning's celebration was especially exciting.

As an explorer sets off for distant, unknown lands, looking into the eyes of his fellow travelers and comrades, so I looked into the eyes of my little ones. They stood there, 16 little boys and 15 little girls. The children's parents and many of their grandparents had come with them. There were Kolya and Tolya's mothers, and Galya's stepmother was standing with her hand on the little girl's shoulder, but she wasn't frowning as she had a year ago. Everyone congratulated us and wished us success. The tenth formers came up to the children and gave them all tokens of their new life --books with the inscription, "Good luck, little friend. Take care of this book. Let it always be a reminder to you of the day you started school. Keep it in your family library." (The years passed, my students grew up, and all of them saved these books as if they were sacred, as invaluable reminders of a golden childhood.)

We all went into the school garden, the children with their parents and teachers and tenth formers who carefully dug up an apple tree and brought it along with a big clump of earth to another place and put it into the hole dug there. All of the new students put in a handful of dirt to fill up the hole. The children watered the tree and left for home. The next day they would come to school, and their first lesson would begin. They would be elementary school students for four years, and for four years I would teach and rear them. On the eve of the first day, I thought about what an elementary school was. A lot has been said about the enormous, decisive role of elementary school. It has been said that, "the solid foundation of knowledge is laid in the elementary classes", and that "the elementary grades are the foundation of the foundations". These phrases are repeated often when the deficiencies and errors in teaching appear in the middle and upper grades or when superficiality and shakiness in the children's knowledge become apparent. Elementary school is most frequently blamed for not having given children the specific knowledge and skills, which are necessary for further study.

Yes, experience shows that first of all, children must be taught how to study in elementary school. Outstanding educators Jan Amos Komensky (1592-1670), K. D. Ushinsky, and F. A. Disterveg (1790-1866) wrote precisely about this problem. This confirms the teachers' experience in practice. One of the most important tasks of the elementary school is to give the students a specific sphere of solid knowledge and skills. The ability to study contains within itself a host of other sills connected with the mastery of knowledge: the ability to read, write, observe phenomena from the surrounding world, think, and express one's thoughts in words. These abilities are, figuratively speaking, instruments without which it is impossible to master knowledge.

In preparing myself to teach children in the elementary classes, I tried to determine those things the children should know thoroughly and what they should be able to do.

But these tasks should not be exhausted in elementary school. One must not forget for a moment that in elementary school, one is dealing with children.

The formation of the person occurs in the four elementary classes with children aged seven to eleven. Of course this process does not end with the completion of the elementary classes, but precisely during these years the most intensive piece of human life occurs. During this period, the child must not only prepare for further studies, accumulating the baggage of knowledge and abilities which will enable it to study successfully in the future, but it must also live a rich inner life. The elementary school years are a whole period of moral, intellectual, emotional, physical, and esthetic development which will be real and not just empty talk only if the child lives a rich life every day rather than simply preparing for tomorrow by mastery of knowledge.

There are thousands and thousands of excellent elementary school teachers in our country's schools. And each of them is not just a light to knowledge for the child, but a tutor, a teacher of life, in the genuine understanding of the term. Elementary school in the land of the Soviets is a solid base for general secondary education. But one must not keep silent about the many elementary schools, and especially the elementary classes in eight-year and secondary schools, which are far from being free of serious deficiencies. The fate of the student in the elementary classes of some schools seems to me unenviable: the child is loaded down with a sack into which the teacher has tried to cram as much as possible. The teacher frequently sees the meaning of life and the activity of the student as directed toward carrying that sack to a designated border, i.e., to studies in the middle and upper grades.

Elementary school must give the student a firm sphere of knowledge. Any lack of clarity or vagueness in that process weakens not only the elementary school but the following links in studying. Without an accurate designation of the sphere of knowledge, abilities, and practical skills the children must be given, there is no school. One of the serious deficiencies in the elementary links of studying in many schools is precisely in that the teacher frequently overlooks which rules and definitions the child should think through carefully and remember in the first grade, second grade, and so on, and which words it should learn to write properly, never forgetting their spellings. In trying to lighten the children's intellectual load, some teachers forget that the child must not only find out about and become interested in some things, but must memorize them and keep them in its memory forever. At the present time, much is being said about the general development of the elementary school student. Of course general development is an exceptionally important element of studying and upbringing, but that basic knowledge without which solid long-term memory and general development are impossible, is just as important, because general development means a constant mastery of knowledge, and for that, it is absolutely essential that one be able to study.

One must not forget, in the face of all the important tasks facing the elementary school that the teacher is dealing with a person going through an active period in the formation of the nervous system. One must not look at the brain of the child as a living arrangement ready-made for the teacher, for the assimilation of knowledge, memorizing, and storing information. The brain of seven- to eleven-year- old child is in a process of rapid development. And if the teacher forgets that one must care for the development of the nervous system of the person, for the strengthening of the cells of the cortex of the brain, then studying will dull the child.

Studying need not lead to uninterrupted accumulation of knowledge, constant memory training, to dullness and stupefaction, from cramming, which no one needs, and which is harmful to the health and mental development of the child. I tried to make studying a part of the rich inner life of the child, which would promote its development and enrich its mind. Not cramming, but intellectual life in full swing, proceeding into the world of games, fairy tales, beauty, music, fantasy, and creativity would be the type of studying for my pupils. I wanted the children to be travelers, discoverers, and creators in that world. To observe, to think, to discuss, to experience the joy of work, and to be proud of what one creates, to make beauty and joy for people and to find in that creative happiness admiration for the beauty of nature, music, and art, to enrich one's own inner world with this beauty, to take the joys and sorrows of other people to heart, and to experience their fates as if they were one's own--such were my educational ideals. Along with this, I had to keep in mind the precise, strictly defined goal: what, exactly, must the children know? What words must they learn to write and never forget? What rules of arithmetic must they memorize? While the School of Joy was in operation, I made out a list of words that first through fourth graders should know well.

In mastering the methods, forms, and modes of intellectual labor, I saw great importance in the task of upbringing. I was very upset by the condescending attitudes of many school directors and inspectors toward the elementary classes. The inspector would arrive and be interested first of all in the middle and upper grades, acting as if only children's games, not genuine education, went on in the lower grades. But the tenderness toward

that game changed to consternation about poor knowledge of subject matter as soon as the students entered the fifth class.

I did not hold forth any sort of tender emotions when I began to work with small children. Before completing the second class, they would have to learn to read fluently, expressively, and with comprehension, to perceive short sentences and phrases of longer sentences as a single whole with their eyes. Reading is one of the sources of thought and mental development. I set myself the task of teaching such reading so the child would think as it read. Reading must become a very precise instrument for the mastery of knowledge of the child, along with those sources of a rich spiritual life.

In the next chapter I will tell how over a period of four years, from the fall of 1952 to the spring of 1956, I carried out the unity of two equally important tasks of the elementary school: first, giving the children deep, solid knowledge of subject matter, while second, preventing cramming, and caring for the rich spiritual lives of the children and for their health.

Health, Health, and Once Again Health

I do not hesitate to repeat that caring for the health of the child is a very important task of the educator. Children's spiritual lives, worldviews, solid knowledge, and faith in themselves depend on their cheerfulness. If we were to measure all of my concerns and anxieties about the children during the first four years of their studies, more than half of them were health-related.

Looking after the child's health is impossible without constant contact with the family. The overwhelming majority of the talks I had with families, especially during the first two years of school, were about the children's health. I explained to the parents that their children would not be given homework. The rules and definitions would be learned by heart during—the lessons. At home the children would, for the most part, complete exercises, which would promote a deep understanding of the material. Aside from that the children would read, draw, observe natural phenomena, make up little compositions about objects and events from the surrounding world, and learn their favorite poems by heart. Homework need not be tiresome, but to avoid it entirely is impossible. One cannot reason seriously that owing to the perfection of the methods of study, one can dispense with after-class assignments. This reasoning does not reflect the true goals and laws of studying because one cannot concentrate all the intellectual labor of the child into some three or four hours running.

The parents promised to see that their children spent more time out-of-doors, went to bed early, got up early, and slept with the window open. All summer long and during the warm fall and spring months the children were to sleep in the yard--I agreed with the parents about this. The fathers and mothers built special "sleeping corners" protected from the rain in their haylofts under the barn roofs. The children liked this a great deal. Every family that had schoolchildren had to have a summerhouse in the yard where the children could read, draw, and play. I had agreed with the parents about this several years earlier. The older schoolchildren helped with this project.

The children had already gotten accustomed to morning exercises in the School of Joy. Now I had to arrange it so that the habit would be continued. I was sure that the habit of doing exercises must be strengthened precisely in early childhood. The parents taught the children to get up at the same time every day. After doing exercises in the fresh air, the children washed. In the summer they got used to bathing in the pond, and in addition, many parents made showers in the yard or the garden, and five months a year (from May to September), the children showered there. This became such a strong habit that they would wash themselves from the waist up even in the winter months, but indoors of course.

With the parents' help, six public showers were built out-of-doors to be used by those for whom it was especially necessary - Tina, Tolya, Kostya. Larisa, Nina and Sasha, and Slava. I took especial care to see that those children who had some kind of physical defects, for example, a stoop or disproportion of the body or face, did gymnastics

and took showers. A person must be not only healthy but attractive, and attractiveness is inseparable from good health, from the harmonious development of the organism.

The harmony and proportionality of the parts of the body and, in part, the normal development of the osseous tissue, especially of the thorax, depend on the diet during the years of childhood. Many years of observation show that if the diet is lacking in mineral substances and trace elements, disproportional development of some parts of the skeleton results, so that one's carriage is affected for the rest of one's life. To avoid this, I took care to see that the children got food with all the necessary vitamins and that there was a proper combination of vitamins and mineral substances.

Observation and specialized research conducted on this subject over a series of years reached the following alarming conclusion: 25 per cent of all young children do not eat breakfast before they leave for school--they don't want to eat in the morning; 30 per cent eat less than half of what is necessary for a normal diet in the morning; 23 per cent eat half of what is a normal breakfast, and only 22 per cent eat a proper breakfast. After several hours in the classroom, the stomach of the child that did not eat breakfast begins to growl, and giddiness appears. When the student gets home from school, he or she hasn't eaten for several hours, but a normal, healthy appetite is lacking (parents often complain that children don't want to eat simple nourishing food--soup, borsch, kasha, or milk; they want something "that tastes good").

Lack of appetite is a terrible scourge of good health, the source of illnesses and indispositions. The main reason for this is long hours of sitting in a stuffy classroom, monotonous mental labor, the absence of varied activity in the fresh air, and "fresh air hunger" in general. The child breathes air saturated with carbon dioxide all day long. Long years of observation have brought me to yet another unfavorable conclusion: being in a building saturated with carbon dioxide for a long time adversely affects the endocrine glands, which play an important role in digestion. These illnesses become chronic and incurable. Serious illnesses of the digestive organs are such that parents often try to stimulate the appetite with various goodies, mainly sweets. To avoid "fresh air hunger", one must set up an adequate regime of fresh air. This is one of the most important prerequisites of maintaining good health.

I advised the parents to prepare tasty, nourishing meals for the children, and to lay in more fruit rich in vitamins for the winter. At that time we had a few beehives, so in winter, we could feed the children honey in the school-dining hall.

Thanks to the fact that the children were out-of-doors most of the time and moved about a lot, did physical labor, and didn't sit down to study immediately after classes were over, they had excellent appetites. All the children ate an adequate breakfast in the morning, and three hours after they left for school (about two and a half hours after lessons began) they ate lunch in the school-dining hall. They got hot soup or borsch with meat, cutlets, a glass of milk, and bread and butter. After lessons, they ate dinner at home (three to three and a half hours after lunch at school).

The children spent the second half of the day outside, either at home or at school. Only when it rained or snowed did they stay indoors.

Everything is interrelated in the harmonious development of the child. Good health depends on what kind of homework the child is given and how and when it does it. The emotional coloration of independent intellectual labor at home plays an enormous role. If the child is not interested in its studies, then they not only sap its inner strength but also reflect unfavorably in the complex system of mutual interdependence of the internal organs. I know of many cases where the child experienced a serious aversion to studies, which gravely upset its digestive system and a gastro-intestinal illness sprang up.

We always spent our fall, spring, and winter vacations out-of-doors, in nature - on a trip, resting, in the forest, playing... On our first winter holiday, all the children put on their skis and went to the forest where they tobogganed. As during the winter of our School of Joy, we built a snow fortress and an ice wheel. When the children became Young Pioneers, their detachments had their most interesting meetings in the forest.

A very important source of good health was our work out-of-doors in the wintertime. In moderate frost (to -10° C), the eight-year-old children worked once a week for two hours, the nine- and ten-year- olds, for three hours, and the eleven-year-olds, for four hours. They tied cane around the tree trunks, brought snow in little wheelbarrows to protect the plants from the cold, and so forth. This work in the fresh air was an excellent means of toughening their bodies and protecting them from catching cold.

The children spent their summer vacation-taking trip about the meadows, fields, and forests. A month of direct communion with nature did a lot to strengthen their health and increase intellectual development as well. After finishing the first class, the children spent the month of August in the kolkhoz garden and apiary. After the second class, they stayed in the kolkhoz melon-field.

August is a month of generous gifts from nature, the zenith of her blooming beauty, a time of festive labor. At that time, the air is especially clean, transparent, and bracing, as if infused with the aroma of the mowed wheat, the ripe melons, grapes, and apples. On the border between summer and fall, the air in the village is especially full of phytonddes. If you want to make a child with a predisposition to pulmonary diseases, colds, and rheumatic illnesses hardy, let it live out-of-doors for the whole month.

Once the children spent the day at the kolkhoz melon-field. They were generously treated to watermelons and melons. We parted with the charming spaciousness of the steppe sadly. That very evening the kolkhoz chairman gave instructions that four new huts be built in the melon-field. The building was completed in a day. When I told the children that we would spend our vacation in the melon-field, they didn't believe me: "Will they really let us stay there?" They believed me only when they saw the huts with straw roofs that had been built for them. The children were wildly happy at the news that we were going to spend the night there. We covered the floors of the huts with sweet-smelling hay, brought sheets and blankets, made a washstand, and the parents built a kitchen to provide the children with food. The boys stayed in two huts, and the girls in the other two. The month we spent in the melon-field is one of the children have never forgotten, like a fascinating song of the blue sky and the bright sunshine.

We rose at dawn, admired the unrepeatable beauty of nature, having woken up after a night of dreams, wandered over the dew, washed with spring water, which was brought in big wooden barrels and poured into the washstand. Everything was enjoyment for the children: morning exercises, washing in the cold water, and cooking potatoes to eat with tomatoes and watermelons. After breakfast, we worked: with helped the collective farmers gather the melons and watermelons. Children from the city and their parents came to visit us. We proudly showed them the melon-field and treated them to melons and watermelons.

The children learned to tell if a watermelon were ripe or not by looking at it. Flowering herbs were planted next to the melon-field, and the kolkhoz beekeeper came there in August, so we got to see Grandfather Andrei every day. We brought him watermelons and hot cutlets which our cook, Aunt Pasha, made for us. Grandfather Andrei gave our class a hive with bees. "Take it to your school garden plot," he said. The children observed the lives of the bees with interest.

Every day the children bathed in the pond, then went to the forest or gathered wildflowers to bring to Grandfather Andrei and Aunt Pasha. During the midday heat, we went into the huts and napped, leaving several "little windows" open in the wall for fresh air, curtained off with the stems of flowering herbs which flies and mosquitoes could not stand. It was hot outside, but cool in the huts. From the first days of the existence of the School of Joy, I taught the children not to be afraid of draughts. Life shows that draughts are not in the least

dangerous if the person gets used to them in childhood. To teach the person intolerance for the stuffy air of an unventilated room is just as important as to inculcate good hygiene.

When the heat had abated, the children went to work: more often than not the farmers came after the watermelons and melons in the afternoon. After the sun went down, when the fields, hills, and meadows were wrapped in a lilac haze, and the stars lit up one after another, the children gathered around one of the huts. They especially wanted to listen to stories and fairy tales of unusual adventures and journeys, of heroic deeds in the evening hours. I told them about the fairy tale creatures, created by the imaginations of our people, about mermaids and witches, about the Autumn Beauty who, according to popular belief, brings the gift of fertility to the quiet August nights.

In the quiet of the night, we heard an amazing melody once again: above the fields, where the wheat had been reaped not long ago, a melodious sound, much like the sound of reed pipes, rang out. Apparently an unfamiliar night bird was singing, but the children's imaginations created a kindly fantastic creature of it--a little boy with a garland of wheat who played on the pipes to make people happy. The children called this creature Sunstraw. In their minds, Sunstraw was a child of the Sun and the Fertile Earth. Wherever heads of wheat are ripening, you will find Sunstraw. When the wheat is harvested, he moves into a sweet-smelling haystack and sings joyful and sad songs in the evenings. When winter draws near, he has to go into the warm earth where the life- giving juices of fertility are slumbering. But when the wheat comes up green, Sunstraw once more appears in the fields singing his beautiful songs.

It may seem that children personify nature too often, and that fantasy might, to some degree, make them removed from reality. A thousand times no. It is in fact fairy tales about life, fertility, the person, which are the mighty sources of inspiration. The personified, fairy-tale image of a creature incarnating within itself life, beauty, fertility, and abundance, was present in the song the children made up about Sunstraw. Here is their simple song:

The sun woke up the earth,
The wheat began to ripen; s
Who's that playing on the pipes?
Sunstraw, Sunstraw.
Dressed in magic clothes
From the heads and straws of wheat;
With golden brews from the awn and merry eyelashes...

When the children are under the impression of fairy-tale images, an amazing thing happens: a word which they had heard or read somewhere seems to be awakened from deep within the consciousness flashing with bright colors, filled with the aroma of the fields and meadows, and the child creates, making up poetic images.

The reader might ask why, on pages devoted to health, I am speaking of fairy tales, of fantastic images, of children's creativity. Because this is children's joy, and without joy, the harmony of spiritual and bodily health is impossible. If the child, charmed by the beautiful fields and the twinkling stars, the endless song of the grasshoppers and the odor of wild flowers, makes up a song, that means it is at the summit of this harmony of soul and body. Caring for the person's health, all the more so for the health of a child, is not simply a complex of sanitary-hygienic norms and rules, not a code of demands for a certain regimen of diet, work, and recreation. It is first and foremost caring for the harmonic completeness of all physical and spiritual strengths, and the crown of that harmony is the joy of creativity.

After the children finished the third class, we also spent the summer in the melon-field but in a different place next to the grape arbor. The children worked on the plantation helping the adults put the bunches of grapes into baskets. They went swimming in the pond in the morning and evening. They played an interesting game: three

boats were transformed into a whaling fleet in their imaginations. The little pond became an ocean, and we went on reconnaissance, searching for whales... We made pipes here; our music club met in the evenings. We played folk songs and made up songs about the summer evenings, about thunderstorms and the crimson firmament, about the secret pool near the dam, about the migratory birds. Music entered more deeply into our spiritual lives with the passing years. Wherever the children went on vacation, they listened to tapes of the works of outstanding composers and to folk songs.

Upon completing the fourth grade, in the summer of 1956, the children vacationed in the meadow next to the oak grove and the shore of the lake. They made huts of branches and covered them with straw. Their parents helped us build a bathhouse and a kitchen. The children were old enough to help the cook, to go to the village for bread, potatoes, fish, milk, and vegetables. We took care of twenty calves and two horses. The children took the calves to pasture in the daytime and locked them up in a little pen next to the lake at night. Everyone learned how to ride and went to the village on horseback for groceries. Strict riding order was maintained since everyone wanted to gallop a few kilometers. I was very glad that Volodya, Sanya, and Tina became especially good riders. Horseback riding helped improve their health.

That year, all the children swam in the deep lake and learned to swim well. I picked a safe part for bathing and set out with one of the children each round.

The days of haymaking were especially merry. We helped the adults dry and stack the hay, and in the evenings we would climb high on top of a haystack. The children were quite charmed during these hours: they wanted to hear stories about the stars and far-off worlds. Under the starry cupola the children felt face to face with the Universe and asked me questions: "Where did it all come from--the Earth, the Sun, the stars?" I am convinced that such questions arise in children's consciousnesses when reason and feeling are seized by surprise, amazement before the beauty and greatness of nature.

I will never forget how, after one of the stories about the planets, the children asked, "But what lies beyond that!" When I told them that the very same Universe lay beyond the visible worlds, and that they were innumerable, the children were amazed: "But where does the world end?" The infinity of the Universe was the most incomprehensible thing for them. I remember how the children fell silent at this startling fact, trying to imagine infinity, but not being able to. That night they didn't fall asleep for a long time; and more than one dreamed of the far- off Sun and the planets. The next day, from time to time, the little boys and girls returned to the question that was troubling them: what is infinity? This question never lost its novelty for them throughout all the years of their schooling.

...From the first week of educating the children in the School of Joy, I put a lot of emphasis on sports. The older students helped us make a playing field and hang a swing. We had enough balls, and by the second class, they had started to play table tennis. The children were just as fond of throwing discs and balls and of climbing up ropes and poles.

The children went bare-footed all summer and weren't afraid of the rain. I saw this as an especially important means of physical training. In the first and second classes, only three children caught cold, and in the third and fourth, no one fell ill.

I considered immunity to various head colds especially important. I worried about this for many years: during periods of rapid changes in the weather, almost half of the children were sneezing. Even when the child doesn't have a temperature, it cannot work normally when it has such illnesses. And there are no radical cures for head colds. Medical science has proven that many types of head colds are not infectious illnesses but reactions of the sensitive organism to rapid changes in the environment. Many years of experience have shown that the feet are especially sensitive. If the feet are sensitive to slight chills, then the person will be subject to non-infectious head colds. The system of strengthening the body, which developed in our educational work, began with the

toughening up of the feet. Before this can be done, however, one must take account of the general condition of the child. There are no special exercises to be carried out over a certain period of time for toughening the feet. It is necessary constantly to observe a general regime, not letting children get accustomed to "hothouse surroundings", not displaying superfluous anxieties, which would break down the resistance of the body. If the child doesn't go barefooted in the summer time, sponging with wet towels and bathing won't help.

...Thus the children finished elementary school. It was the last day of vacation. They gathered on the green lawn after a swim in the lake--strong, sun-tanned, and beautiful. They were eleven but could be taken for twelve or thirteen. Even little Danko, who was called "midget" for so long was as tall as lot of fifth formers.

The doctor had given them check-ups several times a year. In the first class, there were four children with weak vision, in the second, there were two, and not a single one in the third. Life shows that weak vision is not a defect of the eyes but a result of disharmony between physical and spiritual development. During the first two years, three children had been diagnosed as having symptoms of cardiovascular weakness; two had residual effects from pleurisy; two had signs of bronchitis, and one child had latent tuberculosis. By the time they finished elementary school, only one child had symptoms of cardiovascular weakness, and they were much less pronounced than they had been during the first two years of school.

Studying - a Part of Spiritual Life

It is important that the amazing world of nature, play, beauty, music, fantasy, and creativity surrounding children before they start school not be locked out of the classroom. Studying during the first months and years of school life need not be transformed into a single type of activity. The child will only love school when the teacher generously opens before it those same joys that it had earlier. The teacher must not adapt the studies to the pleasures of children and intentionally lighten them so that the children will not become bored. Little by little the child must be prepared for that most important facet of human life--serious, persistent, assiduous labor, which is impossible without mental effort.

I saw gradually inculcating strenuous work habits and creative intellectual labor in the children as an important educational task. The child must be able to disengage itself from the surrounding world at the given moment, to direct its mental efforts toward the goal, which the teacher or the child itself has put forth. I tried to accustom the children to such concentration. Only then could intellectual labor become a favorite activity.

The task of the elementary school is gradually to teach the students to overcome difficulties, not just physical, but intellectual. Children should understand the very essence of intellectual labor, which consists of mental effort, and the penetration of various complexities and fine points, details and contradictions in things, facts, and phenomena. In no case should the child be spared the knowledge of these difficulties to make studying easier. Along with the process of mastery of knowledge of subject matter, there must be independent intellectual labor. Intellectual education is one of the spheres of spiritual life in which the influence of the educator is organically blended with self-education. Education of the will begins with the mental organization of goals before oneself, the concentration of intellectual strength, the attempt to understand, and self-control. I wanted to see to it that the children found out what the word difficult meant from intellectual labor itself.

If everything the child does in school is easy for it, its mental processes will become lazy in time. It will become a corrupt person with a frivolous attitude toward life. It seems strange, but lazy thinking occurs most frequently in talented children if the process of studying is not challenging to them. And lazy thinking occurs most frequently in the first classes when the talented child masters with ease what, for the other children, is connected with a measure of mental effort, and it essentially loafs around. Not to allow the pupils to be idle is also a unique educational task.

Our first class was located in a little building all its own. The big, well-lit room where we studied had windows in the east and south, so the class got a lot of sunlight. There were nut trees outside the windows, and beyond them, apple, pear, and apricot trees, and farther off, an oak grove. Not only our school building, but the other buildings were surrounded by verdure. The leaves on the trees enriched the air with oxygen. It was always quiet in the school farmstead. Adjoining our schoolroom was a long corridor the door of which led to another building: here we dreamed of building a room for fairy tales.

There was a concrete square in front of our building with a place for washing one's shoes with the supply of rainwater kept there. Several paths planted with peach trees, lindens, and chestnuts led away from this square. One path led to the big grape arbor located in the center of the school courtyard, and another to our nearest neighbors, the fifth formers, a third to the green lawns and groves, and a fourth to a ravine grown over with bushes.

It seemed advisable to me that the first and second classes study in separate buildings. They had their own special regime of study, labor, and recreation-- especially in the first class. The shouting and commotion characteristic of the larger collective are impermissible among young schoolchildren. Let young schoolchildren make use of the blessing of the quiet necessary for full intellectual development for as long as possible. Many years of observation led me to the conclusion that the situation in which the child finds itself the first few days of school stun it. Children become tired not so much from intellectual labor as from the constant excitement of the shouting, running around, and commotion of the first few days of lessons. Over period of five years, I observed first formers after a long break. For a half hour the children were in the atmosphere of noise, shouting, pushing, and commotion of the school collective as a whole. The break ended, and the students returned to their classes. The first ten minutes of the lesson of experienced teachers were wasted on calming the children down. A different picture is observed when the first formers take their break in their own small collective. To calm the: children down after the excitement takes no more than two minutes.

Unrestrained shouting and running about is not the best mark of a school. Children's joy is such a deep river that there must be a bank, which restrains its fits and desires.

At the present time, our first and second classes study in cozy, secluded buildings surrounded by verdure. The situation created for the children aids the interchange of work and play.

During the first weeks, I gradually led the children into their new life. Studying essentially differed very little from the School of Joy, and I tried to make it so. In September we were in the classroom no more than forty minutes a day, and in October, not more than two hours. That time was set-aside for lessons in writing and arithmetic. The other two hours we spent out-of-door. The children eagerly awaited real reasons, as they called the things we did in class. I rejoiced at this desire and thought, "If you only knew, children, how your schoolmates, tired out from a stuffy classroom, waited for the bell to ring for break-time..."

Gradualness in preparing the children for classroom studies is an essential condition for full vocational, moral, physical, and intellectual education. The final aim is to teach the person to work under various conditions. Inclass lessons are not some sort of necessary evil to which one must be reconciled whether one wants to or not. They are the most favorable situation for intellectual labor, but one must prepare the child for them gradually. And in this lies the specifics of lessons for small schoolchildren. If you make them work four hours a day in a classroom right off, their health will be adversely affected by what would otherwise have become a favorable situation for studying.

In class, we read our primers, drew circles, lines, and letters, made up and solved problems. All of this gradually made its way into the multi-faceted spiritual lives of the children without tiring them with monotony. We didn't have to read one and the same thing from the primer over and over as all the children knew the alphabet well, and for working out reading technique, I resorted to various means of activity. The children composed and wrote

down tiny compositions about nature, and that was incomparably more helpful for the development of their ability to read than repeatedly reading one and the same text.

I made sure every child developed the necessary reading skills. Without exercises or fixed norms, you will not obtain any results in teaching reading. It is not enough to know the letters: students must be able to read the syllables and words. Reading is a window to the, world, and it must be done fluently and rapidly. Only then is this instrument ready for action. I tried to involve the children in various activities-expressive reading, writing, and drawing-- to promote the transformation of reading into a semi-automatic process so that by the second class they would perceive multi-syllabic words as single wholes. And if I resorted to the composition of tiny stories about nature, if I tried to awaken a living interest to this kind of work in the children, then this was essentially an "educational method" necessary to reach one goal--to teach the children to read well.

Various forms of work during lessons could be considered one such method. Experience showed that the first hours spent in the classroom need not be mere lessons in the three "R's". Monotony will make the students tire quickly. As soon as the children began to tire, I tried to go to some other new form of work. Drawing was a powerful tool of variety. When I noticed that the children were getting tired of reading, I would say, "Children, open up your drawing pads, and we will draw a picture about the story we are reading." The first signs of tiredness in the children's eyes disappeared, and sparks of joy took their place. The monotonous activity was transformed into creativity...I did the same thing during lessons in arithmetic. If I noticed that the conditions of the problem I had given them for independent work were difficult to understand, the creativity of drawing would be called to the rescue. The children would read the problem again and then draw it. The dependencies, which had seemed entirely incomprehensible up to that point, became clear... Extended listening also tires children out. If I noticed that the children's eyes were growing dull, I broke off the story, "rounded it out", and we began to draw.

Three weeks after the beginning of the school year, my students began to put together a picture book about nature. The students in the upper grades made every child a hard-covered notebook with twenty sheets of heavy paper and tied a pencil to the cover. Once a week we went to the sources of thought and language and made one picture--a story about the surrounding world. Our first "journey" was to the fruit orchard where the apples, a fruit that ripens late, were growing. The children made up stories, which reflected their individual worlds of perceptions and ideas.

"The apples are bowing to the earth", "The apples are basking in the sun", "Red apples among the green leaves", "The sun caresses the apple, and the branch shakes it", "White flowers in spring and golden apples in the fall", "We came to visit the apples", wrote the children in their picture-books about nature. The children made their mini-compositions in class, which gave them great pleasure. Studying in the garden was not an end in itself. Making up mini-compositions was an excellent means of preparing the children for assiduous, serious intellectual labor in the future. In the first class, and especially in the second, I tried to see that every student had his or her own individual assignment and carried it through to the end. This was very important for teaching discipline in mental labor.

In the first year of studying, all the picture books were filled with drawing-compositions. The children wrote about the red bunches of snow-ball berries, about the harvest, about the sleeping lake (they said the lake was sleeping probably because every time we came there the water there was like a mirror, clean and peaceful), about how children worked in the school garden, about the crimson sky at dawn, about the first fall frosts, about the rainy, cloudy fall days, about the festivities at the anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, about life in our village, about the first snowfall, about January blizzards, about Grandfather Frost, who locks up rivers and lakes in the fairy tales, about February thaws, about the blue shadows of March on the snow, about the first crocuses, about starlings that returned from the warm regions too early and were surprised by the March snowstorms, about the gay spring flocks of migratory birds (the "gay spring flocks" are the children's own words), and about the bees flying on the sunny days of Indian summer saying good-bye to the daisies.

The picture books on nature became unique poetic readers for our collective in which reflections on the delicate tones of the colors of our natural surroundings, the music of the earth and the sky, the flavor of words, could be found. They were that joy for the children without which studying would not have found a place in their inner lives.

If we divide the time the children spent in class into lessons, then in the first two months of the school year, we had one lesson a day; in the third and fourth months, two lessons; in the fifth and sixth, two and a half; in the seventh and eighth, three lessons. The lessons lasted a half hour the first two months, and after that, forty-five minutes. If a child had to leave the class before the break, it asked permission and left. If it was impossible to interrupt the teacher, the child simply got up and the teacher saw that the child had to leave the room and silently gave permission. But some children had trouble adapting to the regime to which the overwhelming majority got accustomed without any trouble. Tolya, Katya, Kostya, and Shura tired quickly. The effort it took to sit still during lessons taxed them more than anything else, for they felt that their freedom of activity had been considerably curtailed by a specific regime. I could not indulge their every desire, of course. All of the students had to get used to working seriously at their desks, but neither could I break the children's desires and habits too strictly. I let the children leave during the lessons for several weeks, gradually getting them used to working at their desks. Three or four months after the school year began, all the children could fulfill the regime of schoolwork.

In the sunny autumn days, we studied in one of the "green classrooms" in the grass among the tall apple trees. Several years before the older students had helped me construct the frames for the future green classrooms from wire and iron rods. Then we planted climbing plants -wild grapes and hops-- all around. In two years the green classroom was ready--the plants had covered even the roof. Several little "windows" provided normal lighting. It was cool there on hot days, and warm and cozy in the autumn. It was always quiet in the green classroom. The "windows" could be closed with the grape and hop vines, and then there was semi-darkness with sunrays pouring through the holes in the vines, making a whimsical play of light and shadow. The children called it "shutting the windows for fairy tales". There were tiny tables and stools for reading, writing, and problem solving in the green classroom.

The second "green classroom" was a lawn closed off on three sides by a frost-resistant type of grape vine. When it was very hot--and hot days are not a rarity in fall and spring in our part of the country-- it was cool there.

We had yet another "green classroom" in the grass among the green trees in a remote grove adjacent to the ravine. We sometimes went there for our last lesson when we didn't have to go back to the school building for anything. During the course of the year, I held about 40 per cent of our lessons in the "green classrooms" rather than the school building, and of the remaining 60 per cent, a significant portion were held in the "green laboratory" or the school green-house. The "green laboratory" was a separate building surrounded by trees and grape vines. It was a study room filled with plants and flowers.

The fact that significant portions of our lessons were conducted in nature, in the fresh air, under the blue sky, had an exceptional meaning for the children. They felt cheerful for the rest of the study time and never went home with headaches.

After lessons were over, the children played at home. Whatever special measures were taken so that the children would not be overworked at school, they felt tired, and needed to rest after their studies. Many years of experience convinced me that during the second half of the day, children generally should not be occupied with such intense intellectual labor as they are at school. All the more so since it is inadvisable to overload a young child. If, after three to four hours of intellectual labor at school, the child is made to work just as intensively at home, it will than be taxed beyond its strength.

Homework is unavoidable. The child must learn to concentrate its mental powers, to pay attention. But this must be done first and foremost during lessons, gradually training habits of independent intellectual labor. It is not easy for the child to learn to work attentively and with concentration. The experienced teacher "fastens" the child's attention to his or her stories and explanations, without the aid of any special devise but simply with the lesson material. Mastery in organizing intellectual labor at a young age consists in having the child listen attentively to the teacher, remembering and thinking about what is said, not noticing at first that it expends effort in so doing.

If the educator succeeds in this the child will remember everything that awakes its interest, and that is all the more amazing. Why was it so easy for my children to learn the alphabet and to read and write? Because they were not required to do so. Because every letter was the incarnation of a clear image for the child, one which called forth a feeling of admiration. If I had given the little pre-schoolers a "piece of knowledge" every day, showing them a letter and demanding that they learn it, I would have accomplished nothing. This doesn't mean, of course, that one must hide one's goal from the child. One must simply teach in such a manner that the children don't think about the goal--this lightens their mental efforts. This is far from being as simple as it looks at first glance. We are speaking of a specific stage in the mental development of the child, of that period scholars call the infancy of the nervous system. During this period, young school-aged children, especially for the first year of study, simply cannot concentrate. The teacher must gain the children's attention, awake that which is known in psychology as involuntary attention.

The young child's attention is a capricious creature. I think of it as an easily frightened bird, which dies farther from the nest every time one tries to get close to it. When one finally reaches the bird, one can keep it only in one's hands or a cage. One shouldn't expect songs from the bird if it feels trapped. Such is the attention of a little child: if one holds it like a captive bird, it will be a poor assistant.

There are some teachers who consider it an achievement that they create "a situation of constant mental effort" in the children during the lessons. More often than not, there is an external factor which acts as a bridle to hold the child's attention: constant reminders to listen attentively, rapid changes from one type of work to another, checking up on comprehension of information immediately after the explanation has been given (more precisely: threats of giving a failing mark if the student doesn't listen to what is being said), and the unavoidability of assigning some sort of practical work immediately after the explanation of a theoretical proposition has been given.

At first glance, all these methods give the impression of active intellectual labor: as the types of work are changed like a kaleidoscope, the children listen to the teacher's every word with concentration, and there is tense quiet in the classroom. But what is the effort required for all this, and what are its results? A constant effort to be attentive and not to miss anything; but at that age, the child still cannot make itself be attentive—it becomes exhausted, over- strained, and worn out. Its nervous system is drained. Not to lose a minute during the lesson, not one instant without active intellectual labor—what could be more stupid in such a delicate affair as the education of a person. Similar singleness of purpose in the work of the teacher, to squeeze everything out of the children that they can possibly give, is just as stupid. After such "effective" lessons, the children go home tired. They are irritable and easily excitable. They need to rest and play, but they have yet to do their homework, and they feel wretched as they drag their hooks and notebooks from their satchels.

It is not by chance that one notices a lot of misbehavior, students being rude to their teachers and each other, responding impudently to reprimands, as a result of which a lot of conflicts arise--for the nervous strength of the children is taxed to the limit, and neither is the teacher a computer--from these attempts to hold the attention of the class for the whole lesson at a level of "high effectiveness", changing the subject matter like a kaleidoscope. It is not by chance that children often go home after lessons gloomy, sullen, and indifferent to everything, or just the opposite, seriously irritated.

One must not try to obtain attention, concentration, and mental activity in children at such a cost. The mental strength and nervous energy of students, especially little ones, is not a bottomless well from which you can draw water endlessly. You must take what you need from this well intelligently and circumspectly, and most important, you must constantly replenish the sources of nervous energy in the child. These sources are observation of the objects and phenomena of the surrounding world; life surrounded by nature; reading, but of a type that awakens the interest, the desire to find something out, rather than the fear of being called on in class; and "journeys" to the sources of living thoughts and language.

In the life of the school collective there is something illusive which can be called spiritual equilibrium. I include the following in this concept: the children's feeling of the fullness of life, clearness of thought, belief in one's own strength, faith in the possibility of overcoming difficulties. Characteristic peculiarity of spiritual equilibrium are tranquility of purposeful labor, equitable, comradely interrelations, and the absence of irritability. It is impossible to work normally without spiritual equilibrium; when this equilibrium is disturbed, collective life becomes hell: the students offend and irritate each other, and nervousness reigns in the school. By what method must spiritual equilibrium be created and, what is especially important, maintained? The experience of the best educators convinced me that the main thing here is a very delicate sphere of education--constant thinking activity without jerking, hurrying, or anguish in spiritual strength.

For the spiritual equilibrium, there must be a characteristic atmosphere of goodwill, mutual aid, harmony of intellectual abilities in every student and the work he or she is capable of doing. I carefully studied the educational art of the outstanding masters of spiritual equilibrium of many elementary school teachers. I tried to uncover the "secrets" of the wisest, in my opinion, and at the same time, the most natural thing: all their pupils studied to the best of their abilities. There is no child, which would be an average student when it could be an excellent one. Those who are average students in such classes do not consider themselves the unlucky victims of fate, and their comrades do not treat them with condescension.

I always felt anxiety over the psychosis of running after top marks-this psychosis is born at home and is seized upon by teachers. It places a heavy burden upon the young souls of the students, mutilating them. A child doesn't have the ability to get top marks at the moment, but the parents demand perfect marks from it, or at the very least, next to the highest. If the unlucky child receives only average marks, it feels itself inferior. This doesn't happen with experienced teachers. Excellent students don't feel blessed, and average students are not depressed by feelings of inadequacy. I learned from these genuine educators true mastery of intelligent, concentrated mental labor. I noticed in them a very subtle trait of educational art: the ability to awake an intellectual feeling of the joy of knowledge in the hearts and minds of the children. No successes, even the most modest ones, failed to arouse a joyful spiritual upsurge connected with the discovery of truth and with research in anyone of these teachers' students. Summarizing the pearls of wisdom from these experienced teachers, I tried to get the children to work not for grades but from a desire to experience exciting intellectual feelings. I was very glad that there was no passion for excellent marks or distraught reactions to average marks in our children's collective.

...Every week we dedicated several lessons to "journeys" to the source of thought and our native language, to observation. They consisted of direct communion with nature, without which the well of mental abilities and the nervous strength of the child quickly grow scarce. In warm weather in autumn, song, and summer we set out on journeys long before sunrise. Village children can get up quite early. Stories about nature, about the objects and phenomena of the surrounding world had already awakened the children's inquisitiveness, and I had to answer a lot of questions. I will list a few of them: "Why is the sun red early in the morning and fiery at midday? Where do clouds come from? Why do dandelions open up in the morning and close at mid-day? Why are there lightning and thunder? Why does the west wind bring rain and the east wind, drought? Why does the sunflower turn its head to the sun? Can it see like a person? Why does iron rust? Why don't pigeons ever light on trees? Why can't you transplant trees in the summer when they have leaves? Where do falling stars land? Why are snowflakes so beautiful as if someone had cut them out of paper? How do the birds find their way when they have so far to go? Where does the white ring around the moon come from? Why is the sky red at sunrise and

sunset? Why do bees "dance" before they fly off for honey? Why do they burn straw in the garden when the trees are blooming? How come you can hear echoes in the forest? What is a rainbow? Why isn't there thunder and lightning in the winter? Why does salt water freeze only when it's very cold? Why do rabbits dig burrows, but hares don't? How come you can tie a wet towel around the milk jug in the summer, and the milk won't get warm even on the hottest days? Why do swallows fly close to the earth before it rains? Why do larks make their nests in the fields, but starlings and titmice make them in trees? How come ducks can swim, and chickens can't? Why did the airplane leave a trail of smoke behind it today, but it didn't yesterday? Why do stars fall from the sky, and where do they fall? Why does wind make columns of dust like a whirlpool? Why do willows 'weep'? Why do crocuses bloom only in early spring? Why do you sow winter wheat in the fall and spring crops in the spring? Why do fireflies glow? Why does a cow have only one calf, but pigs have whole litters? Why is the sun high in the summer and low in the winter? Why are there beautiful patterns on frozen windowpanes? Why do the leaves turn brown in the fall?"

I tried to answer every question so that I would not only uncover the essence of natural phenomena before the children, but even further excite their inquisitiveness and curiosity. The answers to the children's questions, conversations about the world around them were the first schools of thought. I didn't know how to go about answering some of the questions. It seemed the simpler the question was on the surface, the more difficult it was to answer. I met with the elementary school teachers especially to ask advice on how to answer the children's "philosophical" questions. We spent entire evenings discussing the complicated labyrinth of children's thinking.

The experience of the elementary teachers--experts in children's thinking-led me to the conclusion that in the seemingly simple and obvious, major difficulties are often lurking. Answering the question, "Why do you sow winter wheat in the fall and spring crops in the spring'" is considerably more difficult than answering the question about falling stars and meteorites. I saw making the "journeys" into the world of nature such that the children would notice the cause and effect relationships between objects and phenomena and learn to see dependencies as an important educational task.

If the "journeys" into nature occurred during the last lesson, we played after it was over. The children thought up group games for themselves. The world of natural phenomena was intertwined with fairy tales. Here is one game with which the children were especially carried away. It was called "Searching for the Mysterious Island". We all divided up into two groups. One group positioned themselves in some remote corner of the forest. We surrounded the place of the game with a chain of markers known only to us-this was the shore of the island with rocks, with many beasts of prey. The children on the mysterious island were travelers who had been shipwrecked. They left well-disguised markers along a narrow strip, which signified the way onto the island. (Both groups had agreed upon the markers beforehand.) We had to save the shipwrecked travelers, and the children examined the forest step by step along several kilometers of "shoreline" looking for the place across which one could get onto the island. Here not only sharp eyes and bravery were necessary, but also the ability to investigate many natural phenomena and to think logically. Honesty and truthfulness were also taught by the game. The children located the secret path to the island and helped the travelers, sending the sick ones to the hospital. Pilots and doctors appeared in the game. The game ended with the shipwrecked travelers and their helpers making kasha. We would sit by the fire, and I would tell a fairy tale. Many of the children would draw the story as I told it, transferring their ideas of the fantastic images onto paper.

During the "journeys" into nature a lot of attention was given to observation of the lives of birds and animals. A completely new, amazing world opened up before us. On quiet autumn days, we watched how a whole litter of hedgehogs followed their mother from the nest and how she defended them. We watched the little hares in the spring. The children managed to see how a mother hare left her newborn baby hare forever to fend for itself, waiting for some chance meeting with another hare to be fed. In July the children observed the tree frogs. One day we found a foxhole in a remote place. The children saw how the fox took her young out for walks, taught them to run, and played with them. In one distant corner of the forest, we observed beavers.

Our journeys and observations enriched thought and developed speech and expression. The more questions arose in the children's minds during trips and excursions, the clearer their curiosity and inquisitiveness appeared in class when we talked about natural phenomena, work, and far off lands. Observing the emotional state of the children after the "journeys" into nature, I became even more convinced of the fairness of ancient wisdom: love of knowledge begins in wonder.

I tried to have this amazement before the secrets of nature, the experience of joy at discovery, serve as an impulse to awaken and activate the children. There were students in our class who needed a lot of time to think through even uncomplicated problems (Valya, Petrik, and Nina). There were different causes in each case, but the results were one and the same: the cells in the cortex of the brain were in some sort of depressed state in these children. The children were indifferent to what I explained in class.

The thinking of these children was deficient, the explanation for which strengthened my conclusion of the inertness and languidness of the cells in the cortex of their brains. The deficiencies consisted in that it was difficult for the children to determine, and especially to keep in mind, the connections between several objects or phenomena. I gave them, for example, a problem about apples, baskets, and children. While the child thought about the apples and baskets, it forgot about the children. When it remembered the children, it forgot about the apples and baskets. And thus the deepening of thoughts about the cause and effect relationships between the objects and phenomena of the surrounding world, the little discoveries, the feeling of amazement in the fact of truth-all this gave Valya, Petrik, and Nina great joy. The children experienced a big spiritual uplift. The light of joyful excitation burned in their eyes. The indifference disappeared, and personal interest in the object of study appeared. If I managed to awaken a question in which clear emotional coloration was noticeable in the child, there would be dynamic processes going on inside the child's head at that time, as if powers which had been drowsing had been called into action. I was joyfully convinced that the most complicated children—as to mental development—were being awakened more and more. They listened eagerly to stories, comprehending the problem better I shared my observations with the experienced teachers of the elementary classes, and we called this work the emotional awakening of the reason.

I tried to understand what was going on with such children as Valya, Petrik, and Nina when the teacher managed to call forth in them interest in the subject at hand. I read the works of biologists, psychologists, educators, and neuropathologists. In the works of the well-known scholar Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), I came across an interesting idea about the interaction of the cells of the cortex and the sub cortical centers. Freud assigns a decisive role in thinking to the sub cortical centers, which, as many researchers have shown, rule the emotional processes of the human psyche. The scholar compares feeling and reason with a horse and rider; in his opinion, the horse determines the route (i.e., feeling--the sub cortical centers). The horse takes the rider where it wants to go, but does it so cleverly that the rider thinks that he is ruling the horse himself. Thus, according to Freud, the main thing is not the cortex, but the sub cortex.

While denying many of; the categorical claims of Freud, the great Russian physiologist Pavlov (1849-1936) also thought the sub cortex was of great significance. He wrote that the main impulse for cortical activity comes from the sub cortex and that if we were to exclude these emotions, the cortex would be deprived of its main source of strength. But the role of chief regulator of human thought and conduct according to Pavlov is the cortex of the cerebrum (the rider can stop the horse and turn it around). Observation of the intellectual labor of children further convinced me that emotional impulses coming from the sub cortex to the cortex (the feeling of joyful excitement, amazement, surprise) seem to awake the sleeping cells in the cortex, activating them. Experience has shown that intellectual education of small children must come to be the path of developing in than a need for knowledge-curiosity and inquisitiveness.

"Journeys" into nature became a tradition in the elementary classes. The children waited impatiently for trips to the forest, the field, or the pond, and thought up games beforehand. The children's favorite games came to be those connected with overcoming difficulties, games in which the players became real or folk heroes. I told the

children about Robinson Crusoe when they were in the second grade, and an interesting game began, which lasted for several months. After the story about Spartacus the children built an imaginary camp of revolting slaves on a high hill next to the precipice overlooking the ravine. The children were so carried away by the story of the Scythian cattle breeders, hunters, and fishermen who had lived in our region in the distant past that they made up a game in which they pretended to live and work like these ancient toilers.

Studying must be strongly connected with multi-faceted games of mental and physical strength so the games will awake clear, exciting feelings, and the surrounding world will appear before the children as an interesting book they will want to read. In addition to "journeys" into nature and games, physical labor became a broad area for the development of intellectual and physical strength. It is impossible to imagine a genuinely happy childhood without joyful, exciting feelings of work activity. Experience shows that for the small child, physical labor is not just an acquiring of skills and habits, not just moral education, but an unbounded, surprisingly rich world of thought. This world awakes the moral, intellectual, and esthetic feelings without which it is impossible to know the world, and this means studies as well physical labor alternated with study presented an exciting journey for the child into the world of dreams and creativity precisely in the process of physical labor the important qualities of mind were formed in my pupils: inquisitiveness, curiosity, flexibility of thought, and clearness of expression.

Intellectual labor becomes a desirable, interesting thing during lessons, developing and enriching, if, in the life of the child, there is an inspiring thought in physical labor. By the second grade we did our favorite work once a week, and the children occupied themselves with those things, which they could master with thoughts and feelings. In the third and fourth grades, we did our favorite work twice a week.

Favorite work... That doesn't mean that the teacher must wait passively until the child becomes interested in something. In vocational education, as in all educational work in general nothing must simply be let to take it's own course. Children must be surrounded by an atmosphere of interesting things to do. Teenagers and young men and women were working all around my pupils. All the students were carried away by dozens of interesting things. They cultivated trees and grain, built models of machines and mechanisms, made mixtures of soil, took care of animals, worked on the new greenhouse a the workshop, a assembled the water-main.

The spirit of research, inquisitiveness, and curiosity awakens an interest in work in children. My motto has always been: work is not an end in itself, but a means to attain many different ends in the educational process-societal, ideological, moral, intellectual, creative, aesthetic, and emotional.

Studying can become an interesting, absorbing thing for children if it is lit up by the bright light of thought, feeling, creativity, beauty, and games. My concern about success in studies began with concern for how the child was fed and slept; how it felt; how it played; how many hours a day it spent outside; what books it read, and what fairy tales it heard; what it drew, and how it expressed its thoughts and feelings through drawing; what feelings the music of nature and musical compositions, both folk and classical, awoke in its soul; what were its favorite tasks; to what extent it perceived the joys and adversities of others; what it created for others, and what kind of feelings it experienced in connection with this. Studying becomes a part of the inner life of children when knowledge is not separated from other activities. It is difficult to get the child to be interested in the multiplication tables or the calculation of the area of a rectangle of its own accord. Knowledge becomes desirable to the child when it is the means to the attainment of creative goals connected with labor. I tried to make physical labor exciting to the children from an early age, so that it uncovered the possibility for cleverness and ingenuity. One of the most important tasks of the school is to teach children how to use their knowledge. It is dangerous if knowledge is turned into dead weight, and this happens in the first forms when intellectual labor, by its very nature, is connected more than anything else with the acquisition of more and more new skills and habits. If these skills and habits are only learned and never put to use, studying gradually goes out of the inner life of the child as if separated from its interests. In attempting to overcome that phenomenon, the teacher must take care that every child use its skills and habits creatively.

Three Hundred Pages of "The Book of Nature"

Well-known mathematician Felix Klein (1849-1925) compared the secondary school student with a cannon, which had been loaded with knowledge for ten years, and then after it was fired, there was nothing left inside. I remembered this grim joke when during the intellectual labor of the child which has ban forced to memorize something it doesn't understand, which hasn't made a clear impression on it, and does not call forth images and associations. The substitution of memory for thought, clear perceptions, and observation of the essence of the phenomenon, which has been memorized, is a major flaw, which stupefies the child and, in the end, kills its desire to study.

Who among us has not been amazed by the sharp, tenacious memory of the pre-schooler. The five-year old goes to the field or forest with its father and mother. It is filled with impressions of clear images, pictures, and phenomena. A month or a year passes, and mother and father again decide to go for a walk. Their child looks forward to the quiet sunny morning, remembering how one time, inconceivably long ago, it went to the forest with its parents. The mother and father are struck by the clear, living details which sparkle in the child's recollections: the child remembers a surprising flower, which had two different-colored petals. The father listens with amazement as the child repeats the wonderful legend about the brother and sister who were turned into a flower. He had told his wife this legend a year ago on the edge of the forest; the child didn't appear to be listening to what its father was saying. It was chasing a butterfly--how had it remembered such a minor detail from the surrounding world.

The fact is that children have a surprisingly sharp memory for clear, thrilling plays of color, details and sounds of images, all of which can be buried deep in their memories. The child surprises its elders with unexpected questions, which arise in its consciousness in the process of perceiving images from the surrounding world. And remembering about the surprising flower, the child asks its father, "but can the brother and sister see each other or not? You said that plants are living--that means they hear and see, doesn't it? And do they talk with each other! And can we hear when they talk?" A whole stream of thought which amazes the father has appeared, but why didn't the child ask that a year ago? How did it save not only the memory for so long, but the emotional coloring of those instants? The father is convinced that the little child can clearly imagine to itself the clearing with its motley cover of flowers, the blue sky, and the far-off roar of an airplane.

Thinking all this over, I asked myself why it happens that after two or three years of studying in school, the child with a living, clear imagination, with a sharp memory, with sensitive emotional reactions to the phenomena in the world around it cannot remember the rules of grammar, why it is hard for the child to remember how to spell "steppe", or how much six times nine is. I came to a less grim conclusion than did the German scholar: the process of assimilating knowledge in the school years is frequently unconnected with the inner life of the child. The child's memory is sharp and tenacious precisely because a pure stream of clear images, pictures, perceptions, and ideas flows into it. Children's thinking strikes us with its subtle, unexpected, "philosophical" questions because it is fed by the life-giving sources of that stream. It is important that the schoolroom door not shut the surrounding world out of the child's consciousness. I attempted to see that throughout all the years of childhood, the surrounding world and nature constantly fed the minds of my students with clear images, pictures, perceptions, and ideas, that the children realized the laws of thinking like a well-proportioned building, the architecture of which is prompted by an even more well built building--that of nature. To avoid turning the child into a mere repository of knowledge, a treasure-chest of truths, names, and formulae, one must teach it to think. The very nature of children's minds and memory demand that the clear world around them with its laws not close before them, even for a minute. I was convinced that the sharpness of children's memories, and their clearness of thought will not necessarily weaken when they enter school, but can then be strengthened if the environment in which the child learns to think, remember, and reason is the world around it.

One should not exaggerate the role of nature in intellectual education. The teacher, who thinks that if children are surrounded by nature, that very fact conceals a mighty stimulus for intellectual development, is seriously

mistaken. There are no magic forces in nature, which act directly on the reason feelings, or will. Nature is a powerful source of education only when the person gets to know her, is imbued with thoughts of the cause and effect relationship. Reevaluation of the obvious is the absolutization of separate peculiarities of children's thinking, reducing cognitive activities to the sphere of the perceptible. One must not fetishize the peculiarities of children's thinking, in particular that children think in images, colors, and sounds. This feature is an objective fact, the importance of which was convincingly demonstrated by Ushinsky. But if the child thinks in images, colors, and sounds, it does not necessarily follow that it must not be taught to think abstractly. While emphasizing the importance of the use of visual aids, the big role of nature in intellectual education, the experienced educator sees a means to the development of abstract thinking and purposeful education in these methods.

I thought through everything that should become a source of thought for my students and determined that day by day over a period of four years, the children would observe such phenomena in the surrounding world as would become the sources of their thoughts. Thus evolved the three hundred pages of the Book of Nature. It consisted of three hundred observations, three hundred clear pictures that would leave an imprint on the minds of the children. Twice a week we took nature walls to learn how to think, not simply to observe but to learn to think. They were essentially lessons in thinking not interesting strolls, but lessons. But the fact that the lesson could be very absorbing, very interesting, was a circumstance which further enriched the inner world of the child.

I set a goal to impress clear pictures of reality upon the minds of the children, to reach a point where the thinking processes reached into the foundations of living, graphic concepts, so the children, when observing the world around them, could ascertain the causes and effects of phenomena, so they could compare the quality and signs of things. Observation strengthened a very important law of intellectual development in the child: the more abstract the truths summarized in the lessons, the more the intellectual effort required, the more often the student must go to the sources of knowledge--to nature-and the clearer the impression the images and pictures of the surrounding world will make on its consciousness. But clear images are not reflected in the child's consciousness as on photographic film. No matter how clear concepts are, they are not an end in themselves, nor are they the goal of studying. Intellectual education begins where there is theoretical thinking, where living contemplation is not an end in itself, but only a means: a clear image of the surrounding world is the source, in various forms, colors, and sounds, of a thousand questions. In uncovering the content of these questions, the teacher leafs through the pages of the Book of Nature.

The first page of the Book of Nature is called: "The Living and the Non-Living". One warm sunny day at noon in early fall, we went to the riverbank and made ourselves comfortable on the grass. Before us lay a meadow strewn with fall flowers. Fish swam in the depths of the clear river, and butterflies flitted about. Swallows were flying in the blue-sky overhead. We walked to a high precipice on which a section of soil has been uncovered for years. The children examined the different-colored layers of clay and sand--yellow, red, orange, and white. There is a thin layer of white clay and golden sand below it, then an even narrower layer of beautiful cubic crystals. The children compared the upper layers of black topsoil with the deeper layers.

"What do you see in the upper layers of soil?" I asked.

"Grass roots," answered the children. "There are no roots in the deeper layers".

"Look at the green blades of the grass growing on the very edge of the precipice and at the strip of golden sand. What are the differences between the grass and the sand?"

"The grass grows in the summer, withers in the fall, and comes to life again in the spring..." the children said.

"And the grass has little seeds that scatter on the earth, and new grass grows from them. . ."

"And what about the sand?" I want all the children, especially the slow thinkers Petrik, Valya, and Nina, to compare the things in the surrounding world. In the class there are still children whose train of thought can be compared to a slow but full river--Misha and Sasha. There is still one little girl--Lyuda--whose thinking is as much a mystery to me as the contents of a cask with seven seals. In the beginning I thought that the child simply had a slower process of mental development and it was hard for her to understand what came easily to the other children. But the little girl's eyes were living and impressionable. She felt the thought, holding it in with some kind of inner strength; it is as if she were consciously not hurrying to say what she knew very well.

"Children, look at the golden sand and the green grass. Or better yet, green sand and green grass. How are they alike, and how are they different?"

The children think, looking at the green meadow and the bare precipice. Lyuda's eyes are pensive, and Petrik's brews are knit. Valya is pouring sand from one palm to the other.

"Sand doesn't have flowers and grass does," said Lyuda.

"Cows graze in the grass, but just try to graze in the sand!" explained Petrik.

"Grass grows when it rains," said thoughtful Misha, "but how could sand grow from the rain" "Sand is deep in the earth, and grass is on the surface," Yura announced.

But Seryozha objected, "But isn't there sand on the seashore? Grass reaches out for the sun, and sand only gets warm in the sunlight."

Then we compared the little pebble someone had picked up and the green maple leaves, a piece of red glass, daisies, the fish swimming in the pond, a goose feather, the cast-iron railings on the bridge, and the hop vines intertwined among the trees. The children's thoughts were in full swing. The little boys and girls noticed the visible interdependence between things and phenomena in the world around them and discovered connections, which are not immediately apparent. The first concepts of living and non-living took shape in the children's minds. Some things are living, and others are non-living--the children saw this in a multitude of facts, but when I asked, "What distinguishes the living from the non-living?" they couldn't answer. The conclusion was formed that in the face of that question, the children again returned to what they saw with their eyes. Along with the signs they had correctly noted, the children made mistakes, which were corrected in the process of living observation we did there. When Kostya said, "Living things move, but non-living things don't move", almost everyone agreed with him, but then silence set in, and the children looked around themselves, and the discussion was heard:

"A stick moves when it's floating down the river, but it's not alive."

"A tractor moves, but it's not alive either."

"A spider web floats through the air, but it's not alive."

"The moss on the old roof doesn't move, but it's alive. Is moss really alive?"

"And sand moves, too. We were at the sand-pit and we saw how the sand ran in rivers."

No, the difference wasn't motion. What in the world separates the living from the non-living? The children repeatedly compared different objects from the world around them. Shura cried joyfully:

"The living grows, and the non-living doesn't grow."

The children thought over these words, and once again their gaze was drawn to the world around them. They reasoned aloud: grass is living--grass grows; trees are living--they grow; sweetbriar bushes are living--they grow; sand is non-living because it doesn't grow. And so it was--everything that is living grows; everything that is non-living doesn't grow... Misha was thinking of something and looking into the distance. Did he hear what his comrades were saying? When the children had named all the living and non-living objects around them, the little boy said:

"The living could not exist without sunshine", and pointed his finger at the forest, the meadow, the field.

These words convinced me again that slow thinkers are frequently notable for their perceptiveness, attentiveness, and keenness of observation. Misha's words lit up the children's imaginations. "Why didn't I think of that earlier" the boys and girls asked silently. This tenacious thought seemed once again to feel the objects of the surrounding world, and the children once again thought aloud: "Grass, flowers, trees, and wheat can't live without the sun. People can't live without the sun either... Or could people live without it? No, you couldn't even imagine people living somewhere deep inside the earth. We know that the tree branches cast shadows, and that makes the grass wither. My father told me that if it weren't for the sun to warm the earth after a rain, the winter crops wouldn't turn green, and that it would be bad without the sun..." But stones would stay the same even without the sun. No they wouldn't; in the dusk they are covered with mold. Is mold living or non-living? The sun doesn't just bring useful things; it can scorch the crops if it doesn't rain for a long time. That means that living things need not just sun but water.

Such were the brooklets of the children's thoughts, then these brooklets merged into a single stream, and it became clearer to the children that some sorts of phenomena which were not yet clear to them occurred in the living, and that these phenomena depended upon the sun, water, and everything around us in nature... The children were reading the first line from the first page of the Book of Nature. They understood that the whole world consisted of two elements-living and non-living. Their first impressions of the living and non-living brought up many questions. On their way home, the children examined everything they had thought was familiar, and they realized that they hadn't seen anything before, and that the more they noticed the more questions they had: why do the little sprouts coming out of an acorn turn into a mighty oak? Where do the leaves, branches, and the thick trunk come from? Why do the leaves fall from the trees in autumn? Do trees grow in the winter or not' It was impossible to answer all these questions at once, and one should not even attempt to do such a thing. What was good was that the children had these questions. It was good that while thinking, the child learned to go to the sources of knowledge and thought—the world around it—for the answers. It was good that in transmitting its thoughts, it located the exact, correct word. Clarity of thought is an important element of thinking acquired in the process of direct communion with the surrounding world.

The child thinks in images, colors, and sounds, but that doesn't mean that it should stay within the realm of concrete thinking. Thinking in images is a necessary step in the process of coming to under-stand ideas. Gradually I tried to give the children the following operative concepts: phenomenon, cause, effect, event, conditionality, dependency, difference, resemblance, community, compatibility, incompatibility, possibility, impossibility, and others. Many years of experience convinced me that these concepts play a big role in the formation of abstract thinking. It is impossible to master these concepts without research into living facts and phenomena, without thinking over what one sees with one's own eyes, without a gradual transfer from concrete objects, facts and phenomena to general abstract conclusions. The questions, which arise in the children's minds, promote that transfer. I taught my pupils to observe concrete phenomena in nature and to search for the cause and effect relationships. Thanks to the close connection between thinking and concrete images, the child gradually acquires the habit of operating with abstract concepts. Of course this is a long process, occurring over a period of years.

Reading the Book of Nature was interesting for the children. But that interest was not an end in itself. The Soviet educator denies hypertrophic direct personal interest of the child in studies, denies the activity of children as the aim of the process of education. Ushinsky wrote long ago, "Teach the child to do not only what it is interested in, but what it is not interested in, and to do it for the pleasure of fulfilling one's obligations. You are preparing the child for life, and in life, not all obligations are entertaining." The tendency of bourgeois scholars to examine the material, form, and method of studying from the point of view of the satisfaction of the personal needs of the pupils is foreign to Soviet educational science.

In Soviet education, the personal interests of the child are looked upon as a means of reaching educational aims at school--the acquisition of a sphere of scientific knowledge and the formation of dialectical-materialist convictions. In reading the Book of Nature, we were not merely passing the time of day, engaging in an interesting game, but walking along a path that would lead us to the world of scientific knowledge. The children thought about those phenomena in the surrounding world in which the essence of the laws of nature were revealed. I determined the material in the Book of Nature not for the satisfaction of the personal interests of every child, but for dialectic, scientific cognition of the world. In this, the principles, which delineate the goals of activity of the schoolchild in Soviet educational theory, differ from that well-known proposition of the pragmatists: learn by doing. In Soviet educational theory, activity is not a sign of systematic scientific education, but a means to attain educational and general upbringing aims. Of course activity and promoting the mastery of knowledge is senseless without the personal interest of the child.

In Soviet educational theory, interest is looked at as an active part of the creative inner strength of the schoolchild in the process of reasoning and investigating. Interest in what can be studied and known is deepened to the extent that the truths the pupil masters become his or her personal convictions. In Soviet educational theory, interest is inseparably linked with ideology, with a scientific-materialist education.

We read one page after another of the Book of Nature and studied and thought. The second page, which the children got to know, was called "the non-living is tied to the living". We went to the green-house and observed how the older students were cultivating cucumber, tomatoes, barley, and oats in that same golden sand that comes from deep under the earth on top of little pieces of broken brick. The children saw how the metal and wooden containers were filled with sand and broken brick and how a mixture of chemical substances were poured into this. The roots of the cucumbers and tomatoes took what they needed for growth and ripening from this medium. The lifeless pebbles and white powder dissolved in water--it would seem as if all of this were necessary for life. And the green stalks of barley were growing in flat vessels even without sand and pebbles: their roots took food from the solution of white powder. But looking closely at the flowers and ripening fruits, the children saw that the non-living becomes an environment for the living only where there is water and sunlight. Life is impossible without light, warmth and water. The day was cloudy, and electric lamps were hung in the greenhouse. It was cold outside, but in the greenhouse, the central heating pipes were warming the air.

I said to them, "Children, look carefully at what you see around you, and think about whether or not the living can exist without the non-living. You see before you a big container with lots of little containers filled with various chemical fertilizers. Look how your older comrades take white, yellow, and gray powders from different containers, mix them together, and dissolve them in water. They make fertile soil, mixing coarse sand with humus. See what juicy tomatoes grow in this mixture? Where does the plant get the necessary materials for its leaves, stems, and fruit? From the non-living. The non-living provides the environment for the living." These truths awakened a feeling of wonder at the secrets of nature in the children's souls.

Again we are reminded of the ancient dictum attributed to Aristotle (384-322 B. C.) that love of knowledge begins in wonder. Sincere amazement in the face of the discovery of the secrets of nature is a powerful stimulus for directing the train of thought. When the children saw how entirely different types of plants--tomatoes, cucumbers, and barley--grew from a solution of chemical substances, they bombarded me with questions: "How is that clear solution transformed into thick stems and bright-colored flowers with bees flitting around them, and

into juicy fruit?" "Where does the living come from? Does the sun bring the plants pieces of green, or does it only give warmth and light?" "Why do green cucumbers and red tomatoes grow from the very same solution" "Why are cucumbers green and tomatoes red when they are growing right next to each other?" "What is in these different-colored powders?" "Why do the plants turn green from the humus mixed into the soil?"

The first visual ideas about the connections between the living and non-living are very important for the further intellectual development of the child! Thinking about the questions, "Where does the living come from'" and "How does the sun 'make' the living from the non-living?", the child prepares itself to read the great book of life and to learn about the secrets of the most complicated processes.

I looked upon reading the Book of Nature as a means of bringing about mental activity. Ideas, pictures and images are only the beginning of active thinking. "Any method is poor to the extent that it trains the pupil to simple perception or passivity," wrote F. A. Disterveg, "and any method is good to the extent that it awakens activity in the pupil." I tried to make reading the Book of Nature not simple perception of the pictures and images of nature, but the beginning of active thinking, theoretical condition of the world, and systematic scientific knowledge.

"The very best material," writes well-known Soviet psychologist G. Kostyult, "matches the consciousness of the pupils when it is included in their personal activity." Not activity for activity's sale, for the satisfaction of personal interests, but activity which will uncover the material of scientific knowledge-- such is the essence of the unity of the active and scientific element in Soviet pedagogy.

"Everything in Nature Changes"--this was the title of the next page in the Book of Nature. We returned to this page several times. One bright autumn day around lunchtime, we went to the orchard. The branches of the apple and pear trees were bending low under the weight of the fruit. "Remember, children," I said to them, "what our garden looked like in the winter--all bare, the branches covered with frost and snow around the trunks... But now the branches are covered with dense greenery, and the apples and pears are filling up with the juices of the earth."

Two months later, we went to the orchard again. What did it look like! The yellow leaves covered the earth with a soft carpet, and the branches were halfbare. An old, hollow apple tree and a little wild apple tree growing side by ride stood there. The apple tree had been planted by our grandfathers. Half of the branches on it were dead. Only a few were green, and on them were round, juicy fruits. In a couple of years, the old apple tree would have to be cut down. But on the delicate stalk of the seedling, a tender sprout was turning green. The students grafted this bud from the old apple tree. As the years passed, the bud would grow into a tree, bloom, and golden fruit would ripen on it.

"Look carefully around you, children--do you see even one plant that stays the same all the time?" The children's life experience was not great, but from their young years they had lived in the world of labor and nature, and they knew that plants grow, bloom, and bear fruit... They described how the tender shoot pushes up from the earth and grows into the thick stalk of a plant, how buds come out on the tees, and then leaves appear... The children were amazed at the rapid leaping changes in the world of living things. The day before, we had been in the peach orchard and seen the black buds and bare branches. Today we went early in the morning, and a new picture lay before our gaze: there were little, rose-colored flowers opening on the branches... Why had the buds opened so quickly--overnight-- and the trees burst into bloom? Did they sleep at night or not? Did trees sleep in general, or not? Did it hurt the tree when its branches were cut off? Why did trees grow old and die? I had to think a long time about these questions to find the answers to them. But the answers brought about a new stream of questions.

We read this chapter of the Book of Nature by the edge of the pond, in the ravine, and in the thickets of bushes, and in the field. There were tiny tadpoles swimming in the shoals. The children knew that they turn into frogs.

But how did it happen? Why did the smallest fish in the aquarium look like a fish, but a tadpole didn't look anything like a frog? We saw how the collective farmers fed the silk worms. Voracious little worms appeared from little eggs like poppy seeds. Why do they eat only mulberry leaves? The silk worm grows to several times its original size, as if shedding old skin—why? It spins a silk co- coon about itself and hides in its little golden house --what happens inside there? We took several cocoons and put them in the window. After some time, we saw how big, beautiful butterflies appeared. The butterflies laid eggs, and the same process repeated itself. How did the worms make the delicate silk thread? Why did they eat a lot of mulberry leaves before they started to spin the cocoons?

The more activity is connected with active cognition of nature, the more deeply what is thought about becomes visible in the surrounding world. With every month, the children noticed more and more of the phenomena around them to which they had paid no attention before. Thus they saw forms of life, which were absolutely unlike those, which were familiar to them: in the dark, damp cellar they saw white eyes on the tuber potato. Were they roots or future stems? On the dark, northern side of tree trunks green moss grew. Why did it hide itself from the sun' Why didn't moss have seeds? How did it propagate itself? All plants bloom except for moss. What kind of a plant was moss?

Several lines from the Book of Nature convinced the children that not only living things change. We went to the riverbank. The children examined the gray stones and saw tiny cracks in them. Little pieces cracked off the stones into the children's hands. That meant that even stones didn't stay stones forever. The children remembered how a few months ago they had said: "Stones are the same in the sunlight or in the cellar." Stones get warm in the daytime and cool at night. Cracks appear and water falls into them. It seemed that even stones were not eternal.

Analyzing the lessons in thinking devoted to "everything in nature changes", I was convinced that the more the child finds out and the more it discovers laws of everyday life that it had not noticed before, the more it wants to know, the more receptive its sense organs become to the phenomena of the surrounding world, and the more closely connected the sense organs become to the thought processes. In the works of the Soviet anthropologist M. F. Nesturkh there is a phrase which gives, it seems to me, the key to understanding the process of mental development in the child: while being subject to an uninterrupted stream of new information in the years of childhood, precisely at that age the person acquires *a growing striving for knowledge*.

The flow of information is one of the most important conditions of mental development. What occurs when that flow grows weaker for one reason or another and can't be widened? What the child sees for itself is still not a flow of information. The education of the person consists in that is elder's transfer their knowledge of the surrounding world to the child, and the energy of their thoughts gradually feeds the flow of information affecting the child.

I began very carefully to study every child's home environment from the time of is birth to the time it entered school. Interesting generalizations began to appear. If the child were left to its own devices in the years before it entered school, if its elders did not create that stream of information without which a normal human environment is unthinkable, the child's brain will be in a state of inertness: inquisitiveness and curiosity die away and indifference develops. In such conditions, it seems that the growing striving for knowledge and important energy for thinking which determine the intellectual development of the child appear to an enormous degree.

Petrik was left to his own devices in childhood. His mother and grandfather went to work in the morning, and the little boy remained at home alone. He was left under the shed of the barn or on the green lawn of the fenced-in yard. From time to time, the neighbor checked to see if he were all right. Thus Petrik was "raised" from the time he was two until he was five. It was a "vegetable" upbringing. The boy was well fed and had adequate clothing and shoes, but was deprived of what was most important-a human environment. From the age of five, Petrik played with other children, children of his own age for the most part, on the streets. When he came to school, he

didn't know the meaning of the simplest words of his native language. His indifferent expression, sliding over the objects around him seemed to me to be the expression of a little old man. That meant that the living material of thought, the cells of the cortex of his brain, were inert because in the most important period of the formation of his nervous system, the period of the infancy of the brain, the child was deprived of a rapid flow of information from the surrounding world. Therefore, reading the Book of Nature had to play a big role in the education of the little boy.

...We turned to the next page of the Book of Nature, "Seeds of Life". In the fall, the children gathered pear, apple, peach, and plum seeds to plant in the school orchard. They already knew from experience that plants grew from seeds. In the spring and summer when life abounded on the steppe, in the forest and groves, seeds ripened on the plants, and the genus reproduced itself. We went on an excursion. The spring breezes tore off the little bits of white fluff from the poplar, and dandelions. The children found the little seeds in the light fluff. They were amazed how nature had taken so much trouble with these seeds: they held to the dry surface of the soil, but as soon as there was moisture, the fluff stuck, anchoring itself to the ground, and the little seed sprouted. The children read from line to line of the Book of Nature with interest. They saw how the seeds "shot" out of many plants, and the seeds of life were scattered to all sides, how through the "little windows" in the heads of poppies swaying in the breeze, the seeds which ripened earlier than the others flew out. We examined the clever hooks, claws, and "climbing-irons" with which the seeds could catch on to a person's clothing or - an animal's coat under the magnifying glass. We collected the seeds of different strains of grain. The children thought about how a big plant could grow from a little seed. Were seeds living or non-living? The children read several interesting lines of that page in the winter: several plants drop their seeds on the snow, and they must lie in the snow for several weeks before they can sprout.

The more intensively they attempt to acquire knowledge, the more interest children take in their work, and the more deeply the investigative character of work is revealed. The flow of information from the surrounding world becomes an especially strong stimulus for obtaining knowledge when the hands aid the thinker, when the child vies to obtain the answer to a question that excites it through labor, to solve a riddle, to ascertain the truth of what is a proposition for the time being. The child who has become a worker becomes a genuine thinker not by compulsion but by sincere desire. The source of the child's desire to work appears first of all in the desire to discover. If this desire is developed, the interest in labor is strengthened in the child. What is called love of work in educational theory appears together with curiosity, inquisitiveness, and a feeling of human dignity in the child.

The "journeys" devoted to reading one of the most exciting pages of the Book of Nature, "The Sun, the Source of Life", made a deep impression on the consciousnesses and emotional memories of the children. One simmering summer day we went to the field, the garden, and the vineyard. Fields of wheat and sunflowers, bunches of grapes, golden pears, and ripening tomatoes were spread out before us. The children saw the light and warmth of the sun in all these gifts of fertility. Everything necessary to the person was given by the earth thanks to the sun. This conclusion, which was reached as a result of many observations and comparisons and the determination of cause and effect relationships, called forth amazement from the children, which provided new stimuli for the flight of their thoughts. The children examined the world around them and thought about the genesis of everything. And the feeling of amazement was deepened when they were convinced that the sun was the only source of life.

Bread, potatoes, and sunflowers nothing would exist without the sun. Meat, milk and butter wouldn't exist either because animals eat the plants that grow from the earth thanks to the sun's light and warmth. In their amazement, the children asked, "What is the sun? Where does it get the warmth it sends us? Why does the sun warm the earth so little in winter? What will happen if the sun burns out?"

The questions which arose during the reading of the Book of Nature were the beginning, of the flights of thought toward higher knowledge with which, in several years' time, the children would uncover the complicated mysteries of life. I tried to get the children to be inquisitive investigators and discoverers of the world, so that the

truth would not appear before them as a ready-made conclusion handed to them on a platter by their teachers, but a clear picture of the world around them, experienced with wildly beating hearts. If a discovery excited the child, truth would become a personal conviction, which it would carry throughout life. Intellectual feelings, the experience of the joy of knowledge, surprise in the face of the greatness of nature and the orderliness of her laws--this is the source of a solid memory.

I saw intellectual feelings as the main method of development and strengthening of the memories of some of the children. Valya had a poor memory; everything seemed to fly in one ear and out the other. I had to get the little girl's heart to beat with amazement at the pictures of the surrounding world. We walked about the field and forest, to the riverbank, the garden, and the apiary for several days to read the page from the Book of Nature entitled "Every Living Creature Adapts Itself to Its Surroundings". I pointed the children's attention to the fact that several flowers closed up in hot weather, and opened up again in the cool of the evening. I showed how the delicate stalk of the snowdrop pushed up through the thick layers of fallen leaves like an arrow, how the bees built their hives and filled the combs with honey, how the roots of the grapevines grew to a depth of three meters to get moisture, and how the willow branches would fall into the silt and put down roots from which another tree would grow... These discoveries filled the heart of the little girl with joyful excitement. The expression of indifference in the child's eyes gave way to a living personal interest. Quiet Valya began to talk and asked: "But how does the bee know how to get back home? How does it find its beehive? Isn't the snowdrop's flower cold blooming when there is still snow on the ground?" Where there are questions, there are thoughts, and where there are thoughts, the memory is preserving pictures of the surrounding world and the laws of nature.

Here are the names of the pages from the Book of Nature which we read one after the other: "The Plant and Animal World", "How a Drop of Water Travels", "The person Uses the Forces of Nature", "Nature Awakes in the Spring" "The Longest Day of Summer", "Spring Flowers in the Forest, Field, and Meadow", "Summer Flowers", "Lily-of-the-Valley and Violets", "Chrysanthemums, Children of the Autumn", "Life in the Pond", "The Last Day of Indian Summer", "Nature Awaits Winter", "The First Morning of Winter", "The Lives of Birds in the Winter Forest", "Heads of Wheat", "Life in the Bird Family", "The Swallows Build Their Nests", "A Thunderstorm Draws Near", "Rainy Weather in the Fall", "The World of Flowers in the Midst of Winter", "The Forest Conserves Moisture", "The Storks Have Arrived", "The Birds Get Ready to Fly South for the Winter", "The Sun after a Summer Shower", "The Rainbow above the River", "Winter and Spring Crops", "The Sunflowers Have Begun to Bloom", "Stars in the Sky", "Life in the Soil", "The Green Leaf, a Storehouse of Sunshine", "Mushrooms and Moss", "How an Oak Grows from an Acorn", and many others. "The poor teacher presents truths; the good teacher shows how to find them," wrote Disterveg. In our day the inquiring approach to the phenomena of the surrounding world took on a special significance. It was very important that the pupils' method of thinking be based on investigation and searching so that the realization of scientific truths preceded the accumulation, analysis, comparison, and contrasting of facts. In observation of the phenomena and pictures of nature, the child masters the forms and processes of thinking and enriches its understanding, all of which is filled out by the real thinking-through of the cause and effect relationships that an alert eve will notice. Experience confirmed that the thoughts of the children while reading the Book of Nature were distinguished by significant features: operating with abstract understandings, the children thoughtfully addressed those ideas, images, and pictures upon which these understandings were based.

When my students, having read the Book of Nature throughout the years of childhood, became teenagers, and then young men and women, I was especially interested in how active cognition of the world around them in general intellectual development was rejected in the character and style of their intellectual labor and multifaceted intellectual interests. I was convinced that the intellectual lives of my pupils were distinguished by their great inquisitiveness. In all of their affairs, everything around them affected their feelings and thoughts. One of the traits of the mental lives of my students in the years of adolescence and early adulthood was their ability to see the inter- relatedness of the objects and phenomena of nature. They tried to find out about anything that was unclear or that they didn't understand from books. Books became sources of knowledge for them and were necessary to their spiritual lives.

From the World of Things to Society. Where Does Everything Come From?

Nature is an abundant source for education of the person, but the formation of the mind, feelings, attitudes, and convictions only begin with the understanding of nature. The person lives in society, and in essence, all of his or her life presents itself in terms of the relations into which he or she enters with other people. I tried to get the children to think about an important truth during the entire four years they were in elementary school: the person lives thanks to hundreds, or even thousands, of other people who satisfy his or her material and spiritual needs. It is impossible to live in society without creating material and spiritual values for hundreds and thousands of other people. In work and in the process of mutual relations in society, the moral face of the person is formed along with his or her spiritual values, attitude toward life, and worldview. One of the important educational tasks of the teacher is to get the children to understand and feel that through the creation of material and spiritual good, personal interrelations are born in our society, as is the societal face of the citizen.

Experience convinced me that the little child comes to understand societal relations via an understanding of things, via the revelation of where all these things come from.

We ate lunch in the school dining hall and washed our dishes. Wait, children, don't leave the dining hall; let's sit at the table another half hour. Let's think about where all these things we use today come from. Where are all the things they gave us come from? The children enumerated everything they had eaten: bread, meat, potatoes, milk, butter, and eggs... The food was cooked on the stove, which had been built of new bricks not long before. The stove burned coal, which had been brought from the mines. The chain and tables we were sitting at were made of metal and plastic...

"Is that everything?" I asked.

"Yes," the children answered.

"Look carefully. There's something you haven't noticed... "

The refrigerator in the corner couldn't run without electricity. There were electric lamps on the walls. I wondered whether or not the children would notice these things.

They did. They realized with amazement that if there were no electricity, it would be difficult to live at home and study at school.

Where did all these things without which we could not live come from?

Our "journeys" into societal production and the complex world of work relations began with this question. Our every step led to more new discoveries. Thus the children experienced a feeling of great respect for working people while discovering the truth that the labor of almost all their parents was necessary in order to put bread on our table. But that was far from everything. The work of the people who built tractors, ploughs, and combines was also necessary because without machines, the grain could not be harvested. The labor of miners was essential because the metal to make the machines from couldn't be smelted without coal.

No less surprising discoveries awaited us in our becoming more closely acquainted with other things. Hundreds of people of very different professions in cities and villages far and near in our homeland had-to work so that the coal from the bowels of the earth arrived it our school kitchen. Hundreds of people had to work to smelt metal to make our tables from, and to make bricks from sand and day.

Then in the same manner, we took our first step into societal production, into the world of interrelations at work, found out where our clothes come from, how paper is made, who made books and films for us, and who composed music. Week after week, month after month, we tried to understand the complexities of societal relations. We got to know the person through the world of things. Things, material and spiritual values, helped us see, understand, and feel the person. Stepan Maximovich, the baker, whom we met at his place of work, was not simply a person in the children's eyes, carrying out his modest task of making bread, but a creator of life without whom hundreds and thousands of people could not live. Every week we met with workers, the producers of material and spiritual good for hundreds and thousands of people, with combine and tractor drivers, metal craftsmen and turners. On one of these spring days after the children had finished the third class, we went to the Kremenchug Hydroelectric Station and saw how electric power was produced. We met with the power specialists.

The attitudes of the workers with whom the children met toward their jobs was an important factor in the formation of the children's moral outlooks. The things people create for others seem so ordinary that at first glance, there seems to be nothing remarkable about such material blessings as bread, meat, milk, sugar, and other things. When people were proud of their labor and considered it to be a service to society, it had a strong influence on the children. The truth that work elevates and brings the person complete happiness was not an abstract idea to the children, but the essence of life. From childhood the person was certain that the most important walk of life in which his or her strengths and creative ability could be revealed was honest work for the good of society.

A Thousand Problems From the Math Book of Life

An important task of the school is to teach the person to think creatively and to be a searching, inquisitive person. I imagined the years of childhood as a school in thinking, and the teacher as a person who cared about the formation of the organism and the inner world of the pupils. Concern for the development and strengthening of the child's brain so that this mirror reflecting the world would always be sensitive and receptive is one of the main duties of the educator. Just as the muscles develop and grow stronger from physical exercise and overcoming difficulties, so are efforts and labor necessary for the formation and development of the brain.

The child's brain develops and grows stronger due to a complicated internal process of awakening the energy of the cells, which occurs at a moment determined by the multi-faceted connections between the objects and phenomena of surrounding world-- cause and effect, temporal, and functional. When the student thinks through something, searches, tries to get to the essence of something he or she doesn't understand, the cells in the cortex of the brain make efforts which throw these microscopic muscles, the strength of which becomes reason, into action. I saw my task as helping the children understand the connections between the phenomena of the surrounding world, and to activate new strength in the efforts of those microscopic muscles every time. This complex phenomenon is the process of formation, strengthening, and development of the most important qualities of the brain-inquisitiveness, sharp-wittedness, and the ability to observe.

The work of the human brain is discrete, occurring at intervals. Stimulation of the stream of information from the surrounding world arises first in one group of cells in the cortex, then in another. Thought instantaneously switches from one object to another, and that switching is an important factor in the process of thinking. The ability quickly to change one's train of thought corresponds to the transforming of thoughts from one group of cells to another. This is the main precondition of adequate mental ability. The child can think--that means that within some interval of time (a second, for example), its thoughts can switch from one object to another many times. This process is so fast that the thinker doesn't notice it, and it seems that he or she is thinking simultaneously about the area of the swimming pool and the first and second drains, out of which a specific amount of water is flowing at unequal rates over a certain amount of time. In other words, the student comprehends various objects and phenomena simultaneously and analyses and compares them. Our task consists in developing this important mental ability in every child.

Effective exercises to awaken the internal energy of the brain and to stimulate the play of strength in the "intellectual muscles" are found in problems, which develop keenness and quickness of wit. These problems are found in the things, objects, and phenomena of the surrounding world themselves. I directed the attention of the children to this or that phenomenon, trying to get them to see the secrets they didn't yet understand, so that they would attempt to find the essence of these things, to locate the truth. Activity and human labor appear as the key to solving these problems. Straining intellectual strength, trying to determine the connections between objects and phenomena forced the child to complete a specific task. There were thousands of such problems in the world around us. The people had thought them up, and they live in the creativity of folklore as interesting stories and riddles. This is one of the first problems I gave the children to solve during a rest period:

"You have to take a wolf, a goat, and a head of cabbage from one side of the river to the other. You can't take them all at the same time or leave the wolf with the goat or the goat with the cabbage. You can make as many trips as you like. But you can take only the wolf with the cabbage or any one of the three by itself. How can you get the wolf, the goat, and the cabbage to the other side of the river so that everything turns out right?"

Folk wisdom is full of these riddles, and small children find them quite interesting. All the little boys and girls started trying to figure out how to get the three "passengers" across the river so that the wolf wouldn't eat the goat, nor the goat the cabbage. We were sitting on the shore of the pond. The children drew the river in the sand and found little pebbles. Everyone would probably not solve the riddle, but all the children thought hard. This was an excellent means for developing mental strength.

Solving such a riddle requires the same kind of efforts as chess: one must think several steps ahead. I gave this problem to my seven-year-old children soon after the beginning of the first grade. Three children, Shura, Seryozha, and Yura solved it in ten minutes. The quick train of thought of these children surged ahead, combined with tenacious, sharp memories. In fifteen minutes, almost all the children had solved the riddle, but Valya, Nina, Petrik, and Slava once again had no results. I saw that their train of thought stopped suddenly. The little children understood the thought of the problem, the clearly laid out examples and phenomena we were talking about, but as soon as they got through the first suggestion, the idea that had been clear grew dim. In other words, the child forgot what it remembered only a second ago.

From the rich treasure chest of folk wisdom, I took more and more riddles, hoping first of all, that interest would be awakened in the composition and subject of the riddles in my slow learners. A couple of days later, I gave them the following problem: "A small detachment of soldiers came to a river they had to cross. The bridge was out, and the river was deep. What could they do? Suddenly their officer noticed two boys playing with a canoe on the shore. But the canoe was so small that only one soldier or the two boys, and no more, could row across at one time. All the soldiers ferried across the river in that canoe. How did they do it?"

Once again I observed how the children thought. Again they drew in the sand, trying to hold several "moves" in their heads at once. Again I saw how depressed Nina, Slava, and Petrik were. Valya's eyes sparkled with joy: she had solved the problem.

I started to work separately with my slow learners. I gave them simple folk riddles designed to deepen comprehension of natural numbers and to determine the interdependence of numbers. Here are five such riddles:

1. "Falcons and Oaks": Some falcons flew up and lighted on some oak trees. If there was one falcon per tree, one falcon remained. If there were two falcons per tree, one oak remained. How many falcons were there in all, and how many oak trees?

- 2. "In the Pasture": There were two shepherd boys. If the first one gave the second one sheep, then they would have the same number. If the second gave the first a sheep, then the first would have two more sheep than the second. How many sheep did each shepherd have?
- 3. "How Many Geese?" A flock of geese flew up and was met by a gander. "Hello, hundred geese!" he said. "Oh, no, there are not a hundred of us," the geese answered. "If you want to know how many of us there are, then double our number, and add half of that, then a quarter, and you as well, fine gander, and then there will be a hundred of us." How many geese were there in the flock?
- 4. "Heads and Feet": Chickens were pecking, and rabbits were hopping about the courtyard. There were ten heads and twenty-four feet in all. How many rabbits and how many chickens were there?
- 5. "How Many Balls": There were ten yellow balls, ten red balls, five green balls, and five black balls in a sack. Close your eyes and pick out the smallest number of balls you can. But be sure that you have seven balls of one color. How many balls must you take?

These riddles were an irreplaceable means of training the mind. The children had to remember from two to four "moves" to solve each of them. In six months, Valya and Slava could solve such problems, but Petrik and Nina still had no luck. They couldn't remember anything, and without memory, it is impossible to make a series of "moves".

What was the explanation for this phenomenon? Obviously, some of the children didn't have the ability to switch their thoughts from one object to another instantaneously. They couldn't remember and comprehend all of the elements of the problem at once. Why that ability was not worked out in the cortical cells is another question. The explanation does not lie simply in lack of innate ability, but this cannot be ruled out entirely. Observation shows that if the train of thought is broken instantly, and if in the same instant, the child cannot direct its mental gaze upon what is present now and what was present several moments ago, it cannot think. It will be difficult for the child to determine the connections between several different objects and phenomena.

I studied the thinking of children, especially such slow learners as Valya, Petrik, and Nina, not for some kind of theoretical goals, but to facilitate their intellectual labor--to teach them to study. Observation confirms that one must first of all teach children to keep in mind the thoughts of a row of objects, phenomena, and events, and to think through the connections between them. From deepening its examination of the essence and internal order of an object, the child must gradually expand this examination to a series of objects placed at a distance from it. Studying the thinking of slow learners, I was even more convinced that the inability to think through, for example, a problem, is the result of the inability to think abstractly, to digress from the concrete. Children must he taught to think in abstract ideas. Valya should not be drawing a concrete picture of a wolf in her imagination. Her thinking should not stop at how the goat reaches for the cabbage. For the child, all these images should be abstract ideas. But the route to the abstract is through a deep understanding of the concrete. One must imagine what is going on in the child's head when it is thinking. The ability to think must be taught, or otherwise the children will strain their memories and cram, dulling their thoughts even more. I tried to imagine what went on in the heads of my students. Perhaps it was only a diagram, but I am sure that to some measure, it correctly reflects the picture of thinking. When the child's thoughts switch from one idea to another, a new group of brain cells are activated. Its thoughts will surge onward only when the train of thought between images and perceptions is not broken, when information and signals go from one side to the other: the new idea lets itself know about what was received earlier, and what was received earlier reminds itself about the new information. This swift interchange occurs many times within an instant. This process is what we're talking about: the child thinks and considers. The firmer the train of thought awakened between the two ideas, the deeper the thought, the broader the circle of objects and phenomena children can hold in their reason.

The sources of the firmness of these trains of thought are hidden, apparently, in the very nature of the living gray matter of the brain, in the very delicate biochemical processes going on in the brain of a given person, and, as observation of pre-school children shows, in the character of the surroundings, upon which the formation of intellectual abilities in the period of the infancy of the nervous system depends to a considerable extent.

Undoubtedly, the cells in Valya, Nina, and Petrik's brains suffered from insufficient development of that nervous energy which, is the source of firmness of train of thought in the connections between the different living islands of thinking. The links connecting the centers of awakening are weak and die away quickly. The child cannot simultaneously grasp the thought of several images. When Petrik made an effort to remember what was clear to him several seconds earlier, I saw that he had obviously lost the train of thought.

The reasons for this peculiarity of thinking in different children vary. The main reason is obviously that in early childhood, when the flow of perceptions is especially variegated and varied, the child didn't think much about the connections between the objects and phenomena in the world around it, and the living islands of thinking in its brain did not develop two-way connections for the flow of information. All this is the result of inattentiveness and indifference to the development of the child's thinking on the part of adults. The child asked some adult, "Why" for the first time and didn't get an answer, and a second time without results. The indifference of adults (and occasionally a short reply-- "Leave me alone; don't bother me.") weakens the delicate connections in its brain which must be strengthened time and time again precisely during these years.

One of the reasons for this negative characteristic of thinking is poverty in the emotional reactions of children to the phenomena of the surrounding world, as a result of which, the emotional impulses from the sub cortical region of the brain are weakened.

With every month of lessons, I was more convinced of the importance of educating the parents of pre-schoolers. Before the child has entered school, while it is still at home with its mother and father, one must tell the parents a great deal about education. To provide for the future generations of school-children, we created a school for parents who had two- to six-year-old children. We set up a program of study including questions of the physical, psychological, intellectual, moral, and esthetic development of the child, and how the parents could teach the future pupils to think. Now this school works on a permanent basis.

Educational knowledge is especially important during the period when the mother and father are the sole educators of the child--during the pre-school years. To a large measure, the spiritual life of the child from two to six years depends upon this elementary knowledge on the part of the parents, which is expressed in a wise understanding of the very complicated spiritual development of the person. We tried to equip the parents with certain knowledge and habits. We spent a lot of time on the question of how to teach the child to think, and by what method its intellectual abilities should be developed at the school for parents. At the foundation of many years of experience, we put a thousand questions about the surrounding world--these were the questions children most frequently ask their parents. We explained how to answer when a small child asked them so as to develop its inquisitiveness and curiosity. Together with parents, we worked out a program of nature walks for the pre-schoolers, designating the objects, which should be observed. We gave special attention to seeing that an atmosphere of respect for books reigned in every family with pre-school children.

Many years of observation have convinced me that there are also inherited factors on the strength of which difficulties in intellectual education arise. Alcoholism in the parents is a terrible enemy of the whole organism of the child, but it is especially pernicious for its brain.

Every time favorable conditions for problem solving are created as exercises for the brain, I held those children who thought slowly and remembered with difficulty closer to myself. I had to think up various puzzles and riddles until in the end I managed to achieve the first connections between the living islands of thought in Nina's head which connected impressions and images of the surrounding world.

I recall a winter day when we sat by the aquarium. The children were counting the fish, and some came up with more, while others found less. I gave them a riddle: "Brother saw two big and four little fish in the aquarium. Sister saw two big and three little fish. Mama saw three big and five little fish. Mama saw all the fish that live in the aquarium. How many fish were there?" The problem did not present any difficulties for many of the children,

but Nina thought for a long time. In the end, she joyfully clapped her hands. "Yes, brother and sister didn't see all the fish, but mama saw all of them. So there were three big and five little fish in the aquarium. They were hiding in the grass out of sight...But mama saw them." Valya and Petrik began to solve such problems and even some a little more difficult.

Gradually I began to give these children more difficult problems to strengthen the success they had attained. In the third year of studies when we were picking apples in the kolkhoz orchard, Nina solved such a riddle: "Three brothers were mowing hay in the meadow. At noon, they lay down to rest under an oak tree and fell asleep. Their sister brought them some lunch: soup, bread, and several apples apiece. She didn't wake them up, but left their lunch basket and went back home. The oldest brother woke up and saw the apples. He divided them into three parts, but he didn't eat all of his share. He saved one apple for his favorite brother--the youngest one. Then he lay back down and went to sleep. The middle brother woke up, but he didn't know that the oldest brother had already eaten some of the apples. He divided the apples that were left into three parts, but he didn't eat all of his share either. He left one for the youngest brother because he had a sweet tooth... Then the middle brother lay down and went to sleep again. At last, the youngest brother woke up. He saw seven apples in the basket and didn't know how to divide them up into three parts. He thought for a long time, but couldn't decide what to do. Then the other brothers woke up and explained everything. How many apples had the sister brought her brothers?"

Many of our arithmetic problems dealt with work, a topic the children were well acquainted with. In solving these problems, the children observed again and again how their elders tilled the soil and sowed seeds, planted trees and fertilized them, gathered in the harvest and stored up groceries, built houses and repaired roads. The connections between impressions were strengthened by the establishment of these connections in life. Thought and memory developed in an undivided unity. For solving the overwhelming majority of the problems, the children resorted to drawing or created a schematic model of those examples, which were being discussed. The children put puzzles, riddles, and brainteasers in their wall newspaper, which they began to put out in the second half of the third grade. Problem solving took the shape of an original type of competition of persistence, assiduity, and hard work. We finally held mathematics Olympics in our class in the third form. The children were given problems of various difficulties so that every child could succeed at some of them. Gradually, the mathematics Olympics caught the attention of the other elementary classes and was held throughout the school.

In solving problems from the "math's book of the world around us", the children's thoughts were awakened and they learned to think. One cannot speak of children's having a good knowledge of mathematics or any other subject if they have not been taught to think, if the process of thinking has not strengthened their brains.

Lev Tolstoy advised: "Avoid all arithmetic definitions and rules, but force yourself to conduct as many activities as possible, and correct not because what was done was not according to the rules, but because there was no thought behind it." This advice does not disclaim theoretical generalizations, definitions, and rules, as it may seem to at first glance. Just the reverse, Tolstoy wants to direct the student to think through the essence of definitions and rules and to see a generality proceeding from the very nature of the thing in the rule rather than some sort of incomprehensible verity. If the teacher takes such an approach to truth, the child itself "discovers" the definitions. The joy of this discovery is a great emotional impulse, which plays a big role in the development of thinking. One must not forget that Tolstoy's advice is applicable only to little children.

Solving problems from the "math book of the world around us" should not be considered as the only means of greater success in math. While it has the ability to develop thinking, nonetheless, it plays an auxiliary role and is secondary to the demands of the educational process during lessons. This means will be effective only within the general complex of methods and means of intellectual, moral, esthetic, and vocational education. I see it, figuratively speaking, as a bridge to achieving the main goal of elementary school--to give children a firm outline of simple knowledge and practical skills. In the study of mathematics, accuracy, fixed demands and goals play an especially important role. Every school year I determined what exactly the students had to know thoroughly and retain in their memories. The fundamental of mathematical knowledge, upon which the solidness

of further mathematical education depends, is knowledge of the principles of the natural numbers. I tried to reach a point where, already in the first grade, every student could quickly answer any question connected with adding and subtracting sums up to 100 without stopping to think. To reach this goal, a complex of exercises on the analysis of the composition of numbers was established. I couldn't imagine creative work in the elementary forms or in the future without a firm knowledge of the multiplication table. Remembering necessary spheres of knowledge is one of the important means of creative thinking.

It is difficult for the child with a poor memory to think or imagine. I had long been concerned about how to strengthen and develop children's memories, to enrich their understanding of truths and generalizations, which could always be used to arm their thinking. One of the means of developing the memory was the "arithmetic box". This was a visual aid with the help of which the children checked their knowledge of arithmetic. The evaluation took the form of mathematical squares they made themselves: wooden cubes formed the sides of the square, and numbers written on every cube gave the sum in equal numbers on all sides. There were special problems designed for the repetition of the multiplication table in the "arithmetic box".

The arithmetic "electrina" was an excellent means of developing and strengthening the memory. It was a device the activation of which was based on the use of an electric circuit. Every student repeated the multiplication table on this device and named the natural numbers. In the third grade we began to make our own mathematical "electrinas", and we had made four of them before the end of the fourth grade. In the process of this work, I was once again convinced how important the combination of thinking and working with one's hands is for the students' intellectual development. Children with unsteady memories strengthened them thanks to participation in making visual aids. (Of course, this gave definite results in conjunction with other means of influencing the thinking process.)

Chess occupied a big place in teaching the children to think. Shura, Galya, Seryaha, Yura, Vanya, Misha, and some of the other children had already started to play chess in the School of Joy. The little boys and girls could often be found sitting at the chessboard. Playing chess disciplined the thinking and taught concentration. But the main thing here was memory development. Observing the young chess players, I saw how the children thoughtfully recreated the situation, which had been and imagined what would be. I wanted very much for Valya, Nina, and Petrik to learn to play chess. I taught them the game, and the children thought about the next move. Chess revealed to me that Lyuba and Pavel could think mathematically. Until they learned to play chess in the third grade, I did not notice any sharpness or tenaciousness in their thinking.

Without chess it is impossible to imagine foil development of the intellectual abilities and the memory. Playing chess should enter the life of the elementary school as one of the elements of intellectual development. Here we are speaking particularly of elementary school where intellectual education occupies a special place and requires special forms and work methods.

Our "Journeys" Around the World

The elementary teacher must gradually widen the mental outlook of the child from its native fields and forests to the picture of nature and life in our homeland and all over the world.

In the first grade the children already understood quite well that the earth is an enormous ball revolving around the sun, and that at one and the same time, in some parts of the earth, it is hot summer while in others, it is the depth of winter; it is night in some places and day in others. From the second form, we began to make "journeys" around the world. The children would sit in the "green classroom", and before them would be a large globe with an artificially lit "Sun". The "Earth" revolves around the "Sun" and the "Moon" around the "Earth". "Look, children," I said, pointing to our country, "This is where we live. We live not far from the Western border, so we will take a long journey to the East, visiting the cities and towns, seeing how the people live." Then I told them

about the fields and rivers, the inhabited points which we met on our journey. My words were accompanied by the showing of pictures and filmstrips.

Evening was approaching, and the two hours of our journey had passed by without our noticing it. We had not traveled even 100 kilometers. The children waited with impatience for the continuation of the "journey".

... Again we see cities and towns, forests and rivers, construction sites and monuments of antiquity, but the journey doesn't seem repetitive. Several days of "travel" went by, and we were already drawing near the Volga. We saw the hydroelectric stations and met shepherds on the broad steppes along the Volga. Holding their breath, the children listened to the story of the great Battle of Stalingrad. Which determined the fate of humanity. If thousands and tens of thousands of heroes had not stood here to the death, had not repelled the onslaught of the cruel, strong enemy, had not broken his spine, then we would not have been sitting in a day classroom that day. Children must be led into the larger world of care and concern for the fate of humanity from an early age. Let the child feel that even now there are forces preparing to unleash a new, bloody war on the earth. Let the heroic feats of their grandfathers and great grandfathers draw the children to the certainty that the person is not a speck of dust in the whirlwind of fate, but a great force. The children entered more deeply into their native land, and a new picture opened up before them: the rich Urals with its inexhaustible mines, the secretive taiga, and the great Siberian rivers... We devoted several days to the beautiful land of stones from the Urals, "traveling" with the geologists looking for mineral treasures. Then we took a trip on a steam- ship along Lake Baikal admiring the mountains and forests, staying around a campfire for the night... Moving further, the riches of the Far East opened up before the children, and then the sea. We traveled to Sakhalin on an ocean-going steamship, and then we went to the Kuril Islands where day begins in our homeland. Our journey lasted about three months, and every day we traveled about 100 kilometers, meeting with the representatives of more than forty nationalities, getting acquainted with excellent people--grain growers, builders, miners, fishermen, and geologists. And all of them worked so that we could live well. A feeling of pride grew in the children: look how enormous, rich, and friendly our country is.

One after another, we took a few more trips around our homeland. We went to the North with its severe, beautiful tundra and mighty Arctic Ocean; we met the courageous Polar explorers, reindeer herders, and loggers. In the West, we got to know the lives of our fellow Huzuls. We admired the beauty of the mountain pastures, and in the South, we traveled through the mountains of the Caucasus and across the plains of Central Asia.

We spent a whole year en route. The word "homeland" was filled out with bright pictures in the children's minds, and a feeling of pride at the heroic work of the Soviet people was awakened in them. Using our example, "journeys" about our native land were taken up by the teachers of the other elementary classes as well. We tried to make the children understand the great victories of the Soviet people, which are incorporated into the meaning of the word "homeland".

Our "journeys" to the fraternal republics of the Soviet Union were very interesting from an educational point of view. We began with a journey along the Dnieper, a river of three fraternal peoples--Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians. Floating along the great river, we got to know the cities and villages, the heroic past and genuine fraternity of the peoples. Smolensk and Loev, Kiev and Kanev, Cherkassy and Kremenchug, Zaporahye and Kakhovka-- each of these cities reminded the children of the great fraternity of peoples sealed with the bloodshed in the struggle with the enslavers, for liberation from the exploiters, for freedom and independence in the years of the Civil and Great Patriotic wars. During our "journey" along the Dnieper, the children listened to Ukrainian, Russian, and Byelorussian songs praising the beauty and greatness of this river and the fraternity and friendship of the peoples. The feeling of profound pride in their socialist homeland was awakened in the children by the story of what had been built in our republic during the years of Soviet power.

We spent several days on journeys to places with monuments of friendship. We began in Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky where the Ukrainian people expressed its will for eternal union with the Russian people. We

mentally went through several hundred cities, the fates of which were tied to the general struggle of the Ukrainians and Russians for freedom and independence of their native lands and for the reconstruction of the industries, which had been destroyed during the Civil War and the fascist occupation.

The many days of travel through the Russian Federation made an unforgettable impression on the children. The great friendship of our peoples opened up before them that more than one hundred different nationalities live on Russian land. The children got acquainted with the lives and work of the peoples of Povolzhye, the Northern Caucasus, the Urals, Siberia, the Far East, and the Far North.

We took several journeys to Lenin's memorial places on the map of our homeland. Ulyanovsk, Kuibyshev, Kalan, Leningrad, Moscow, and Shushenskoye each of these points on the map awoke clear pictures in the children's hearts: I talked about the childhood, youth, and adult years of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the creator of the Communist Party and the Soviet state. The "journeys" through Byelorussia and Moldavia, the fraternal republics of Central Asia, the Baltic, and beyond the Caucasus opened more new pictures of the great friendship of our peoples before the children. Our imaginary "journeys" were even clearer and more interesting because our class had Russian and Byelorussian schoolchildren as pen pals.

{The Civil War in the USSR (1918-1922)--A war of the workers and working peasants in Soviet Russia against external and counter-revolutionary forces for preservation of the achievements of the Great October Socialist Revolution (1917)--Ed.}

We set out on a "journey" around the borders of our country. I wanted to show the variety and beauty of nature in different corners of the earth, to tell about everything good that exists in the lives and work of the peoples of the world, to fan interest in the culture and art of the people of the present and those of the past who speak different languages. I wanted to show the struggle between good and evil throughout the planet. Visual aids played an even bigger role in these "journeys" than they did in the "journey" through our native land: it was necessary to create an impression of far-off lands, of natural phenomena, which the children didn't see here at home.

At first we visited the countries where it's always summer. Day after day the children got acquainted with nature, the way of life, the work, and culture of the peoples of Egypt, India, Ceylon, and Indonesia. They listened to stories and watched films devoted to those countries. It was as if they had been carried off to the tall palm trees, felt the parching heat of the tropical sun and the steamy showers and observed the lives of the workers. The "journey" to the land of the pyramids, to Egypt, was exciting.

Then we set off on a "journey" to the neighboring states. We visited the Baltic countries and Scandinavia, then the countries of Central Europe and Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Japan. In such a fashion, we took journeys to Africa and South America, to Canada and the USA, to Australia and Antarctica. The children found the ways in which people work in various parts of the globe quite interesting. Wherever people live, whatever colors their skin, whatever the language they speak, they work and raise children and dream of happiness. I tried to show as clearly as possible the work and lives of our brothers-the peoples of the socialist countries-and to awake in the children a feeling of friendship toward the workers.

I told the children about the German Democratic Republic. They had a clear idea that Nazism and the German people are not the same, and that the best sons and daughters of the German working class gave their lives in the cloudy days of the Hitlerist reaction to protest against Nazism--the same enemy against which the Soviet people fought.

"Journeying" about the earth, the children saw that far from all people live happily, there are countries in the world where one person oppresses another, where poverty and hunger rule. An impression of the reasons for this evil was formed in the children's minds--an unjust social system. Gradually, the children were convinced that a

sharp, uncompromising struggle between the exploiters and exploited was going on in the world. I tried to teach my students to feel grief for those workers who were still enslaved by the exploiters and for those peoples who remained in captivity.

While there remains the exploitation of person by person in the world, one may not teach love for all of humanity, because there is no abstract humanity, but there are brothers by class-the exploited--and their irreconcilable enemies--the exploiters. It is very important that from a young age every child understands and feels in its heart what revolutionary, communist ideas are. Conducting a little excursion into the not so distant past of our homeland, telling about the struggle of its peoples for freedom and independence, showing clear examples of how the workers of the colonialist and capitalist countries defend their rights in our times, I gradually brought the children to the conclusion that precisely for these ideas people go to their deaths--in the struggle of ideas most dearly expressed in the essence of class antagonism. It is very important that people who gave their lives for lofty, noble ideas serve as ideals for our students. And on the other hand, people who submit to oppression without a murmur must call for the feelings of contempt. This is why it is necessary to reveal the world to the child first of all as life, work and the struggle of people for a happy future.

From the understanding of communist ideas, I gradually led the children to an understanding of the Communist Party. Talking about the past of our homeland, I showed the selfless struggle of the best representatives of the working class so that there would be no exploitation of one person by another in clear examples, so that the workers would live happy lives, so that wealth would belong to those who created it. In my conversations I painted colorful pictures of how Lenin and the Communist Party prepared the working class and the peasants for the overthrow of the autocracy and the establishment of Soviet power. I showed the selfless struggle of the Communists, Lenin's comrades-in-arms, and the difficult conditions under which the Great October Socialist Revolution, paving the way for the bright path to freedom and happiness for the peoples of our homeland, was carried out, showing the way to independence for millions of enslaved people in the capitalist countries.

"Journeying" about our native land, I told the children how our homeland had changed beyond recognition in the years of Soviet power, what gigantic factories had grown up in its open spaces, what miraculous kolkhozes had beautified its land, how the culture and way of life of the Soviet people had developed. I paid a lot of attention to the lives of our children in these conversations, to the happy childhood, which our whole people defend.

In contrast with the life flowering in the Soviet land was the difficult life in the capitalist countries.

"Traveling" about Japan, the children found out about thousands of people who were afflicted with radiation sickness during the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945, and about the little girl Sadako Sasaki, who was bedridden with a serious illness. The children experienced deep grief for their far-off sister. They wanted to help the little girl who was ill, but how? Several weeks after the "journey" to Japan, I read the children a short article from the newspaper about how Sadako Sasaki had set herself the goal of making a thousand paper cranes. (According to Japanese folk tradition, a person who with his or her own hands makes a thousand cranes will always be happy.) The Ukrainian people have an analogous belief: a loving mother makes silver larks of paper to bring health to her sick child. So the little boys and girls made larks and sent them to the far-off land of the rising sun... The years passed, and my students became young men and women, but they listened for any news of Sadako Sasaki's health. The sorrowful news of the death of their far-away friend entered their young hearts are a personal loss.

The world, the horizon of which constantly moves before the child, is not only seas and oceans, continents and islands, unseen plants and animals, the northern lights of the Arctic and the endless summer of the tropics: it is first of all people, their work and struggle for a happy future, the centuries old dream of humanity for happiness and justice which has been realized in the countries where the oppression of one person by another has been destroyed. Children should enter that world not as indifferent observers, knowing what is done where and being able to discuss this and that, but as people who feel concern for the fate of humanity.

In the "journeys" about our homeland and its limits one must be aware of one danger--that of "overfeeding" the children with knowledge and impressions. "Avoid any reports (especially in foreign books for schools) of unusual conclusions reached by science, for example, how much the earth or the sun weigh, what the sun consists of, what kinds of cells trees and people consist of, and what types of unusual machines people have thought up," Lev Tolstoy advises the teachers of young children. The bare results are harmful to the student and train him to believe in the given figures, as the great writer and educator explains. Decades have passed since these words were written, and the world has become unrecognizable due to the enormous successes of science, and little children have a different outlook. But Tolstoy's advice has not lost its value even today. One must not saturate stories for children with information, which will stun them.

Give the Child the Joy of Intellectual Labor, and Joy of Success in Studies

The student's intellectual labor, successes and failures in studies, are his or her spiritual life, internal world, and ignoring this might lead to unfortunate consequences. The child does not simply find out something and master material but experiences its own work, expressing a profound personal relation to success and failure.

For the small child, the teacher is a living incarnation of justice. Look into the eyes of a first former who has received a failing mark... The child does not only feel unhappy but experiences a feeling of hostility, and often of enmity to the teacher. The teacher who gives a poor mark because the student failed to understand something seems to the children to be an unjust person.

The following occurred in one school: a student simply couldn't understand how a plant feeds itself and breathes, how leaves grow from shoots, and fruit from a flower, etc. The teacher called on the little boy often and repeated every time: "If you can't even understand these simple things, what can you understand?" At one lesson he said, "In a couple of days, the chestnuts will begin to put out shoots, and our whole class will go to the chestnut alley. If Alyosha can't tell us that what everyone understands, then he's just hopeless." The teacher loved his plants very much--an alley of chestnuts grown from seeds. On the eve of the lesson he took several students to the alley to admire the buds beautifying the tops of every little tree another time. The next day when the class went to the lesson in the chestnut alley, the teacher was shocked: all the buds had been broken off the trees. The children became sad. The teacher saw malicious joy in Alyosha's eyes...

Behind this deed was the explosion of a wild burst of the child's inner strength--a deep heartfelt pain. The boy was protesting the lack of faith in his abilities. But in the practice of educational work, such things happen frequently--children receive one bad mark after another as if it's all the same to them. Sometimes the child's bad grades become a topic of laughter for its comrades, and gradually all the children get used to the fact that Vanya or Petya can't get anything but failing marks. This is the most terrible thing one can imagine for the spiritual life of the personality, which is still being formed. What can be expected of a person whose sense of self-worth has been dulled from childhood.

One of the most important educational tasks is to see that every child feels a sense of human dignity and pride in the process of mastery of knowledge. The teacher doesn't just open up the world before the student but maintains the child as an active creator in the world who feels a sense of pride at its achievements. Studying occurs within the collective, but the children take every step along the path to understanding independently. Intellectual Labor is a profoundly individual process, depending not only upon abilities, but also upon the character of the child and many other conditions, which often go unnoticed.

Children come to school with open souls, with a sincere desire to study well. They are afraid of the very-thought that they might be considered lazy or a failure. The desire to study well is a healthy desire and, it seems to me, a bright flame lighting up the whole idea of the child's life, the world of children's joy. This flame is brought weak

and defenseless to the teacher in boundless trust, and if the teacher does not notice the child's desire, it means that the teacher is not sufficiently concerned for the present and future of his or her pupils. This flame is easily put out with an uncautious touch to the child's heart--a careless word-giving rise to offense or indifference. The life-giving air for this weak flame is the thirst for knowledge, which appears only if the child succeeds at its studies, only if there is pride at the realization that it is making progress along the steep path to knowledge.

Working in vain and without results becomes hateful, stupefying, and pointless for adults, and after all, we are dealing with children here. If the child doesn't see the results of its work, the thirst for knowledge dies out and the child's heart grows cold and passionless, unable to feel excitement for anything until the flame is lit once again, and oh, how difficult it is to light the flame a second time! The child loses its faith in its own strength, "buttons its lip", figuratively speaking, and becomes guarded, bristling up and answering rudely to the advice and remarks of the teacher. Or even worse: its feeling of personal dignity is deadened, and it gets used to the thought that it cannot do anything. Anyone will be seized with anger and indignation when upon seeing such an indifferent, resigned child, ready to listen patiently for a whole hour to the exhortations of the teacher, and acutely unmoved by the words of its comrades: you're falling behind and will have to repeat the class next year... What could be more immoral than to keep a person from feeling his or her sense of self-worth!

The way the student relates to himself during the years of childhood and adolescence, how he sees himself in the world of work, determines his moral outlook to a large extent. Ushinsky wrote that the child does not, by nature, possess spiritual laziness; it loves independent activity and wants to do everything itself. Children must be taught to work, to think, to observe, to understand what intellectual labor is, and what it means to work well-- and only then can one give marks for success. The child who has never felt the joy of labor in studying, who has not experienced pride in overcoming difficulties is an unhappy person. An unhappy person is a great misfortune for our society, and an unhappy child all the more so. I am far from being a romanticizer of childhood, but I cannot rest for the thought that already in the years of childhood, people frequently become lazy and hate to work, even feeling contempt for the thought that they work to the best of their abilities. But why does a child become such a slacker. Because, my dear fellow teachers, it does not know the joy of labor. Give it this happiness, teach it to value this joy, and it will value its own honor and will love to work.

To give children the joy of labor and success in studying, to awaken in their hearts a feeling of pride and personal dignity is the first commandment of education. In our schools there should be no unhappy children-children whose souls are gnawed by the thought that they have no abilities. Success in studying is the only source of inner strength of the child, a source which gives rise to the energy for overcoming difficulties and to the desire to study.

All of our plans, searches, and constructions are turned into dust, into a lifeless mummy, if the child has no desire to study. This desire comes only with success in studies. This seems paradoxical: for the child to succeed, it must not fall behind. This is not a paradox, but rather the dialectical unity of the process of intellectual labor. Interest in studies appears only when there is inspiration born of success in the mastery of knowledge. Without inspiration, studying is transformed into a burden for children. The assiduity I would call inspiration multiplied by the certainty of the child that it will succeed.

Such a simple affair, at first glance, as the marks a child receives for its knowledge is a sign of the ability of the teacher to find the proper path to every child, the ability to cherish the flame of the thirst for knowledge in its soul. In the four years the children studied in the elementary grades, I never gave any failing marks either for written work or for oral answers. The children learned to read, write, and do arithmetic. One child had already achieved positive results in its intellectual labor, and another had none as yet. One already understood what I wanted to teach it; another didn't understand it, but that was no indication that it lacked the desire to learn. I only gave marks for intellectual labor after it brought the child positive results. If the child had not yet achieved those results for which it was striving in its work, I didn't give it any sort of mark at all. The child had to think, to collect its thoughts, and re-do its work.

In the first grade I gave the first marks four months after the beginning of the school year. Here, first of all, it was important that the child understood what assiduous, diligent work was. The child does its work poorly not because it wants to, but because it has no way of distinguishing good and bad work--why should it receive a mark for this? I tried to have the child do the same task several times so that it would be convinced from personal experience that it could do the work much better than it had the first time. This has great educational significance: the student uncovers his or her creative strength in such a fashion. He or she rejoices at seeing personal success and tries to work even better. The child experiences a feeling of inspiration when comparing its last work with that which has mistakes.

Observing the work of the first grade, I saw that the children did not think identically and valued their work differently. For example, they wrote the word wasp. Lida, Seryozha, Katya, Sanya, and Pavel's letters were beautiful and even. Yura's went outside of the lines and were crooked. Kolya and Tolya didn't write - they drew the letters as they had in the picture books in which they set down their first compositions on nature. There were some sort of hooks in Petrik's notebook. I didn't go on to the next exercise. The children wrote the same word several times. Every repetition of the same thing became a new step for the child to climb, both for those who wrote poorly and for those who did well. The child is glad, happy that it does better than at the beginning.

A feeling of pride and self-worth comes from that joy. The child who has this feeling many times does not seek the easy way out and does not copy someone else's work. Only when the children learned to re-do their work and experience a feeling of joy in connection with this did I begin to give them marks--of course only for positive results. Some children began four months, and others six months, after the beginning of lessons in school. Petrik and Misha received their first marks only at the beginning of the second school year. I did extra work with them until they made some improvements each day and did not lose faith in their own strength. Studying is not a mechanical transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the child, but is first of all human relations. The attitude of the child to knowledge and to studying depends to a large measure upon how it relates to its teacher. If the student feels injustice, he or she is shocked. And small children always think that failing marks are unjust and suffer from them, because it never happens that the child did not want to learn. It wants to learn but cannot; it does not yet have the ability to concentrate, to make itself work.

If children experience injustice day after day throughout the course of the year, their nervous systems are stimulated at first, but then inhibition sets in depression, weakness, and apathy. These sharp leaps between excitation and inhibition lead to the point when the child falls ill. These strange, at first glance, illnesses are school-related neuroses or poor reactions to didacticism. The paradoxical nature of this reaction to didacticism is that it occurs only at school--in this sacred place where humanity should become one of the most important features determining the interrelations between pupil and teacher. This reaction to didacticism results from the feeling of injustice. Unjust relations of parents or teachers to children have many nuances, the first of which is indifference. Nothing is more dangerous for the formation of moral and volitional strength in the child than the indifference of the teacher to its progress. Then come shouting, threats, and irritation, and in people who are not genuine educators, even malicious joy at the fact that the child does not know something, pleasure in giving a failing mark so that the parents would "know what kind of child they had"...

I studied school-related neuroses over a period of several years. Children's nervous systems react in various ways to injustice on the part of the teacher: they react with hyperactivity, persecution complexes, bitterness, affected or unnatural carelessness, apathy or deep depression, fear of punishment by their teachers and families, clowning around and cutting up, or cruelty which has pathological manifestations (this is very rare, but cannot be ignored). The prevention of didacticism depends upon the educational skills of the parents and the teacher. The most important facet of educational skill should be feeling the spiritual world of each child, the ability to give each one as much attention and spiritual strength as is necessary for it to feel that it has not been forgotten, that its grief, offenses, and sufferings are shared.

The biggest injustice the teacher can commit from the child's point of view is to give it a failing mark unfairly and to have the parents punish the child for it. If the child sees that the teacher insists upon informing the parents of the poor mark, it becomes embittered against the teacher and against school. Intellectual labor becomes a hated task for it. This coarsening of feelings is transferred to its relations with other people, first of all, with its parents.

It is difficult to imagine something more disfiguring to the soul of the child than this emotional thick-skinnedness to which injustice gives birth. The child loses its sensitivity to good and evil in this feeling of indifference. It cannot understand that there are good and evil people around it. Suspiciousness and distrust of people settles in its heart, and this is the main source of bitterness.

Among educators these days one frequently hears discussions about encouragement and punishment. These tempting theories are born and die like one-day moths... And among them, the most important encouragement and the strongest (but not always active) punishment in educational work is the mark. This is the sharpest instrument, the use of which demands enormous skill and ability.

In order to use this instrument properly, first of all one must like the child. Don't tell it that you like it, but express your love in your concern for it. "If the teacher can only love his work, he will be a good teacher. If the teacher has only love for his students, as a father or mother, he will be better than that teacher who has read all the books but doesn't love his work or the students. "He will be a perfect teacher," wrote Tolstoy.

Sensitivity is a quality, which is impossible to achieve only through studying. The foundation of human sensitivity in the educator lies in the organic unity of general intellectual, moral, esthetic, and emotional development, and this unity is the result of both a high educational level and societal experience in the moral relationships within the collective. The teacher must know and feel that the fate of every child is on his conscience, that the reason, health, and happiness of the person he educates at school depends upon his spiritual and intellectual richness.

...A grammar lesson in the second grade. After the study of the rules and analysis of the exercises, the children did independent work, the goal of which was to deepen and check their knowledge. Marks will be given for the work. When checking the work I see that Misha and Petrik have done the assignment poorly. If I were to give them a failing mark, children who want to learn with all their hearts would perceive it as a sentence: "Your comrades made a step forward, but you did not." I corrected the mistakes, giving examples of good penmanship, but did not give Misha a Petrik any mark at all. Upon handing back the notebooks, I tell the children: "Misha and Petrik did not earn a mark. You must work well, children. Do another exercise on your own, and try to earn a mark."

The children were already accustomed to the fact that they did not get marks for unsatisfactory work. The conviction that a completed assignment did not necessarily mean a step forward upon which "sentence" was decisively passed by the teacher was gradually formed in their minds. The road to success was not closed before the child: whatever it couldn't do yet, it would do in the future, may be even today or tomorrow. Misha and Petrik did not experience that feeling of doom, which the child that has received a failing mark, does, the feeling that it has been left one step behind its comrades. Here at lessons the boys ask: "Give us an exercise, please." So I give them one. In the course of the school day, they find time to do it (our school day is regulated so that daily every student has a half hour to do that work which seems most necessary to him or her). The little boys tried their best to earn a mark, to show that they were not worse than the rest. I checked their work, and it, as was almost always the case in such instances, deserved a good mark.

Cautiously using marks as a stimulus in those cases in which the assignment demands creative intellectual strength, reasoning, and research is especially important in awakening the urge to work. In one student, the thinking process flows quickly and decisively; in another, slowly; but that does not mean that one child is

smarter than another or works more. Arithmetic lessons in elementary school, problem solving is the touchstone of the first precepts of education: to give the children the joy of success at intellectual labor, to awake in them the feeling of pride and self-worth. One must make sure that the first difficulties do not became a stumbling block for the child. I did not give marks for problem solving until the children had learned to think independently, to reason out the conditions of a problem, to find the path to its solution-in other words, to experience the joy of succeeding at that task. Here a routine approach is inadmissible: one child might receive three marks in arithmetic in a month, and another, not a single one. But that did not mean that the latter did nothing and made no progress. It learned to understand the problem, and the first comparatively complex arithmetic problem, which the student solves independently, is an important step in the development of the child.

I watched students who didn't succeed in mathematics attentively for many years, and I am convinced that those who fall behind in elementary and secondary school never solve one problem independently. They flow with the current, putting their feet down where their comrades have already stood: they copy the problems that have been worked on the board or from their neighbors, but essentially have no understanding of how to solve a problem for themselves.

It is impossible to remove this difficulty by searching for some sort of method of improving didactic mastery. Intellectual labor in math lessons is the touchstone of thinking. The reason for the problem lies in that the child has not learned to think; the surrounding world with its things, phenomena, dependencies, and interrelationships has not become the source of thought for it. Experience shows that there will not be even one student who fails in mathematics if, from early childhood, "journeys" into nature have become a genuine school of intellectual labor. Things must teach the child to think: this is an exceptionally important condition to insure that all normal children will be intelligent, bright, inquisitive, and curious. I advised the teachers that if the student didn't understand something, if his or her thoughts were floundering helplessly like a fish out of water, they should take a good look at their own work. Had their students' minds become like a little lake drying up, cut off from the great, life-giving source of thought--the world of things, the phenomena of nature? Connect this little lake to the ocean of nature, things, and the surrounding world, and then see how the spring of living thoughts begins to spout forth.

But it would be a mistake to think that the surrounding world itself teaches the child to think. Without theoretical thinking, things remain hidden from the children's eyes behind an impenetrable wall. Nature becomes a school for intellectual labor only if the child abstracts from the environment surrounding it. It is essential for the child to assimilate clear images of reality and to recognize interaction as an important feature of the surrounding world. Emphasizing the correctness of Hegel's thought that interaction is the *causa finalis* of all existence, Engel's wrote, "We cannot go back further than to knowledge of this reciprocal action, for the every reason that there is nothing behind to know." The cognition of interaction as a direct preparation for abstract thinking is an important condition for the development of mathematical thinking. Successful problem solving depends on whether or not the children see the interaction between things and phenomena.

Independent intellectual labor in the process of problem solving also bears fruit when those generalizations without which thinking is pointless (the multiplication table or the row of natural numbers), are stored permanently and firmly in the child's memory.

Petrik could not remember the conditions of an arithmetic problem for very long. I didn't rush the explanation. The main thing was for the little boy to understand the essence of the interdependency between things and phenomena by personal mental effort. But-living thought will not spring forth if the child is not prepared to think theoretically, if it cannot compare and analyze. I led the children to nature, taught them to observe again and again, to compare things, qualities, and phenomena--taught them to see interactions. I directed Petrik's attention to those phenomena of the surrounding world which formed impressions of multiplication in the child's consciousness, of number as one of the most important qualities of things in general. I reached a point when the child understood numerical dependency, where he became convinced that they were not just thought up by

someone but really existed. Here it is very important not that the student immediately learned to do calculations, to operate with figures, but that he thought through the very essence of dependency.

We were sitting in the hut in the melon-field and observing how the combines gathered the wheat. From time to time, a lorry filled with grain left the combine. How many minutes did it take for the bunker of the combine to fill up? The children looked at their watches with interest and saw that it took seventeen minutes. How did people figure their work so that the combine didn't have to stop? Five, then four, then three minutes remained until the bunker would be full--the children were alarmed: all the same, the combine would probably have to stop. When only two minutes were left, the truck appeared from out of the forest. But it took a full hour to get to the grain storage point. That meant that people calculated the dependency between the distances and the times. They assigned as many trucks to taking the grain away as were needed for the combine to work without stopping. But if it took two hours instead of one to get to the grain storage point would they need more trucks or fewer to carry the grain?

"More, of course," said Petrik, and his eyes gleamed with joy. "Now there are three trucks working all the time. One is being loaded, and one is being unloaded. If the road were longer, they would need more trucks en route."

The child was exercising its mental strength, and I could see that it had already begun to think about how many trucks would be needed if the road were twice as long. But that wasn't the main thing at the time. The main thing was that he understood that problems aren't the figments of someone's imagination. Problems exist in the world around us because motion, life, and human labor exist.

Petrik was already in the third grade, but so far had had no success at problem solving. He still hadn't solved even one problem independently, without help from his comrades or the teacher and that worried me. But all the same, I was sure that the boy was starting to think. I prepared him for abstraction not only through thoughtful analysis of phenomena, which lay at the base of arithmetic problems. If the thinker can't count, he cannot master knowledge. It was very important that Petrik gradually strengthened his memory of elementary things without which thinking is impossible. The boy sat by the "arithmetic box" and practiced, checking himself. I tried to get him to understand the conditions of the problem rather than worrying about how much 12-8, 19+13, or 41-19 were. (If a third former thinks about these things, he will not be able to solve the problem).

Life convinced me that students are frequently weak in algebra only because they have not thought through the natural row of numbers to the point where thinking further about elementary things is not necessary, and all their strength can be directed toward abstract thinking. Just as reading cannot become a semi-automatic process if the child has not read the syllables the words consist of thousand times, thus abstract mathematical reasoning remains a chest closed with seven seals if it cannot remember dozens and hundreds of examples which people do not think about in every day practice because they always remember the answers to these examples. I tried to get the slow learners, first of all Petrik, to master ever greater numbers of the simpler tools of mathematical thinking--problems in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

We went into nature, and I directed the boy's attention toward a multitude of problems, which people solve in the process of working. Finally the day came when I was firmly convinced that Petrik solved a problem on his own. The little boy's eyes lit up. He began to explain what the problem was about: his explanation was confused, but I could see that at last something had opened up before the boy who earlier had been covered by fog. Petrik was glad. I also sighed with relief--at long last. The boy could not wait for school to end so he could run home to tell his mother. His mother wasn't home, but he joyfully told his grandfather, "I solved a problem all by myself". Petrik was proud of his success, and pure moral pride is the spring of human achievement. Without pride in one's work, one is not a real person.

This case was food for thought for our educational collective. We looked at those children who had difficulty studying in new light. Never jump to the categorical conclusion that a child just can't understand anything, and it

just has to live with this fact. For two or three years may be it won't understand, but then as time passes, it will begin to learn. Thought is like a flower that gradually accumulates vital juices. If we give the roots these juices and put the flower in the sun, it will bloom. We will teach the child to think, opening the source of thought-the surrounding world before it. We will give it a great human joy--the joy of cognition.

The elementary school teachers gathered many evenings specially to think about these difficult, serious educational problems: how should one lead the student from the concrete counting of objects and things, from the obvious, tangible interdependencies between phenomena to abstract generalization-to rules and formulae. We told about interesting facts to the point that not all children make this transformation smoothly and painlessly. There are students who handle the techniques of calculation well--they can calculate quickly-but they understand the conditions of the problem only with difficulty. For some children who think in clear, tactile, concrete categories, getting away from the concrete figures of the given problem presents definite difficulties. For example, some children read through the problem and try to come up with an answer at once: they begin calculating without understanding the reason for their calculations.

We have all met with such children. We consulted with each other as to how to get them to transfer from concrete to abstract thinking. We came to the conclusion that they must do a whole stage of problem solving, reasoning through the conditions of the problem without using any numbers or arithmetical operations. We began to conduct open lessons in arithmetic with a special aim: to show how children reason through a problem and solve it without figures. Visiting each other's lessons, we searched for paths to intellectual development for certain children who were having problems.

One must not allow marks to be transformed into fetters binding the thoughts of the child. I always gave the very weakest students, those who seemed hopelessly slow-witted for the time being, the opportunity to think about what they didn't understand for the time being. The children never lost their interest in studying. In awakening a feeling of pride, honor, and self-worth, I found that the children wanted to work independently.

Let the child think... This is not as easy as it seems at first. Look carefully at the intellectual labor of students in the first through fourth grades and you will see that in the overwhelming majority of cases (it almost always happens), the child did not answer your question (or did not complete the assignment) simply because it did not have time to think or concentrate (and sometimes it happens that the question takes the child unawares and stuns it). Our elementary teachers met specially to discuss how to give the child time to think. We came to the conclusion that one must never rush to decide whether the child knows the answer or not. It often happens that the teacher tells the child, "Sit down; you don't know the answer!" just as the solution flashes into its mind. It appears that it does know the answer, and the child takes offense at the teacher's action. Why does this happen? We could not find an answer to this question at once. We had to observe many times over and study a multitude of facts.

A child who has attained the goal by concentration of will and thought feels an aversion to prompting - a cheating. An atmosphere of mutual trust and goodwill always existed between the children and me. My students were never afraid to tell me that they couldn't understand something no matter how hard they tried or that they hadn't finished an assignment. The students brought all their joys and grief's to me. I was never a bearer of grief for the children, and a failing mark is a great grief for them. The child's soul is perverted when the teacher says almost every day, "Look, you failed again." The child doesn't need much grief to feel unhappy. The tragedy is doubled when the little person gets accustomed to its grief and becomes indifferent to everything around it; its heart becomes calloused. And a callous heart is fertile ground for cruelty. If there are unhappy children in the class and their comrades don't try to cure them, the collective will never be a good, friendly, good-willed one.

One must never allow the student to be spoiled by good marks, as frequently happens in school. If the child says a word, it is already given the highest mark. It often happens that one and the same question is asked of several students and each one receives a mark for their answer. As a result, children cease to take studying seriously.

The child must always earn a grade as the result of intellectual effort. The child must be convinced that intellectual activity is work, which demands a great deal of strength, concentration of will, and the ability to make oneself reject many pleasures, precisely in an atmosphere of work strength of will and persistence are formed. The child who has learned to relate critically to the results achieved and experiences failure with its work will try to work harder and better and will never become lazy.

Knowing how to succeed in intellectual labor from personal experience, the children are trained in self-control. The habit of working hard and achieving the best results teaches children to feel intolerance for carelessly completed assignments, idleness, and negligence.

When the joy of work and success in their studies become the main stimulus for studying, there will be no lazy children in the class. Genuine masters of the art of education rarely struggle with separate cases of laziness in students, but rather treat laziness as a consequence of somnolence of mind.

The system, at the foundation of which lay marks only for the positive results of intellectual labor, gradually took root through the whole school, even with teachers of the middle and upper grades. The reader might want to ask what if at the end of a quarter or of a school year, a pupil still had no mark in some subject or other? The fact is that the absence of a mark for a child cannot be compared with the great misfortune of having received a failing mark. The students simply became convinced that if they did not have a mark yet, they had not worked, as they should have. Therefore, it almost never happened that a student didn't have a mark by the end of the school year. In four years, there were only six times when I didn't give a mark at the end of the quarter. The parents knew that if their son or daughter didn't have a mark that meant all was not well. They knew, too, that the absence of a mark was not the child's fault, but its bad luck. And in such cases, one must lend a helping hand, so we all helped the student together. I convinced the parents that they should never demand the highest marks of their children, or look upon failing mark as a sign of laziness, negligence, or insufficient diligence.

Some teachers handle marks--a delicate educational instrument-thoughtlessly. In many schools, an average mark was regarded with reprehension. "We will study without any average marks!"--These appeals are heard not only at Young Pioneer meetings. One can read them in the children's newspapers as well. In encouraging such an attitude to satisfactory work in students, the teacher is essentially cutting off his nose to spite his face: he is teaching the children to be superficial and unserious.

Several weeks after the beginning of the second grade, the children made booklets for themselves in which the grades they received at lessons were to be written. There was not a single case of a child trying to hide a mark from its parents. It cannot be otherwise if the grade reflects the joy of success. It is not necessary for the teachers to require signatures in the workbooks--that is a remnant of the old days when the atmosphere in the school was one of mutual distrust and suspiciousness between teacher and students. If there is no mutual trust in the class, if the child tries to lie to the teacher, if marks are turned into a whip with which the adult lashes out at the child, the very foundation of correct education is destroyed.

With the unjust giving of failing marks begins one of the greatest evils of school-injustice in the child and lying to teachers and parents. Children only resort to such tricks to conceal their failures at school from their parents and their negligence from their teachers. The less the student is trusted, the more it resorts to the invention of lies, and the more favorable the soil for laziness and negligence. Laziness is the child of mistrust. My pupils are first of all living people, children, and then students. The marks I give them are not only measures of their knowledge, but first of all, my relations to them as people.

I advised all the teachers to treasure the fire of inquisitiveness and curiosity in the child, its thirst for knowledge. The only source, which can feed this flame, is the joy of success in labor, the feeling of pride in the laborer. I told them to reward every success, every overcoming of difficulties with the mark deserved, but not to abuse marks, not to forget that the soil upon which our educational skill is building is the child itself, and its attitude to

knowledge and to the teacher. This is the desire to learn, inspiration, and readiness to overcome difficulties. This soil must be enriched carefully, for without it, there is no school.

The Room of Fairy Tales

Fairy tales, games, and fantasy are the life-giving sources of children's thinking of kind feelings, and intentions. Many years of experience show that esthetic, moral, and intellectual feelings are born in the soul of the child under the influence of fairy-tale images which activate the flow of thought and awake the brain, connecting the trains of thought between the living islands of thinking. Through fairy-tale images in the children's minds the delicate nuances of words are brought out; they become a sphere of the spiritual life of the child, a means of expressing thoughts and feelings, a reality of thinking. Under the influence of feelings awakened by fairy-tale images, the child learns to think in words. Without fairy tales, clear and living, which capture the minds and feelings of the child, it is impossible to imagine children's thinking and speech as a definite stage in human thinking and speech.

Children derive great pleasure from the fact that their thoughts live in the world of fairy-tale images. The child can listen to one and the same fairy tale dozens of times and find something new in it each time. The first step from the clear, living, and concrete to the abstract is located in the images of fairy tales. My students would not have been able to think abstractly if there had not been a whole period of fairy tales in their spiritual lives. The child understands quite well that there is no Baba-Yaga the witch, Frog Prince, or Deathless Dragon in the world, but it embodies its notions of good and evil in these images, and every time it tells one and the same story, its personal attitudes to good and evil are expressed.

Fairy tales are inseparable from beauty and aid the development of esthetic feelings without which nobility of soul and sensitivity to human unhappiness, grief and suffering are unthinkable. Thanks to fairy tales, the child comes to know the world not only with its mind but with its heart. Not only does it know, but it responds to events and phenomena in the world around it, expressing its attitude to good and evil. In fairy tales, the first impressions of justice and injustice are drawn. The first step in ideological education also occurs with the aid of fairy tales. The children understand an idea only when it is incarnated in clear images.

The fairy tale is a beneficial and irreplaceable source of teaching love of one's homeland. The patriotic ideas in fairy tales lie deep in their composition; the fairy-tale images created by the people which have lived for thousands of years bring the mighty creative spirit of the working people, their attitude toward life, ideals, and aspirations, to the heart and mind of the child. The fairy tale teaches love for one's native land because it is the creation of the people. When we look at the wonderful frescoes of St. Sophia's in Kiev, we perceive them as a part of the life of the people, created by their great talent, and a feeling of pride at their creative spirit, thought, and skill is awakened in our souls. Folk tales have an analogous influence on the soul of the child. It seems that folk tales are constructed with simple "everyday" plots: grandfather and grandmother planted a turnip; grandfather decided to deceive the wolf and made a straw bull; but every word of these tales is like the delicate brush strokes of these eternal frescoes-the creative strength of the spirit of the people plays through every word and image. Fairy tales are one of the spiritual riches of folk culture, the understanding of which gives the child an understanding of its native people.

Three months after the beginning of the School of Joy, we made a room of Fairy Tales. The older children helped us create an atmosphere in which the children felt as if they were in the world of fairy-tale images. We had to work a great deal so that everything around us cast the children into the spell of the tales their mothers had told them in early childhood--the mood of evening twilights and the gay flame in the stove in one corner lived wicked Baba-Yaga in a magic hut on chicken legs surrounded by tall trees and stumps. Next to the hut were the likenesses of fairy-tale figures: the Clever Fox, the Gray Wolf, and the Wise Owl. In a different corner was grandmother and grandfather's hut with Geese-Swans flying across the sky with a little boy on their wings Ivasik -Telesik the hero of a Ukrainian folk tale. In the third corner was the blue sea-ocean on the shore of which was

the ramshackle hut of the good old man and the wicked old woman. There was an old trough by the door, and the old man and woman were sitting on the mound of dirt around the edge of the house. The golden fish was swimming in the sea. In the fourth corner was the winter forest with snowdrifts, breaking through the middle of which was a little girl covered with snow--her step- mother had sent her into the frozen winter forest for berries... A kid was looking from one of the windows of the hut. And there was the big mitten in which the little mouse lived; she was going to have unexpected company. There was a big stump made of veneer with dolls on it--a little girl, a gray rabbit, sister fox, a bear, a wolf, a kid, a bull made of straw, and Little Red Riding Hood.

We made all of this ourselves over a period of time. I cut, drew, and glued, and the children helped me. I attached importance to the esthetic character of the surroundings in which the children would listen to fairy tales. Every picture, every visual image sharpened receptivity to the artistic word and revealed the idea of the fairy tale more deeply. Even the lighting in the room played a big role. When I told the tale of the Frog Prince, little lamp lit up in the forest thicket, and a green mist fell over the room, vividly recreating the situation in which the story occurred.

I didn't take the children to the Room of Fairy Tales very often--once a week, and then every two weeks. Esthetic demands should never be fulfilled to satiety. Snobbism begins where there is satiety-- petty-bourgeois disappointment, boredom, and the search for ways to "kill time"... We went them in the fall and winter twilight-at this time, fairy tales ring out in a unique way for children and sound quite different than they do on clear sunny days. It grew dark in the courtyard, and we left the light off, sitting in the gleaming. Suddenly the lights in the fairy-tale hut blinked on, and there were stars in the sky. The moon rose over the trees in the forest. A dim light lighted the room, and it was darker in the corners. I told the children a folk tale about Baba-Yaga with the leg of bone. It would seem that there was nothing new for the children in my words, but their eyes glowed with admiration. The children suffered at the fate of the heroes, hating evil and avidly feeling for the good. The figure of the wicked woman and trusting Alyonka, the kind goose-swan came alive in the imagination of the children; they came to life imbued with reason and feelings. For small children, fairy tales are not simply stories of fantastic events; they are entire worlds in which the child lives, struggles, and opposes evil with its own goodwill. The words of a fairy tale are a real form of expression of the spiritual strength of the child, as games express motion, and music expresses melody. The child doesn't just want to listen to fairy tales, but to tell them itself, just as it wishes to sing songs as well as listen to them, to play games as well as watch them.

Several days passed, and the children asked, "When are we going back to the fairy-tale room?" The expectation of joyful moments excited the children, and we once again gathered there in the evening twilight. Once more I told a story, and after that the children retold it. At these moments the most bashful children became brave and decisive. Speech, which was confused and incoherent in other conditions, was smooth, melodious, and expressive here. Nina, Petrik, Lyuda, Slava, and Valya, children who met with difficulty in speech and thought development, all told stories.

Every time we came to the fairy-tale room, the children wanted to play. Everyone, boys and girls alike, had a favorite toy or doll. Games take on the form of creativity: the child becomes the hero of a fairy tale and the doll in its hands helps the child express its thoughts and feelings more clearly. One child took the straw bull (the hero of a well-known Ukrainian children's story) to play with, and another, the grandmother doll, while a third took the grandfather doll. And thus the children already lived in the world of fantasy. They did not simply repeat the words of the characters but created, introducing the play of their own imaginations into the fairy tale. One child put its doll on the tiny divan and spoke loving, caressing words to it in a melodious voice. The dolly fell ill, and another little girl was taking care of her, trying to make the doll well.

I was not troubled by the fact that the boys and girls played with dolls for several years. This is not some sort of "childishness", as some teachers are inclined to think, but the same stories, the same imbuing of things with living souls that runs through the creative process of listening to and making up fairy tales. The fantastic image of that which the children are attempting to tame, in the words of French writer Antoine Saint-Exupery (1900-

1944), exists in dolls. Every child wants something very dear, something of its own. I attentively observed the relations, which developed between the children and their favorite dolls. I was glad that the boys made friends with dolls over a long period of time. There was nothing outstanding about Kostya's doll--an old fisherman with a pole. The doll's leg broke several times, and in the end, Kostya made a wooden leg for it, as well as a knotted walking stick with which the fisherman could set out for the river. The little boy loved to talk with his old friend: he told him where carp and bream could be found... Larisa's favorite dolls were the grandmother and her granddaughter. The little girl made spectacles for the grandmother, put a warm blanket under her feet, and put a shawl around her shoulders. Valya also had two dolls, a kitten and a mouse. Every week she changed the little bow on the kitten's neck, and brought a green blanket for the mouse for some reason or other. ..

The children's fantasies in the Room of Fairy Tales were inexhaustible. The child would stand up to look at a new object which it immediately began reason to connect with other objects in its mind, and a new fantastic impression would be born. The child's imagination played; its thoughts trembled; its eyes lit up, and its speech flowed along in a smooth stream. Taking that into account, I tried to see that the elements of the different corners of the room were filled with extremely varied objects, between which some kind of real or fantastic links could exist. I was anxious for the children to fantasize, create, and make up new stories. Next to a heron standing on one leg was a small, frightened kitten, from which the child's imagination could create several interesting stories, the heroes of which were the Heron and the Kitten. Then there was a small boat with an oar and a frog next to it, all of which begged to be put into a story. The cave with a bear cub looking out with enormous flies and mosquitoes (in a fairy tale this is permissible), a little piglet and a washstand with soap all of this does not simply make the children smile but awakes their imaginations.

If I managed through all of this to get the child itself, in the development of thinking, in which one meets with serious difficulties, to think up a story connected with several objects of the surrounding world, then I could say with certainty that the child had learned to think. I have already related the difficulty with which Valya's thoughts were awakened and her memory strengthened: one of the means of awaking her thoughts was the feeling of amazement before the unexpected links which were revealed between objects and phenomena in the surrounding world. Stories were another no less important means, For a long time, Valya could not make up any stories, and that disturbed me. Only in the third grade did she finally make up a story of a frog, a boat, and a fish. Here is what she made up: "A Frog saw a Boat by the river bank. Grandfather-Fisherman had left the Boat and gone to the village for bread. The Frog wanted to go for a ride. He came out of the puddle and jumped over to the Boat. He took hold of the oar, and then a Fish swam up to him and said: "What have you thought up? You only swim in puddles, but boats love deep water." The Frog didn't take the Fish's advice and set off for his own little puddle. The Frog swam up and the Boat said: "Froggie, Froggie, where are you pulling me off to?" The Frog answered: "To my own little puddle so that all of my relations can see how I row." The Boat smiled and thought: "When Grandfather comes back he'll teach you how to row.' The Frog could hardly get the Boat to the puddle. It got stuck in the mud and wouldn't go any farther. The Frog groaned and groaned, but the Boat wouldn't move. And all of the other frogs came from the puddle and looked at him. The Frog cried out to the whole puddle-full: "See how well I can row the Boat!" The Frog was embarrassed and jumped in the puddle and clumps of mud flew everywhere. And the whole family of frogs started to laugh, "Ho ho, he!' Then Grandfather-Fisherman came and pulled the Boat out of the puddle. The Frog was frightened and hid himself in some green slime. In the evening he grew brave and crawled out--how they laughed! Ever since then they laugh every night, from evening till morning they can be heard croaking. They are laughing at the boastful Frog."

Making up stories is one of the most interesting types of poetic creativity for children. Along with this, it is an important means of mental development. If you want children to create, to make up artistic images, you must transfer even one little spark from the flame of your own creativity to the child's mind. If you cannot create yourself, or are condescending to the world of the children's interests, if it seems an empty pastime to you, you won't get anywhere.

Tina had her favorite doll in the Room of Fairy Tales-the figure of a metalworker whose face glowed from the smelting of metal. She remembered the meeting with the metalworkers in the foundry, and now, three years later, she made up an interesting story about the Fiery River:

"A warrior stood over an enormous stove. He was smelting iron. The iron bubbled and boiled. The warrior came up to the stove and opened the door--the Fiery River poured out. It flowed and said: 'Look sharp, people, take the fiery iron and make what you need from it.' A wise master came to the Fiery River and ladled out the smelted iron, poured it into sand, and made everything the people needed from it."

In the minds of children arise images of contemporary warriors--the defenders of the Soviet Homeland. The war against the Nazis, the heroic victory of the Soviet people left indelible marks in the memory and the whole spiritual life of our people. The heroes defending their homeland became fairy-tale heroes in the imaginations of the children; they composed dear, exciting stories about them. The main idea of all the stories the children made up about the warriors of our people was the courage, invincibility, and nobility of the Soviet person. Here is Danko's story:

"A mother saw her son off to the army. She said, "Take a handful of your native earth with you. Remember that you are its defender. The son took a handful of earth, poured it into a red silk bag, and never parted with it. The enemy began a war against our homeland. The son met with enemy soldiers at the border, shot at them from a machine gun, and they fell into the river. The son did not retreat even one step. An enemy bullet wounded him in the head, and blood poured into his eyes. His hands weakened. The enemy drew close and thought: we will take him captive. The son remembered the clump of his native earth. He touched the red bag and at once a mighty strength flowed into his hands. The young warrior began shooting again, and the enemy drowned in the river, then at that moment help arrived-swift-winged airplanes and mighty tanks."

I wrote down the stories the children made up at twilight. These stories are dear to me as the clear flames of thought I managed to light up in the children. Without creativity, without making up Stories, the speech of many children would be confused and muddled and their thinking chaotic. I am convinced that there are direct links between esthetic feelings and the richness of children's speech. Esthetic feeling gives emotional coloring to the word. The more interesting the story and unusual the situation in which the children find themselves, the stronger the play of the child's imagination, the more unexpected the images they create. In the twilight hours my students made up dozens of stories, which we put into a manuscript called, "Twilight Stories".

In "Twilight Stories", there are interesting tales of animals and birds, trees and flowers. Making up stories of flowers was an especially joyful event for both the children and me. I told the boys and girls about the emotional life of the person, of the incarnation of the feelings in songs and legends about flowers. I gave them the beginning of a story, and the children's fantasy created lively images. The first telling of a new story was a big event in the children's lives. I will never forget the excitement with which we created the stage for Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen". It was in the second year of school. The early winter twilight had fallen, and the children came to the Room of Fairy Tales. The situation in which the action occurs is in little houses with sharp roofs, a fairy-tale castle on a high rock, a swift-footed deer, and snowdrifts. The children made all this with their own hands, but not all of them had heard the story. The little lights went on in the windows of the tiny houses, and snowflakes were falling from the sky. The evening semi-darkness surrounded us. The children held their breath listening to me. The story ended, but the children asked me to tell it again. This fascination with words was very dear to me. I repeated the story as many times as the children asked. And they asked me to tell the story of the Snow Queen again and again not because they had to remember the words, but because the words were like music to their ears.

The teacher is always thinking how to give the children a deep knowledge of their native language so their native words will enter their spiritual lives and become sharp chisels and colorful palettes and an exact means of understanding truth. Language is the material expression of thought, and the child will know it only when, along

with thinking, it perceives dear emotional colorings the living trembling of the music of its native language. Without the experience of the beauty of words, the child's mind cannot comprehend the outer edges of their meanings. And the experience of beauty is undrinkable without fantasy, without personal participation in creativity the name of which is "fairy tale". Stories are active esthetic creativity exciting all the spheres of the spiritual life of the child-- its mind, feelings, imagination, and will. It begins already with the telling, but acting out a story is an even higher stage.

A puppet theater and dramatics club was born in the Room of Fairy Tales. There the children first staged the Ukrainian folk tale about Rukavichka (little mitten) in which brave animals made their homes. Then they staged the Frog Prince with great interest, and the Japanese folk tale of the Little Hump-Backed Sparrow as well. In the fourth year of school, they collectively put on the Dragonfly Musician, playing all the roles.

In the Room of Fairy Tales I first read the children the story of Robinson Crusoe, the "Adventures of Baron Munchhausen", "Gulliver's Travels", "The Tale of the Tsar Sultan", and the story of "Yanko the Musician". The children never forgot the fascination of those winter evenings when snowstorms beat beyond the windows, and they climbed from the shipwreck onto the desert island with Robinson Crusoe and shared with him the burdens of the harsh struggle with nature. In the Room of Fairy Tales we read all the stories of Hans Christian Andersen, Lev Tolstoy, Ushinsky, the Brothers Grimm, and Soviet children's writers Chukwsky and Marshak. Many years of experience show that the moral ideas located in works on good and evil, truth and dishonesty, honor and dishonorableness, become the property of the person if these works are read during the years of childhood. Fairy tales are intended for childhood.

Our reading was varied: the fairy tales and stories I have named here I knew by heart. I only took the book to show the children the illustrations. And thus the telling of tales was a mighty means of educating the reason and kind, human feelings.

Without exaggeration, it can be said that reading in the years of childhood is first of all education of the heart, the touching of human nobility to the innermost corners of the child's soul. The word, which reveals noble ideas, always remains in the child's heart as the grain of humanity of which the conscience is composed.

The Continuation of Fairy Tales - Our "Magic Island"

Children are attracted to the unusual, to romantic journeys and adventures, to the struggle with the primordial forces of nature. When I first told the children of the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, they wanted to play at being travelers, to listen to the noise of the ocean waves and the crash of a waterfall. They decided to make a Magic Island-- a secret corner in which they could live in the world of games. We made the island in the blackthorn and acacia thickets. We built the dwelling place of Robinson Crusoe of fence rails to defend it from the wild beasts with the same kind of hearth as he had; we made a little window through which we could look into the boundless space of the "sea" We dug up a little plot of land and sowed dozens of wheat and barley seeds there. Kolya even brought a kid from home, for Robinson Crusoe had had a nanny goat at his disposal. We brought old barrels, ropes, and bricks. We made knives from the metal hoops on the barrels and contrived fishnets. Like primitive hunters, we lit a fire by rubbing two dry sticks together, for it could have happened that Crusoe had had no other means of starting a fire.

During showers, the hollow from which we took the earth for building the dwelling filled up with water and turned into a little pond. The children splashed in the water; in their imaginations they saw the endless expanses of the ocean. And if there is an ocean, there must be ships; the children found a piece of pussy-willow wood began to make a boat of it. This was hard work, but they were crowned with success; they affixed a sail to the boat and it put out to sea.

Behind a little hill, which in the children's imagination had become a high mountain, we created the country of Lilliputia. We made the capital of the country from veneer and cane. We made figures of horses, cows, and sheep from clay. We also made the figure of epic hero Ilya Muromets and his enemy Solovei the Robber. We put the figures in the hushes. This was the dense forest of ancient Russia. We went there on quiet summer evenings, and everyone wanted to tell stories of brave, courageous warriors here. Deep in the impenetrable hushes we found a small pit in the slope of the ravine--this was the cave of the evil Deathless Dragon, and there somewhere in the secret depths languished a Beautiful Princess.

On the Magic Island we spent our free days in warm weather whenever we didn't manage to take longer trips. We built a hut near Robinson Crusoe's dwelling. This was a favorite place for the wings of fantasy to take us flying into the world of fairy tales. Our fairy-tale heroes were next to us, and when night fell over the earth, we heard the whistle of Solovei the Robber, the rasping and groaning of the Deathless Dragon, and the careful steps of Puss- in-Boots. The fire of children's fantasy burned especially bright here. Yura, Galya, Tina, and Vitya created wonderful stories in this corner. The very moment awoke the play of the imagination. Thoughts flowed smoothly and irrepressibly; the children found expression for their feelings in clear words. Here is the story of the golden rainbow Seryozha made up:

"One evening the Giant Blacksmiths went to the Sun and said, 'Mr. Sun, Mr. Sun, our iron hammers have broken, and soon there will be nothing with which to forge the silver threads. The anvils are also old. Send us to the earth for more iron.' The Sun sent the Blacksmiths on their way. The Blacksmiths went to people, but dark clouds blocked their way. The Blacksmiths looked at the earth through the clouds-they were high, high up and they had to decide where to go down. They went back to the Sun and said, "Mr. Sun, Mr. Sun, how can we get down to the earth? Make a bridge for us. The Sun threw his ray, through the dark clouds, and a bridge of sunshine began to sparkle in the sky. On the earth, people saw a golden rainbow. The Blacksmiths went down to the earth and got iron from people, then once again returned to the Sun over the bridge of sunshine. As soon as the Sun saw their white beards, he took back the golden rays, and the rainbow disappeared. From that time, as soon as dark clouds appear in the sky, the Sun sends his Blacksmiths to the earth for iron. But in the winter, then are no rainbows because the days are very short, and the Blacksmiths don't use their hammers much."

I was overjoyed that each child made up a story there. I have always remembered those quiet summer evenings; after the sun went down, the sky began to take on an ashy appearance. There are several days like this in a year when summer is at its zenith. It seems that the sky is faintly radiant, the twilights are longer than usual, and the stars don't come out for a long time... The children were silent, admiring the beauty of nature. In these instants, the flame of fantasy burns especially brightly. We listened to the story Nina thought up:

"The Sun went into his magic garden to sleep. He lay down, but forgot to close his eyes. The Blacksmiths thought it was still day. They forged and forged the silver threads. The threads spilled down and turned into dust. Silver dust scattered over the heaven. It burns and shines..."

My heart began to beat faster when I heard this wonderful story. How could I not rejoice when the fascinating beauty of nature and the fantastic images of stories all open the springs of thought in the children's consciousness? I don't know why this is so, but on the longest July evenings when the ashen skies seem to be covered with some sort of mysterious veil--in these hour children's imaginations run wild.

After finishing the third grade, the children wanted to set up a Partisan Detachment Headquarters on the Magic Island. As was the custom, the Headquarters was located in a dugout, which the older students helped us dig out and equip. An interesting game began which lasted for several months. The children wanted to play at night, and it was difficult to keep them from it. They went on reconnaissance missions and learned to use a compass. They made wooden machine-guns and automatic rifles. They gave out orders before going on military operations.

During the last school year, the book of Russian writer and storyteller Bazhov, *The Malachite Casket*, carried them away. The children's eyes lit up with joy when I read about the wonderful precious stones of the Urals, the amazing beauty of the caves where the innumerable wealth of the kind Mistress of the Copper Mountain is stored, and the beautiful pieces of malachite. During those days, the children wanted to do something beautiful, secret, and romantic. Someone got the idea to create an underground emerald kingdom. We began to gather green, dark-blue, sky-blue, orange, red, and violet pieces of glass and put them into the walls of our cave. It is difficult to describe in words the feeling of inspiration at the beauty and the amazement the children experienced when a small electric light was lit in the cave and the rainbow of colon flashed out. Here new stories were born, and here I was again convinced of the great power of esthetics in developing intellectual ability. I witnessed Valya, Petrik, and Nina's thinking making swift progress: they made up stories, which startled me with their richness of expression. Here Lyuda made up a story. I was convinced that the reason for the little girl's silence was not slow mental development but dreaminess and pensiveness.

Songs Reveal the Beauty of the World to the Child

In the elementary grades as in the School of Joy, we listened to the music of nature, an important source of the emotional coloration of words and a key to understanding and experiencing the beauty of a melody. Listening to the music of nature, the children were prepared emotionally for choral singing. I had them distinguish in nature the sounds of the song we were going to sing.

There was a beautiful little nook not far from school. The evening sky was reflected in the glassy surface of the pond, and the singing of birds floated by from the meadow; in the cool of the evening, the singing of grasshoppers could be heard. Here we listened to the music of nature several times before we learned a song by the Ukrainian composer Ya. Stepovoy, "My Evening Sunset". The beauty of sunset is beautifully expressed in this song. Its melody was fascinating in the quiet of summer evenings. We learned a song in this little nook. The children wanted to sing. And then several weeks later, the children performed it in the room for listening to music, singing and playing folk instruments. The song reminded them of the beauty of sunset, and their faces shone with joy.

In the forest we listened to the *music of sunny midday*. The leaves rustled quietly on the tall trees, a woodpecker was pecking, and somewhere wild cuckoos were cooing. The spell cast by this music gave the children an understanding of the beauty of the song "Kukushka", by the Russian composer Arensky.

The children sang Mozart's "Lullaby" with love, then they sang the Czech folk song "Soroka", Tchaikovsky's "Children's Song"; and many other folk and children's songs. As a rule, our choir sang a *capella*. I was very glad that everyone loved to sing.

The children began to feel a need to gather together to sing. Song entered their life and gave a bright emotional coloring to their thoughts, awaking a feeling of love for their homeland and the beauty of the surrounding world.

The Ukrainian folk song, "There Were Reapers Cutting Wheat From the Field" made a big impression on the children. It awoke an image of the distant past of our people and our heroic struggle against invaders. The melody of the song seemed to carry the children to the times of struggle for the independence of our homeland; they saw the world as our remote ancestors had several centuries before. There were reapers cutting wheat front the field, and from time to time the men and women looked worriedly at the horizon. The enemy could appear there at any time, and then sickles would be changed for sabers to defend their native land and the little children lying in the shade under the sheaves of wheat. Only the fascinating melody of song can carry these pictures through to heart and mind. Only song can reveal the beauty of the people's soul. The melody and words of the songs of one's native land are a mighty educational force, revealing the people's ideals and hopes to the child.

There are such human qualities as sensitivity and emotionality. They are expressed when the surrounding world sharpens the child's ability to feel everything keenly. The person with a sensitive, emotional nature cannot forget the grief, suffering, and unhappiness of another person; his conscience compels him to help. Music and songs bring out this quality in people.

Emotionality of nature characteristic of the morally and esthetically educated person is expressed in that the heart becomes receptive to kind words, precepts, advice, and words of parting. If you want words to teach your students how to live, if you want them to strive for the good, teach them delicacy and emotional sensitivity. Among the multitude of influences upon the young heart, music occupies an important place *Music and Morality* is an area worthy of serious study and research.

Song strengthens the poetic vision of the world. I remember how one day after singing songs into which the people had put a great deal of feeling, we went to the steppe. The boundless sea of wheat spread out before us, and on the horizon was the blue haze of the ancient burial mounds. A narrow road wound its way between the golden fields, and a lark sang in the blue sky. The children stopped—it was as if they were seeing this piece of their native land for the first time. "This is like the song about the reapers," said sensitive, impressionable Varya. I felt that the words of the folk song were ringing in the soul of every child in those instants. Song opens the eyes to the beauty of one's native land, and that beauty becomes even more one's own, even dearer.

Ukrainian songs revealed to the children their native language as an invaluable spiritual treasure of the people. Thanks to song, the children perceived the delicacy of the way words sounded.

At first we had only a few recordings of the instrumental music which I considered just as necessary as reading the stories of Russian writers Tolstoy and Chekhov, Gorky and Korolenko, Gaidar and Chukovsky, Polish writer Senkiewicz, American writer Jack London, the poetry of Pushkin and Shevchenko, and the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen and the Grimm brothers. I could not imagine education without listening to music, without having his or her favorite music from the years of childhood. Before the School of Joy began, our teachers got several recordings, both tapes and records. We considered this a treasure-chest, and that this treasure-chest could not give the children a full impression of the artistic wealth of humanity made us very sad. By the time my students finished the first year of study, we had twenty-seven works, seven vocal and twenty instrumental. We went to the music room specially to listen to the music twice a week. Several melodies and songs were familiar to the children and had become part of their inner world in the School of Joy. They had heard the Song of the Lark and Snow-Drop by Tchaikovsky, Mozart's "Lullaby", Schumann's "Brave Horseman", and Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" many times. They also knew The Song of the Fox, The Song of the Goat, and The Song of the Wolf from the children's opera *Kora-Dereza*, by Lysenko, as well as Ukrainian songs "I Look at the Sky", "The Broad, Roaring Dnieper", and "The Sun Sets and the Mountains Darken".

In the four years of work with the children, our record library almost doubled. It wasn't much, but I was concerned not so much with the number of works we had as with seeing that all of the best from the musical treasure-chest of humanity (first of all Ukrainian and Russian works) entered the children's lives so that listening to one and the same works gave them esthetic satisfaction and left its mark on the children's intellectual and emotional lives.

Let the children listen to one new melody a month, but let that melody become a source of spiritual satisfaction throughout their lives. I was afraid of drowning the children in new works, which would simply entertain them without leaving any imprint on their hearts.

In addition to what was mentioned above, over a period of four years, my children listened to such works as: "March of the Black Sea Warrior", from the opera Ruslan and Lyudmila, by Glinka; the march from the opera Faust, by Gounod; "Norwegian Dance" and "Coboldt", by Edvard Grieg; pieces from the ballets The Nutcracker and the Swan Lake, by Tchaikovsky; "Flight of the Bumblebee" and the excerpt. "The Three Miracles", from the

opera The Tale of the Tsar Sultan, by Rimsky-Korsakov; "The Merry Peasant", by Schumann; "Dance of the Elves", by Grieg; "The Ecosaisses", by Schubert; "Starlings Came Flying", by Dunacvsky; selections from the opera Winter and Spring, by Lysenko; selections from the opera The Fox, the Cat, and the Rooster, by Stetsenko; "Babak", by Beethoven; the Swiss song "Cuckoo"; the Polish song "The Singing of Birds"; several Ukrainian folk songs; the Hungarian folk song "The Nightingale"; the Russian folk song "There Was a Birch Standing"; "Young Pioneer Unit", by Kabalevsky; "Young pioneer", by Ostrovsky; "Pioneer Campfire", by Muradeli; "Comrades, Bravely March in Step", an old revolutionary song rewritten by Lobachev; and "Tortured in Captivity", Lenin's favorite song.

Before listening to music, I told of the actual events of fantastic picture reflected in the musical images. I attached great significance to these stories: they put the children in the proper frame of mind to listen to the music. Thus, before we listened to the Dance of the Fairy Drazhe, I told the children Hofmann's old fairy tale, which served as the basis for the ballet. I tried to paint a picture of the kind fairy in clear expressive words for the children - her lightness, airiness, and graciousness. "You will hear the ringing of little crystal bells," I told the children. "This music points the surroundings of the beautiful fairy. I imagine the light, slender columns of the magic castle illuminated by a bright light." The children listened to the music and then talked about how they imagined the fairy castle. They drew pictures of ponds, fountains, shady groves, and mysterious caves in their imaginations. The fantastic images awoke the desire to listen to the music again. The interpretation of works of music, especially works the children don't know demands enormous tact and great skill on the part of the teacher. One must never forget that the language of music is a language of feelings. Even folk songs with simple, sometimes even elementary, words are perceived as works of art only thanks to melody. To explain the essence of artistic images in a work of music, the teacher must understand the specific expressive means of the composer.

The explanation must be a distinct, polished artistic story. The story itself must awaken feelings and create clear pictures in the imagination.

I am deeply convinced that the beauty of music is a mighty source of thought. Clear images born in the imagination of the child under the influence of music make thought come alive, channeling its many streams into one river-bed. Children try to paint verbal pictures of what their imaginations create and of what they feel. Listening to music was indeed a mighty source of mental development for the slow-thinking children. I tried to see that after listening to music, the children gave their impressions without embarrassment.

We played our pipes in the music room and learned our favorite melodies. In the second grade, there were nine of my students and four from the other grades in our pipe-playing club. The children made the instruments themselves. Seryozha, Yura, Tina, and Lida were real masters at making pipes. They went to the grove and chose suitable materials, and then they seasoned the cut branches in the shade, tried the sound of the instrument, and wound up with pure, melodious tones. In the third grade we got two accordions and three violins. Yura, Seryaha, Fedya, Lida, Kolya, Tina, Larisa, Sanya, and Shura learned to play the accordion and the violin. By the end of elementary school, nineteen children had musical instruments at home-- accordions and violins. But the children didn't forget about their pipes. Several children had an inclination for music; however, I did not see the main goal as developing their individual talents, but rather in making sure that all the students loved music and had an inner need for it.

What is neglected in childhood is never compensated for in the years of youth, and even less so in adulthood. This rule is applicable to all the spheres of the inner life of the child, and especially to esthetic education. Sensitivity and receptivity to beauty in the years of childhood is incomparably more profound than in the later periods of personality development. One of the main tasks of the elementary school teacher is cultivating in the children a need for the beautiful, which in many ways determines the entire system of the inner life of the child and its relation to the collective. The need for the beautiful fosters moral beauty and intolerance of banality and ugliness.

"When a person is holding a violin in his hands, he cannot do anything bad," goes an old Ukrainian saying attributed to the outstanding thinker Grigory Skovoroda (1722-1794). Evil and genuine beauty is incompatible. One of the most important tasks of the teacher is, figuratively speaking, to place a violin in the hands of every child so that they all can feel how music is born. In our day when the technical means for recording and the wide distribution of music has given it a universal character, this educational task takes on a special meaning. Make sure that the young generation is not merely a consumer of beauty; this is a problem of moral as well as esthetic education.

The Book in the Inner Life of the Child

Books play a big role in the inner life of the child, but only when it knows how to read well. What does "reading well" mean' First of all it means mastery of the elementary skills of reading. I tried to make reading on one's own an inner need of the child. In the first and second grades, the students took a book from the library every week or two and read it aloud. Without this, it is impossible to work out a firm, stable ability to read fluently and to understand what has been read.

In the second grade each student had a notebook, a "verbal storehouse" in which all the words he or she found interesting or did not understand were noted down. Then I explained the meaning or emotional nuances of these words. In the third and fourth grades, with the exception of a few words, these notebooks were filled with idiomatic expressions, phrases, and sentences the student happened to like.

Reading as a source of enrichment cannot be reduced to the ability to read; this ability is only the beginning of reading. The child may read fluently and without mistakes, but--and this frequently happens--books have not become that path which leads it to the heights of intellectual, moral, and esthetic development. To be able to read means to be sensitive to the meaning and beauty and to the subtle nuances of words. Only that student "reads" in whose mind the word plays with the colors and melodies of the surrounding world. Reading is a window through which children see and come to know the world and themselves. It opens before the child only when together with reading, simultaneous with it or even earlier than the first opening of a book, laborious effort is put forth to master vocabulary, all of which involves covering all spheres of activity and the inner life of the child-- work, play, and interaction with nature, music, and creativity. Without creative work, which makes beauty, without stories and fantasy, games and music, it is impossible to imagine reading as one of the spheres of the intellectual life of the child. The basis for the development of speech and thinking is also a "journey" to the living source of thought and the emotional-esthetic coloration of words, which is understood only thanks to the ability to feel the beauty of speech and the artistic merits embodied in books.

Before the child reads its first word, it should listen to the teacher, its mother, and its father read, so it will feel the beauty of the artistic images. "Journeys" into the world of nature are impossible to imagine as something different from a book. The child will not see the beauty of the surrounding world if it does not feel the beauty of the words read from a book. The path to the heart and consciousness of the child has two sides, which seem contradictory at first: from books and the word read aloud to the spoken word, and from the living word, already included in the inner world of the child, to books, reading, and writing. Emotional and esthetic preparation for reading and writing is an important condition so that the child will learn to read and write not for a mark but because reading and writing are necessary for its inner life-- because not being able to read and write deprives it of many joys.

Even in the School of Joy, my students expressed their feelings and thoughts of the surrounding world in drawings and expressive captions for them as a result of emotional and esthetic preparation for reading and writing. The "journeys" into nature were not an end in themselves in our system of education, but a means of intellectual development of the child via words. The children would have been indifferent to the beauty of nature, to the play of colors and sounds, and to the inexhaustible variety of life if it were not for words,

intellectual education, and the striving toward the main goal of education--to teach the child to think, to notice objects and phenomena and their interaction, to generalize, and to abstract from nature, and visual objects and impressions.

I saw that reading was already an inner need of the child in the first grade, so that it did not come to mere exercises in working out the techniques of fluent reading comprehension. Only that which is congruent with the level of the child's intellectual, emotional, and esthetic development, and at the same time is consonant with its further development, can enter the spiritual world of the child. It is exceptionally important for the teacher to choose reading materials properly. Unfortunately, in readers many artistic values, which the child could understand, are lacking. Three months after the beginning of the school year, we began reading interesting stories and fairy tales, which were not included in any of the readers.

I distributed the book Ukrainian and Russian Stories among the children. I prepared them to read the Ukrainian folk story, "The Little Straw Bull"-- I told what the story was about, illustrating my talk with pictures. The children opened the book. The first student read the story, then a second, then a third. We read the story over and over, but they did not grow tired of it because for each of them, reading was not a repetitive exercise, but a profound personal experience of vivid images; every child added its own individual perceptions to the words. The children listened to the reading as attentively as if, one after the other, they were all singing the same song, the words and melody of which were very exciting. Each would sing in its own way, and the words would take on a special coloring for each, communicating the subtleties of experience, perception, and impressions. Such reading sounds like music; the words are like a melody.

In preparation for emotional, individual reading, it is especially important that the child reach for the source of thought many times and experiences the beauty of language. A student reads a sentence: "The little bull went into the dark forest and met a gray wolf there." The mind of the child is plunged into unforgettable pictures at the words "dark forest": the evening twilight in the forest, the secretive noises of the night, and the disturbing rustle of the leaves before a thunderstorm. All this has entered its inner life and plays in the bright colors, sounds, and music of nature when the child hears the words "dark forest". No explanations the teacher can give--how to read, how to pronounce the words, what kind of intonation to use--could possibly teach the child expressive reading if it does not know the paths to the source of the living word and thought.

From the first days of work in school, the object of my concern was that not even one poor book fall into the children's hands, so that the children would live in the world of interesting works, those which had been part of national and general human culture. This is an exceptionally important task: a person can read no more than about 2,000 books in a whole lifetime-it follows that in the years of childhood and early youth, reading material must be chosen thoughtfully. It is better for the child to read only a little, but that every book impress it emotionally and intellectually, so that the person will return to it several times and discover ever new values there. Here, it is very important that the child appreciate the emotional coloration of the word, and ability, which comes from aural perception, i.e. from expressive reading.

In the first grade, we already had a children's library with four sections: (I) stories which, in my opinion, were the most valuable for the moral, intellectual, and esthetic education of children. (We bought 15 copies of each book so that there would be one for each pair of students at reading lessons.) This section was intended for the four years of study in elementary school. Stories with profound ideas the children could understand, incarnated in clear artistic images, were selected for it. These were stories and tales by Tolstoy, Zhukovsky, Hans Christian Andersen, Hugo, the Grimm brothers, Pushkin, Korolenko Nekrasov, Turgenev, Chekhov, Senkiewicz, London, Twain, Gorky, Franko, Kataev and others.

Reading these works was not only part of the process of getting to know the world for the children, not just exercises to promote regular habits and abilities, but part of their emotional and moral education. Every book made a deep impression on the children. Mamin-Sibiryak's amazing story, "Winter Hut at the Studyonaya

River", affected the children greatly. The story is about an old man who lives alone and whom everyone has forgotten. He whiles away the time in a hut in a remote part of the taiga. I saw how after reading this book, the children's sensitivity to the phenomena of the surrounding world was sharpened. We read the stories both at lessons and out of class. This section of our library could be compared with the recordings of works of music intended for collective listening.

The second section of our library consisted of stories by contemporary Russian and Ukrainian writers about the present time, the work of the Soviet people, the struggle for peace, the feats of the heroes during the Great Patriotic War, and children who were heroes. My students read the poetry of Soviet writer Mikhatkov and Marshak with great interest, as well as the stories of Gaidar, Kassil, Nosov, Prilezhaywa, Trublaini, Yanowky, Zbanatsky, Linkov, Ivanenko, Voronkova, Zhitlrov, and Aleksandrova.

The third section was fairy tales, poetry, and fables. These books were intended only for out-of- school reading. Every child chose the work, which interested it most (and this interest was aroused by good drawings, the recounting of what had been read by the teacher or fellow-students).

The fourth section of the class library was Greek mythology. The books here were located with great difficulty and set down the Greek myths in a form, which could be understood by children. Ancient mythology plays an important role in the intellectual and esthetic upbringing of children. Mythology does not just reveal an amazing page in the culture of humanity to the children, but it awakens the imagination, develops the mind, and arouses interest in the distant past.

From the middle of the first year of studies, we began to conduct sessions in collective reading. I distributed all the copies of one book to the children so they could read it at home. This was in preparation for collective reading. Why should we go to the Room of Fairy Tales to read the story the contents of which was already known? What did this desire stem from, and why should they do it? Wouldn't it be better to read something new?

Yes, new, unfamiliar things must be read as well, and we read books that were new for us. But books become part of the inner life of the child only when the child wants to read its comrades what has excited it and wants to express its thoughts and feelings in words. We read every book from the first section of the library aloud no fewer than ten times, and interest did not lag because of these repetitions. The children didn't forget a book that had been read two or three weeks ago and tried to read it again, sometimes coming to school especially for that purpose. Three of four months would pass and then the children would want to read a favorite book again, so it would reappear on the list for collective reading.

But the beauty and power of a work touch the heart and mind only if the child has already begun to distinguish the subtle nuances of words even before it learns to read. Those who didn't feel the fascinating beauty of words during the "journeys" to the sources of thought would never want to listen a second, third, or tenth time to what they already knew.

We dedicated some lessons to our favorite stories. The children prepared excitedly for reading. Each one read what it like the most, what it found the most exciting.

The reading of poetry occupied a special place for us. I recited the best works of poetry: the verses of Pushkin, Lumontov, Zhukovsky, Nekrasov, Fet, Shevchenko, Lesya Ukrainka, Schiller, Mickiewicz, Heine, Beranger, and other poets. The children developed a desire to memorize their favorite poems. In four years they memorized a lot of verses, but they never did this until they had come to love the marvelous sounds of poetic language.

Good poetry combines the beauty of words and images with melody. I tried to see that the children felt this harmony from an early age: I recited the poems of Ukrainian and Russian poets. We listened to Pushkin's "Song about Prophetic Oleg" and Shevchenko's "The Servant Woman" many times. Almost all the children learned

these poems without even trying to. In the same manner the children memorized many lyrical poems that describe the beauty of nature. They liked to leave a part of what was being read to be continued on the next day. In the Corner of Dreams we read *The Adventurer of Tom Sawyer* over a period of several weeks. The environment surrounding the children strengthened the impression the book made on them. In the same manner we read Gorky's Childhood, Kataev's *A Solitary Sail Gleams*, and Bazhov's *The Malachite Casket*.

In time, we began to hold evening and morning parties of dramatic reading. Everyone who wanted to participate prepared to read or recited his or her favorite story or poem. Many children from the other classes came to these parties, and gradually such readings were conducted throughout the whole school.

Twice--at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year, we celebrated a native language festival. Several rituals became traditional at this festival. The children invited the older people in the village to decide who recited their story or poem the best. This was a unique competition, the winners of which were awarded books. Those older collective farmers who were admirers and connoisseurs of their native language awarded the prizes. They also told stories and recited poetry. It happened on occasion that a student and an older person would recite the very same thing. In the fourth year of studies, the spring festival lasted for two days because there were so many who wanted to read or recite stories, poems, and fables.

Constant association with their elder's, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, and grandfathers-brought more than one interesting tradition to life. Our best readers began to read to their parents at home, and the adults began to come to school to hear how the children read. Several reading clubs appeared and were even joined by adults, very respected people. The activity of organizing these clubs boosted the children's interest in books and reading.

A traditional festival in which the whole school participated arose. On August 31, the eve of the beginning of the school year, the children and parents came to the school. On that day, everyone made presents of books--the children to one another, and the parents to the children. It became a rule that the administration of the collective farm gives books to the best leaders in the Reading Clubs on that day.

I tried to get each child to build up a personal library so that reading would become an important inner need. I saw to it that there was a library in every family during the first two years of study. In some families there were more than five hundred books, and in others there were fewer, but each family added to its collection every month. I considered it alarming if no new books appeared in the family library in the course of a month.

Self-education and individual intellectual Life begins with books. There comes a moment in the educational process when the teacher who has steadily held the pupil's hand can let it go and say, "Go along by yourself and learn to live". Great educational wisdom is necessary to be able to take such a step. To prepare the person intellectually and morally for independent life, one must lead him or her into the world of books. Books must become a friend, a tutor, and a wise teacher for every pupil. I saw getting every little girl and boy to strive to attain solitude for reading, meditation, and reflection as an important educational task. Solitude is not loneliness. It is the beginning of the self-education of thoughts, feelings, conviction, and points of view. This is possible only when books have made their way into the life of the little person as a spiritual Reed. In individual conversations, I found out what kinds of books interested the little boy or girl and what kinds of questions they wanted books to answer. I needed to know this to give intelligent advice and to help the children find the ones they needed.

School becomes a genuine source of culture only when four things reign in it: love of one's homeland, respect for other people, love of books, and love of one's native language.

Even before beginning to work with my pupils, I had read a lot about the difficulties of working with teenagers. I was told: "Working with little children is the easiest thing of all. But as soon as a little child becomes a teenager, it changes unrecognizably. Kindness, sensitivity and modesty disappear. Rudeness and indifference appear." I

became convinced that these words were far from true. The good "disappears" only if it was not created there by the teacher--if the teacher thought that the child was good by nature. If the child has not been taught to love books from childhood, if reading has not become something the child will need to do for the rest of its life, the years of adolescence will be empty, and badness will appear as if from nowhere.

Native Language

Ukrainian is the native language of Ukrainians, and there are more than 36 million people who speak it today. But the history of our people developed so that our language is very close to Russian. The two tongues are closely related, and this not only makes the mastery of Ukrainian and Russian easier but on the contrary, makes it more difficult. There are hundreds of words, which sound exactly alike in both languages but mean different things. In many other cases, the same word has different emotional colorations in Russian and Ukrainian. A word, which rings with pathos in one language, is ironic in the other. The play of nuances, the delicate features of the emotional and esthetic coloration of words in both languages are a treasure, which we teachers in Ukrainian schools are called to hand over to the younger generation.

Language is part of the wealth of a people. "I am as many people as I know languages", as the saying goes. But the riches of the languages of other peoples are inaccessible to the person who has not mastered his or her native tongue, who does not feel its beauty. The more deeply a person comes to know the subtleties of his or her native language, the more delicate his or her receptivity to the play of nuances of the native language, the more prepared his or her mind is to master the languages of other peoples, and the more actively he or she will perceive the beauty of language.

I tried to make sure that this life-giving source—the richness of one's native language—was opened for the children from the first steps of their school life. "Journeying" to the living sources of thoughts and language, my pupils came to know the emotional, esthetic, and semantic nuances of Ukrainian and Russian words simultaneously. I got them to feel the beauty of language, to take a careful attitude to words, and to be concerned for their purity.

The oral development of the person is a mirror of his or her intellectual development. Beauty and the greatness, power and expressiveness of the native language are important means of influencing the child, developing its feelings and thoughts. The role of this means in elementary school, where every encounter with a new phenomenon in the surrounding world staggers the child, cannot be overestimated.

We went to nature--to the forest, the garden, the fields and meadows, and the riverbank--and words became an instrument, which helped me open, the children's eyes to the richness of the surrounding world. Feeling the beauty of what they saw and heard, the children perceived the delicate nuances of words, and beauty entered their souls via words. "Journeying" through nature was the first stimulus for creativity. The children developed a desire to put their feelings and impressions into words--to talk about beauty. They made up little compositions about nature. These compositions were an important form of developing their speech and thinking. Every child made up its own composition and then wrote it down in class. I will give several examples of the minicompositions that the children made up orally in the first year of studies and then wrote down in the notebook on "Our Native Language" or in their individual notebooks.

The Song of the Lark (Larisa)

A gray lump trembles in the blue sky. It is a lark. I hear it singing its wonderful song--I never get tired of it. It is as if the lark is playing on delicate, delicate silver strings. The strings are stretched from the golden wheat to the sun. The ears of wheat listen attentively to its song.

The Sun Went Down (Seryozha)

The sun went down. The field grew dark. Twilight crawled out of the ravine and over the fields and meadows. It spread out like a river. But golden sparks Bashed out at the tops of the poplars. This was the sun sending his final farewell. They flashed and went out. Good-bye, Mr. Sun-shine!

The Bees Drink Water (Galya)

I saw how the bees drank water. Droplets of water trickle down the thin blade of grass onto a smooth willow stub. The stub is wet. The bees love the smell of the willow. They fly to the stub and drink water. They flap their golden wings. Rest a while, little bees; you have a long way to fly.

The Buckwheat is Blooming (Varya)

The buckwheat began to bloom. The field looked like it was covered with a white blanket. But that blanket was alive, and how good it smelled! There was a bee on every flower. The blanket was buzzing--that was from the buzzing of the bees. A big fuzzy bumblebee sat on a little flower. The stalk began to shake and bent down. The bumblebee couldn't hold on. It fell off and began to buzz angrily.

The Combine Driver (Yura)

My uncle drives a huge combine. The wheat stands before him. The sharp blades cut the stalks and give it to the thresher. The threshing machine threshes the wheat. The grain flows in a little stream into the bunker. A truck drives up under the bunker and takes the grain to the threshing floor. There will be a lot of white bread.

Our Thresher (Vanya)

We have a tiny, tiny thresher at school-it looks like this... The students reaped the wheat from the school plot. They tied it into five sheaves. The little thresher began to drone. It threshed the wheat. They pound the wheat into a sack. We will sow the seeds.

The Apple Trees are Blooming (Pavlo)

Oh, how beautiful it is in the orchard when the apples bloom. The white flowers open their petals to the sun. A breeze caresses the blossoms, and they ring out like little silver bells. The whole orchard rings and smiles at the sun. And when the wind fades away, the buzzing of bees can be heard. They fly above the trees. They look for the loudest bells. And the orchard sings like a thousand strings. The bee alights on a dainty bell, moves its little feet, and flaps its tiny wings. The golden pollen rises above the bell like a cloud.

On the Farm with Aunt Dasha (Kolya)

We were at the farm where Aunt Dasha works. She milks thirty cows. There are great big cans for the milk. They take the milk to the creamery. They make butter out of it there.

The Cranes Sing in the Evening (Tina)

The sun sets behind the mountain. Cranes fly in the blue sky. They sing: "Hello, green meadow, we have come from the warm sea." The branches on the trees begin to shake. The green grass begins to rustle. The pond rings out - hello, cranes, tell us what you saw at the warm sea.

Kind Grandfather Dusk (Sanya)

The stars twinkle in the sky. Kind Grandfather Dusk come out of the ravine. He is old and hairy. He walks with a cane. He goes to the village. He enters a hut. He takes the children in his warm, soft palms, and they want to sleep. They have sweet dreams.

(It was Sanya who thought up the story about Dusk in the School of Joy, and now this story was reawakened in the memory of the child.)

Uncle Kuzma (Fedya)

We were at Uncle Kuzma's. He is a construction worker. He makes walls for homes out of bricks. Now he is building a store. Uncle Kuzma has already built fifty buildings. A lot of people live in them. He says, "My

buildings will stand for two hundred years. A lot of people will remember what a good builder Uncle Kuzma was!"

The Crocus (Katya)

The sun woke up the forest. It melted the snow from the tops of the pines. The hot drops fell on the snow. It made holes in the snowdrifts and dry foliage. Green arrows appeared whenever it fell. And there bloomed the blue bells. They looked at the snow with surprise and asked, "Did I wake up too early" "No, you're not early; you're right on time," sang the birds. And spring began.

The Sun and the Thundercloud (Tolya)

There was a golden field, and the sun played with every head of grain. Oh field, field, how beautiful you are. But look--a thundercloud has come over you. It is hiding the sun. The golden sparks on the heads of grain have gone out. The field has gone gray, like someone covered the earth with a gray blanket. Come out from behind the clouds as fast as you can! Mister Sunshine! We are waiting for you, Mister Sunshine!

Little Stars Fall From the Sky (Lyuba)

In August, little stars fall from the sky. There is a big glade in the dark forest, and the little stars fall onto it. Purple flowers bloom.

It's Warm in Our Classroom (Sasha)

It's warm and cozy in our class. There are hot radiators with water flowing through them. There is a big boiler in the basement. Coal burns in the big stove. The coal is dug in mines deep under the earth, and then brought to us on the railroad. It is unloaded onto the ground. Then a truck brings it to our school. We are warm because the miners and railroad men labor.

Winter Starling (Misha)

Last winter, the starlings didn't fly south. How did they know that we wouldn't have any bad freezes? I saw how they gathered in a big flock in the evening and flew from one tree to another. They were looking for a warm place. And they cawed with worry. In snowstorms, the starlings flew into our barn. They alit everywhere, even on the cow. But on sunny, cold days, they bathed themselves in the snow. A starling would fall into a soft snowdrift like a little stone, and burrow into the snow. Then it gets out of the snowdrift and chirps merrily

Christmas Tree (Danko)

Mother and I put the Christmas tree on the table. We decorated it. We put Grandfather Frost at the bottom. Night fell. The moon shone brightly outside. I wanted to see what Grandfather Frost would do. He raised his cane, walked out from under the tree and walked about the table. He walked about and wheezed. And the white snowflakes were whispering about something on the branches. The gray rabbit sat still on a twig. It jumped from the tree into Grandfather Frost's sack. It will be a New Year's present.

Grandfather Yukhim (Lyuda)

My grandfather Yukhim is a forester. He has been working on the kolkhoz for twenty-five years. There is an oak grove behind the village. They are his oaks; he planted them. Grandfather says that his oaks will live for three hundred years. I will also plant my own oak tree.

The Evil Spider (Kostya)

A spider spun its web in a dark corner of the pantry. I watched to see what it would do. The spider lurked on the wall and rubbed its legs. It was as if it were waving its webs. A fly flew up, buzzing. The spider turned around to listen. The fly flew into the web and got stuck. The buzzing got loud and anxious. The spider was already hurrying to the fly. No, you will not kill the fly, evil spider. I will tear your web and free the fly. Fly away, and don't fall into a spider's web again.

Tomatoes (Slava)

There are red tomatoes on the green bushes. In the morning the tomatoes are covered with drops of dew. The golden sun plays on every drop. A white butterfly sat on a red tomato. A bee buzzed. It thought that the tomato was a big red flower. It circled above the tomato and flew away.

The children's compositions were the result of a lot of work. One must show the children phenomena of the surrounding world so that they not only reach their minds via language, but their hearts and souls as well. The emotional and esthetic coloration of language, its subtle nuances, are the life-giving source of children's creativity. Words live like vivid images in the mind of the child, and therefore, when writing their compositions in class, the children added drawings to the text.

It would be naive to expect that the child would immediately begin to make up compositions under the influence of the beauty of the surrounding world. Creativity is not something instinctive in children. It must be taught. The child will only make up compositions when it hears descriptions of nature from its teacher. The first composition I recited to the children was made up on the edge of the pond in the quiet of evening. I tried to get the children to understand and feel how a visual image could be described in words. At first, they repeated the compositions I had made up. Then gradually, they began to describe the pictures of nature that excited them on their own. The process of individual creativity had begun for the children. In this process, it is very important to feel the nuances of words. The child begins to make up compositions only when he sees every word as a ready-made brick with a specific place of its own. And children will choose that one brick which is suitable to the given situation. They cannot simply grab the first word that pops into their heads. Their sensitivity does not allow them to do that.

Making up compositions became one of my students' favorite tasks. They tried to tell about everything that they saw and experienced. Words became a means for the children to express their relationship to the beauty of the surrounding world. In the second, third, and fourth grades, the children made up compositions about their older comrades-the collective farmers and workers about the work of the Soviet people, about the appearance of buds on the apple trees and the fading of the daisies, about the silver spider webs of Indian summer and apple picking in the collective farm's orchard. Over a period of four years, every student made up between forty and fifty minicompositions. Here are several of the compositions the children made up in the second, third and fourth years of study.

It is difficult to find another stimulus, which would make people work so hard as the attempt to create beauty. This attempt inspired the whole collective. There was not one child who did not take part in caring for the flowers. The first summer, nature did not reward our efforts, but the children lived with the dream of success. The second spring, the lawn became an even, green blanket covered with blooming wild flowers. The third year, our corner was transformed into a kingdom of green and flowers. There the children often gathered to read and tell stories.

Where Do the Ice Flowers on the Window Panes Come From? (Tanya, fourth grade)

I asked mama: "where do the the flowers on the window panes come from?" Mama said: "A little grandson of Grandfather Frost draws them. He goes about with his grandfather at night and covers the window panes with drawings..." I wanted to see how he did it. I lay down to sleep, but I didn't close my eyes. Everyone went to sleep. The tree beyond the window was creaking. The tiny boy came up to the window. He went about the glass with silver pencil and sang quietly. I saw that he had drawn a marvelous flower. It had broad, broad leaves and tiny petals. In the morning, the sun began to sparkle, and the flower looked as if it were alive. I don't know if I dreamed all this or if I really saw it.

The World of Flowers in the Middle of Winter (Galya, third grade)

Chrysanthemums bloomed near the greenhouse in the fall. They were not afraid of the cold fogs. But then a frost came from the North. The water froze in the bucket. We had to save the chrysanthemums from the cold. We

replanted them in pots and put them in the greenhouse. We cut back the stalks. The chrysanthemums became green once again and then bloomed. In the morning when I woke up, I saw snow on the ground. Snow and sunshine. I ran quickly to the greenhouse. The chrysanthemums were blooming: white, sky blue, and dark blue. And there was snow beyond the glass. The chrysanthemums smiled at the bright sunshine.

How, We Went From the Field (Pavlo, second grade)

In the summer, mama and I went to the field for haymaking. Mama put the hay on a big cart. She tied the hay up with a rope. The horses walled slowly. We sat high, high up on the hay. The sun went down and the stars came out in the sky. I lay down and looked at the sky. Our cart turned into a big boat. We went sailing across the sea. The stars were above us. They were close. You could put out your hand and catch a little star. The green shore was somewhere far away. A quail was singing there, and grasshopper was playing their violins. Our boat stopped and the little stars twinkled. The boat reached the shore. Mama stood up, but I wanted to lie for a while.

A Cloudy Fall Day (Shura, third grade)

The days got shorter and the nights longer. There was log floating over the river in the mornings. Where was the sun? Why didn't it disperse the cloudy scraps? Little droplets of autumn rain fell from the sky. The trees stood with branches bending down. The leaves fell. Big drops were hanging on the branches. Somewhere in the log, a seagull cried out. Perhaps it couldn't fly south and was complaining to people. It was so quiet in the forest. A woodpecker's pecking sounded several times in the forest and then died out. The golden acorns fell on the leaves. The whole world was covered in a white mist.

When Does Fall Begin? (Seryozha, fourth grade)

The swallows flew excitedly above the village in the morning. Then they gathered in a big flock. They sat in a row on the telephone lines and chirped quietly about something. They were deciding when to fly south for the winter. The next day they were already gone. Where were they? And how did they know that autumn was drawing near, for the days were still warm. The sun beamed caressingly. I love the radiant fall evenings. The crimson colors of twilight stay for a long time. And the leaves on the poplars look crimson. They are the reflections of the sunset. Only at the pond is it noisy in the evenings: the birds flying sleep there. Towards morning, a shroud of fog covers the pond, and there is dew on the grass. The dew is sort of gray, not like it is in summer. Fall is beginning.

What is the Main Thing in Life (Varya, fourth grade)

What is the main thing in life? Miners say the main thing is coal. If there were no coal, machines would stand idle; there would be no metal, and people would freeze... Metal workers say the main thing is metal. Without metal, there would be no machines, no coal, no bread, and no clothes. The farmers say the main thing is food. Without food, no one would be able to work--not the miners, or the metal workers, or the pilots, or the border guards. Which of them is right? What is the main thing in life? The main thing is labor. Without labor there would be no coal, no metal, and no food.

Horse of Fire (Sanya, fourth grade)

Mama told me this. When the first collective farm was created in the village, the farmer bought a horse. His name was Fire. No one could tame him. The bravest and most experienced people were afraid to go near Fire. He pawed the earth with his hooves, bit with his teeth, and snorted.

One of the young fellows named Yurko saddled the wild horse all the same. He roared and neighed, leapt out onto to road, and threw Yurko off. He ran several versts and stopped on the edge of the village. Two little children were playing in the middle of the road. They ran up to the horse and hugged him around the front legs. Their mother's heart froze with fear. She thought the horse would either kill or trample the children. But the horse stood quietly. He moved his legs and stood once again. He squinted at the children as if he were afraid to touch them. But the children kept right on playing. Then Fire went carefully around the children and ran through the village. They caught him and put him in the stable.

The Hedgehog (Fedya, fourth grade)

Some hedgehogs live under our porch. In the evenings, the whole family comes out of the little hole and sets out for the pond. The old hedgehog goes in front, and five baby hedgehogs come behind him. The mother hedgehog brings up the rear. What do they do there? I watched and found out: they drink water and wash. Then they dig in the earth with their little paws and find some roots to eat. That is what the mother and father hedgehogs do. But the baby hedgehogs play and frisk about. They picked out a quiet corner where no one goes.

One day a dog appeared suddenly. It ran up to the old hedgehog. He rolled up into a ball and lay still. And all the hedgehogs rolled up into balls. The dog grabbed the old hedgehog in its teeth and carried it to the pond. The dog put it in the water, but the hedgehog swam to the shore with the dog looking at it. Then the dog started to play with it, but I ran the dog off.

The next spring, only the old hedgehog still lived under the porch. Where had the others gone? Probably they had moved to another place. But the old hedgehog hadn't wanted to move. I put a saucer of milk near the porch. The hedgehog drank it. He stopped being afraid of me. I coaxed him inside. I lit the lamp. The hedgehog stood in front of the light and looked. I put an old newspaper on the floor. The hedgehog started to play with it. At night it went to its home under the porch.

Artem Mikhailovich--A Soldier of Budenny (Danko, fourth grade)

Artem Mikhailovich came to one of our Young pioneer meetings. He works in the vegetable garden on the collective farm. We thought that he was just a grandfather, but he was a soldier of Budenny, a hero of the Civil War of 1918-22. He told how he had gone on reconnaissance and had attacked the White guards. One day he was wounded and taken prisoner by the soldiers of general Denikin. They took him out to shoot him. They didn't kill him, but left him heavily wounded again. That night he crawled away and asked for help at a peasant hut. They hid him in the attic and made him well. He went to fight the White guards once again. This is what kind of a person our Grandfather Artem Mikhailovich is. I want to be just like him.

The Victory Day Celebration (Volodya, third grade)

Victory Day came. This is the day the war ended. Our Soviet Army was victorious over the fascists. The bursting of shells and bombs ceased. Now every year on this day, the people celebrate their victory and remember those who perished. Vladimir Ilyich Lenin founded the Communist Party and said to all people: "Live in peace--Ukrainians, Russians, Byelorussians, Georgians, and Moldavians--then no one can defeat you."

We made up collective compositions. One cloudy fall day, the children sat in the Corner of Dreams around the burning hearth. I told about the far-off tropical islands. The children remembered the hot summer for some reason--the river and our vacation in the melon-field. A composition arose from these memories, and later the children wrote it down in the notebook "Our Native Language".

How We Lived in the Melon-Field

Big watermelons lay on the hot earth. Blue, green, and gray blue. In the morning, they were covered with dewdrops. Cold, so cold. And there was dew on the grass and on our hut. One day, Danko got up early in the morning and brought a big watermelon. He cut it into pieces. As soon as someone got up, he gave them cold watermelon. "The last one to get up," he said, "will get the tasty core of the watermelon, the 'old man'." Everyone got up but Sasha. We sat and waited--when would he wake up? We got tired of waiting and ate the 'old man'. We brought another watermelon. We gave him the core of that one.

It was a quiet, foggy morning. The fog floated from the ravine and covered the whole melon-field. The sun peeped out from under the clouds and shone on the watermelons. It seemed that they were not watermelons but dark blue, green, and gray glass balls floating along a white river.

In the daytime, a hot wind played over the melon-field. The larks sang in the blue sky. Why didn't they light in the melon-field? Why do larks build their nests and raise their young only in wheat, barley, or millet, but most of all in buckwheat?

Next to the melon-field near the ravine, we found an ant-hill. Grandfather saw how the ants were hurrying somewhere. He said there was a big anthill somewhere near by, and that the ants themselves would tell us where it was. He put some pieces of watermelon in the ants' path. The ants covered the sweet watermelon at once. We saw how they took tiny grains of sugar and carried them off. We followed them all the way to the anthill. The little grayhill under a bush looked as if it were alive. The ants carried the grains of sugar somewhere inside the hill and returned to the melon-field again. Grandfather told us how useful ants were to the forest and to people. Every anthill saves several hectares of forest from pests. We began to protect the anthill, and then Grandfather showed us how to make new anthills.

When we went home, Grandfather gave each of us a big watermelon. The watermelons stood in our windows for a long time. They reminded us of the hot wind, the broad steppes, the larks, of Grandfather and the clear song of the cricket that lived not far from us. Where is that cricket now?

The beauty of language is incarnated most clearly of all in poetry. Inspired by poetry or songs, children seem to listen to the music of words. In the finest poetry, words reveal the delicate emotional nuances of one's native language. Because of this, children want to memorize poems. The child receives genuine satisfaction from repeating words that have sunk deeply into its soul.

I tried to get the children to feel and experience the music of poetic language. In the lap of nature in those minutes when the children were fascinated by the beauty of the surrounding world, I recited poetry for them. One day we unexpectedly caught sight of the field; a wonderful view of the pond was spread out before us with the willows reflected on its smooth surface. I recited some lines from Shevchenko about nature for the children. They repeated these lines. They felt that the combination of words created a living image, and that a musical sounding of speech was born that not only gave the words a new emotional sense, but also gave the surrounding world a new beauty. Under the influence of the best of world poetry, the children felt a desire to create language, which would ring out with music. Enjoying the beauty of a spring day, the children tried to speak so that the melody of the words would ring out. Their hearts were seized with poetic inspiration: the little boys and girls made up poems. First Larisa looked into the distance over the field; her eyes were burning, and she quietly pronounced some words, listening to the way they rang out:

"The waves play in the yellow fields of wheat."
"The dark blue hills tremble in the haze,"

said Seryozha, taking up her thought.

Everyone was joyfully excited; they all wanted to find their own musical words. In these minutes when the soul of the child is seized by poetic inspiration, the word is living and full-blooded, playing with all the colors of the rainbow, full of the fragrance of the fields and meadows, which enters into the spiritual life of the child. Children seek and find a means of expressing their feelings, thoughts and experiences in them. To awake poetic inspiration in the child's heart means to open yet another life-giving source of thought for it. The strength of this source consists in that the word transmits not only the object or phenomenon it signifies in human speech but a deep personal perception of feelings and experiences as well.

One must teach poetic creativity not to make young poets of the students, but to ennoble every young heart. I used every opportunity to awake poetic inspiration in the children's hearts, so that language would acquire an individual poetic sound in each of their souls.

It was a quiet winter morning. The trees were covered with white hoar-frost. The branches, covered with delicate little needles of ire, seemed to be forged from silver. We went to the school garden and tried not to touch the branches for fear of disturbing the charming, unrepeatable beauty. We paused, and I recited poems by Pushkin and Heine on the beauty of winter. Under the spell of the poetry and the beauty, the children found the words to describe the trees covered with hoar-frost and create poetry. They did this collectively, one section at a time. We came to the frosty garden several times. The fantastic images from stories made up earlier come alive in the poem:

The magic Blacksmith came Carrying a golden furnace. He melted silver in it To cover the trees in the garden. He forged the whole night, Beating with his golden hammer... Our garden stands all in silver. One needle touches another, And the garden rings out, rings out. But where is the magic Blacksmith? He has flown once again to the Sun On his wings of gold. He takes more silver, Puts it in his bag, And flies to us once more. Again the silver is melted, And the garden begins to ring... But the Sun awaits the Blacksmith... Where have you flown to, my friend? Why are you so long there, Melting my silver in the garden Have you forgotten, Blacksmith, That you must forge my garland? And the crimson sunrays Peeped into our quiet silver garden. And the sun was struck with wonder And its beauty...

Every child is a poet. Of course, it would be naive to wait for poetic inspiration to come to the child by some miracle. I am far from being sentimental about natural talent, far from the thought that every child is a poet by nature. The human feeling of beauty awakes the poet in the soul. Without the cultivation of this feeling, the student will remain indifferent to the beauty of nature and language, will remain a creature to whom throwing a stone into a pond or at a singing nightingale are one and the same. To give the child the joy of poetic inspiration, to awake the living spring of poetic creativity in its heart, is as important as to teach it to read and to do arithmetic. In some children this spring flows more strongly than in others. I saw that in some children, poetic inspiration is not a wild, short-term flight or a flash of fire, but a constant spiritual need.

Poetic creativity is the highest level of language development, which expresses the very essence of human development. Everyone can feel poetic creativity. It does not require some special talent, but ennobles the person. It is very important that this extremely delicate sphere of creativity be deeply personal, an affair of the heart for every child. In the third grade, Larisa, Sanya, Seryozha, Katya, Varya, Kolya, Tanya, and Lida had already begun to recite to me in private the poems they had made up secretly. I knew that some of the other children made up poems as well, but they were too shy to talk about their interest. And that was very good.

There is nothing unusual in the fact that children make up poems. This is a normal play of spiritual strength, an ordinary creative flame without which it is impossible to imagine a full childhood. But the fact that the spiritual lives of the children were so rich was a source of joy to me.

I was especially glad that Kolya was ennobled by poetic inspiration. Our friendship was growing stronger. There was a corner in the school garden where I liked to be alone. I relaxed there in good weather, playing my violin. By chance, Kolya happened to "discover" my corner. Probably he was looking for a place to be by himself as well. When he saw me, he was embarrassed and wanted to leave, but I asked him to stay. I played my violin, hoping to express in sounds my admiration for the beauty of the summer evening. Then I was so carried away that I didn't notice that the little boy was sitting next to me. I gave him the violin. Kolya tried to repeat what I had played, but he didn't get anywhere. He stopped playing. We sat in silence, enjoying the sunset, listening to the quiet of the evening. Probably because the beauty of the surrounding world brought us together, Kolya trusted me with his poem about nature. Here it is:

Dark blue flowers in green leaves;
A bee flying above the flowers.
A nightingale flies to the garden at night,
And sings from the lilac bushes.
In the morning, thunder rumbles in the garden,
And a little shower bathes the flowers.
A gray thundercloud floats over the garden.
But the lilac is blue like the sky.

Kolya and I sat in the garden for a long time that evening. The boy started to come there, and every time recited a little poem. Here is another of his poems, which was so engraved in my memory that I wrote it down a year after he had recited it for me:

The red run set behind the mountain.

The sky blazed with crimson:

Tomorrow would be a windy day.

Uneasily, a flock of ravens took wing.

They rushed to the west, to the black forest.

The leaves rustled on a tall poplar tree. It fell quiet.

The round of a cart creaking down the road could be heard in the distance.

The crimson sky turned dark, the heat was covered with gray ash.

A bright star twinkled in the sky; night had fallen.

I found out that Kolya did not write his poems down: he simply remembered them. The poems lived in his memory and in his heart. Not many of my students made up poems sitting in front of a clean sheet of paper. These poems are not born to be written down. Children like making up poems as much as they do drawing.

Shura also trusted me with his secret in a moment of spiritual closeness. We went to the forest to ski one winter day. The red sun was setting. The trunks of the pine trees seemed to be forged of iron in the evening sunlight. We were standing in a forest glade admiring the beauty of nature. And in these moments, Shura recited a poem about a woodpecker:

There are a thousand strings under the bark of the pine tree; The woodpecker sits at the top of the pine. He pecks with his beak on the upper string, And it rings out so softly it's difficult to hear. The nearer the sun, the thinner the string, And on the earth itself, the string is not a string
A bell drones quietly on the earth,
A bell of bronze under the red bark.
The woodpecker hops, opening the string,
Striking it with his beak,
And the string begins to sound...
The forest sings, but the woodpecker is already searching for another string.

Varya made up dozens of poems in the years of her childhood. She had a sensitive, impressionable soul. I watched as Varya, fascinated by the beauty of a summer evening, stood on the edge of the pond looking at the willows bending over the water, which reflected the sky on its mirror-like surface. Then several days later, she recited a poem about that summer evening for me:

Blue sky, green willow, white huts— All reflected in the water. I stand before the sky-blue mirror, And before me is a far-off endless world. There are crimson sunsets and white clouds. The stars twinkle there, and above the distant road, A bird takes wing--it parts with the sun. This amazing world has music of its own: Listen, someone touches a thick string with her hand, And the blue Firmament begins to ring, the willows sing, And the huts as well. I hear this music only in the evening by the pond When the sun burns with fire-behind the sea, Far away, when the white doves hurry to their resting place, And the bat cleans its paws in the hollow. When the wind hat gotten tired for the day and lays down to rest in the darkening ravine.

Every year when fall grew near, the children wanted to bid farewell to summer. We went to our oak tree and made up poems about the past summer, the cranes, and the warm fall days. When we said farewell to summer for the fourth time, the children made up a collective poem about what was most dear to us--our homeland.

The main thing that deserved attention and praise was the clear images created in the children's imaginations. I tried to see that those children in the spiritual lives of whom poetic inspiration had become a need, read the finest poetry. We created a little library of poetry. This was especially necessary for those whose poetic creativity had not yet become a spiritual need, for those in whom it was necessary to develop sensitivity to poetic language. I repeat once again that children's poetic creativity may not be considered a mark of giftedness. It is the same sort of natural phenomenon as drawing: everyone draws, and all children go through this phase. But poetic creativity becomes an ordinary phenomenon in the spiritual life of children only when the teacher reveals the beauty of the surrounding world and of language to them. Just as love of music is impossible to teach without music, love of poetic creativity cannot be taught without creativity.

The person who loves Pushkin and Heine, Shevchenko and Lesya Ukrainka, is a person who wants to say beautiful things about the beauty surrounding him or her; a person for whom the search for the necessary word has become the same sort of need as the need to create beauty; a person for whom understanding the beauty of humanity is expressed first of all in respect for human achievements, in the consolidation of the most just relations between people -communist ones-and such a person cannot become coarse or a cynic.

Our Nook of Beauty

In the spring before the end of the first class, we began to create our Nook of Beauty. The children had dreamed of this for a long time. We imagined it as a quiet, secluded place where the natural beauty of the surrounding world would be added to by the creations of human hands. Our dream extended into the future, to how we would put more and more plants in our nook. There we would rest and work, greet the spring and bid farewell to summer.

Between the school plot and a thicket of bushes, the children found a little clearing covered with thick grass by the slope of the ravine. There was a lot of moisture here during showers. We weeded the clearing and began to transform it into a green lawn

"Our nook will be a kingdom of green," I told the children. "The slope of the ravine will be covered with a green wall of hop, and nightingales and orioles will live in the thickets."

This dream inspired the children. We worked a great deal to transform the clearing into a green lawn. We had to bring little slabs of turf there and plant and water them. The children eagerly awaited showers so the green grass would be watered. We found several springs of hop in the forest and transplanted them onto the slope of the ravine. We were lucky; the summer was a wet one, so all the plants survived. We dug up several dozen lily-of-the-valley bulbs in the forest and planted them in one corner of the lawn. We planted three sweetbrier bushes and grafted roses onto them--this was to be a kingdom of flowers. We planted hazelnut trees all over the lawn. The children wanted wild flowers to grow there. We found daisies and other plants. We transplanted several chrysanthemum bushes from the greenhouse so they would bloom until late autumn.

Varya planted a sunflower. In a remote corner of the lawn, the children planted buckwheat seeds. Nina and Sasha's father gave us two dwarf apple seedlings. Vitya told me that his grandmother grew tulips. We transplanted several tulip bulbs. One summer day, the children saw a big flowering linden tree in the forest. Thousands of bees were buzzing in the branches of the tree. The whole forest seemed to ring out like a harp. The children stood in silence, fascinated by the beauty of nature. They wanted to plant several linden trees next to their Nook of Beauty. In the fall, we went to the forest, dug up some seedling and lay out an alley...When the lindens grow up," dreamed the children, "they will be covered with thick foliage and will make a shady corridor."

Every class started to make its own Nook of Beauty different from all the others. In the fall of 1955, the school as a whole began to make a Nook of Beauty. Next to the school building we laid out a rose garden. We planted dozens of seedlings grown from the sweet briers to which we had grafted different kinds of roses. Every year the garden was more beautiful. It was a sea of flowers in the spring and summer. Everyone came to admire nature and to work-to create beauty.

The rose garden was the creation of the entire school. The class, which had the most success in socially useful labor, earned the right of cutting and distributing the flowers from the garden. Most often the elementary and middle school grades won. They had permission to cut several dozen roses every day. They brought the roses to class and gave them to their teachers, their mothers, and the best workers in the village. On the day of the Festival of the First Sheaf, the children gathered a big bouquet of roses and presented it to the best workers of the collective farm. Working to create beauty ennobles the young heart and prevents indifference. In creating beauty on the earth, the children became better, purer, and more beautiful.

The Sources of Ideals in Life

I tried to imagine each of my students as a grown person. I was disturbed by the thoughts what kind of citizen, what kind of person will you become, young one? What will you bring to society, what will be your joy; what

will you admire, and what will make you indignant? In what will you find your happiness, and what sort of legacy will you leave on earth?

As a teacher and educator I tried to place those moral values created and struggled for by humanity over the centuries into the young hearts--love of homeland and freedom, intolerance of oppression and the enslavement of one person by another, and preparedness to give one's strength and life in the name of happiness and freedom for people. It is important that lofty words of one's homeland and lofty ideals not be transformed in the minds of our students into loud but empty phrases, that they not fade in strength or be obliterated by frequent use. Let the children speak infrequently of noble concepts, but let these ideals live in the passion for action, in love and hatred, in devotion and steadfastness.

It is especially intolerable to put words they don't understand into the youngsters' mouths. That which a people consider sacred can be transformed into empty sounds because of this.

As the careful gardener strengthens the root of a little tree which has barely pushed its way up out of the ground, giving it the ability to live for decades, so must the teacher look after the upbringing of his or her children, teaching them unlimited love for homeland, devotion to the working people, and belief in the great ideals of communism. The teaching of these qualities begins when the child begins to see, to understand, and to evaluate the world around it.

It is very important that children value everything created by the older generations, everything attained and won by the difficult struggle for the freedom and independence of their homeland and for the happiness of the working people. Homeland begins with a piece of bread and a field of wheat for the child, with a glade in the forest and the blue sky above a little pond, with the songs and stories of its mother at bed time. In the golden period of childhood, when youngsters are especially sensitive to language and images and to the spiritual world of another person, one must bring everything the older generation is proud of to the child's heart, tell it about the value of the struggle for the happiness of free labor. I tried not to permit careless enjoyment of the basic necessities. The child's understanding of the surrounding world and of itself should not be one-sided. Knowing the world and themselves, children must know their responsibility for the material and spiritual values created by the older generations.

"Traveling" into the past of our native region, as we called our excursions and trips to the field, the forest, the riverbank, and the neighboring villages, I tried to show the children those things that connect the past and present in the spiritual life of our people. I told them:

"Before you is a fertile field with heads of ripened wheat. On that field at the edge of the forest, the White guards shot a Red partisan during the years of the Civil War. And in the difficult first summer of the Great Patriotic War, a pitched battle occurred between a handful of soldiers and a company of Nazis. Our heroes perished here. Look at this broad field, children. The little mounds are the graves of unknown people; the earth preserves the memory of what they did. These thousands of little mounds are thousands of unmarked graves. The earth holds the noble blood of heroes, and the people will remember their deeds forever. If they had not given their lives for their homeland, you would not be enjoying the beauty of your native land. The Nazis would have carried you off into slavery."

Let the little child think about the fate of its native land. Let it feel and experience concern and anxiety for its future. Let the events of the past present themselves as the sources of the present.

The years of childhood, that age which we consider years of carefree joy, games, and fairy tales, is the source of ideals. Precisely at this time the roots of citizenship are put down. The kind of citizens your pupils will become depends upon what is opened before them from the surrounding world in the years of childhood, what amazes and delights them, what disturbs them and makes them cry--not from personal offense, but from concern for the

fates of other people. The multi-faceted world with its contradictions and complications opens before the child, and in it children see beauty and ugliness, happiness and grief. Everything that happens in the surrounding world, everything people lived for in the past and the present, the child divides into good and evil. In order to lie out the foundations of humanity and citizenship in the years of childhood, one must give the child a proper understanding of good and evil.

And by that I mean the following: all that children learn of the surrounding world, all societal phenomena, what people did in the past and present -all of this must awake profound moral feelings in children. A proper understanding of good and evil means that the child draws that which it knows close. The good calls forth joyful agitation in it, inspiration, and the attempt to follow in moral beauty; evil awakes indignation, intolerance, and an influx of spiritual strength for the struggle for the truth and justice. The child's soul should never be a cold storage space for truths. A serious defect, which I tried to avoid, was indifference and impassivity. The little person with an icy heart is a future philistine. In childhood one must already kindle the sparks of a passion for citizenship and intolerance of that which is in itself evil or creates evil.

It is not difficult to convince the child of the truth that oppression of one person by another is a great evil. Children can give correct answers when the teacher asks what evil is, but if the child has not been repulsed by vivid pictures of the enslavement of one person by another, if it has not felt hatred for the bearers of that evil, it will not become a true citizen. Human indifference is dangerous and loathsome, and indifference in children is terrible. I tried to get each of my students to experience the noble feeling of profound personal anxiety for the fates of others who live far away, somewhere on the other side of the world, or perhaps for those who lived a hundred years ago. This feeling is a sure mean of fighting indifference, a cure for icy hearts and the seeds of philistinism.

I read books to my pupils and told them the stories of the lives of those who had sounded the battle cry in the struggle for human worth, who had clearly expressed the idea of the intolerability of oppression of one person by another. The children listened with excitement to the Polish writer Senkiewicz's tale "Yanko the Musician" time and time again. The first reading shook the children up. They called the land- lord who destroyed the life of the defenseless boy a monster and a blood-sucker. They raised their little fists in indignation, and their eyes filled with anger. Yanko the Musician entered the spiritual lives of my students forever. Then we read the story many times, and some of the children knew it word for word. Why did the children want to listen to the story of Yanko again and again? It seems to me because the experience of anger gives birth to a show of spiritual strength. In feeling itself to be an implacable enemy of evil, the child becomes stronger and wants to experience the fullness of its moral strength to be convinced another time that it is prepared to struggle for truth. Such a child is sensitive to the good and evil in the world around it.

The stories of outstanding Ukrainian writer Arkhip Teslenko about the joyless childhoods and youths of the children of poor peasants made a striking impression on the children. When we read the story of the difficult lot of the talented peasant girl driven to suicide by poverty and humiliation at the hands of the rich and czarist officials, the children's eyes were filled with anger.

In the third and fourth grades, we read Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* twice. The children suffered greatly for the slaves. It was difficult to imagine that people could ever have been bought and sold like animals. A clear picture of the struggle between good and evil in the present day gradually took shape in the children's minds: millions of people in the capitalist countries worked not for themselves, but for the landlords and capitalists. Children there grow up without knowing what childhood is; the finest of them, who struggle for the freedom and independence of their homelands, are shot and hung or condemned to penal servitude.

The children never forgot the tragic fate of the hero of the Greek people, Nikos Beloyannis. During the Nazi occupation of Greece, Beloyannis fought against the invaders. When his country was liberated from the Nazis, a bourgeois court sentenced him to death for treason against his country. Nikos Beloyannis met his death with a

red carnation in his hand, and on the same day his wife, who had also been sentenced to death, gave birth to a son. Shocked by the fate of the boy, who lived in prison, the children asked how to help Nikos Beloyannis the Junior. Notable feelings give rise to activity. The children wrote a letter to the mother of Nikos Beloyannis the Junior and sent it via the International Red Cross. They made a present as well--a red carnation embroidered on white silk. Then every year, the students sent a letter to the hero's wife and a present for the little boy's birthday: flowers embroidered on white silk--a rose, a poppy, lilac. This seemingly insignificant deed had a deep effect on the children because it censured evil and fought against injustice.

In leading the children into the world of societal life, I tried to convince them that even in the darkest periods of human history, when the forces of evil oppressed millions of people, there were always those who rose up against injustice, precisely these people, their lives and work are bright, guiding stars for the younger generation. I tried to get my students to be inspired by the fortitude, courage, heroism, and loyalty to and belief in the convictions of the finest sons and daughters of humanity, those who struggled and gave their lives for the freedom and independence of their homelands, for freedom from exploitation, and for the strengthening of human dignity.

I tried to reach a point where the moral values created and won by humanity in the past and coming to flower in the socialist society of our day became the spiritual riches of every child, exciting it and awaking it to activity promoting the triumph of truth all over the world. Antonio Gramsci said that truth is always revolutionary. I tried to reveal moral truths in all their beauty without loud words. The beauty of the moral values or humanity becomes richness in the child's soul only when their revolutionary meaning is revealed in vivid, exciting images. "Words teach, but examples captivate," goes a Latin saying. Examples of outstanding lives, victories in the name of the happiness of humanity--this is the light which illuminates the life of the child. But examples teach one how to live only when they are living incarnations of humanitarian, progressive, revolutionary ideas. Everyone who withdraws from ideas, in the end, is left only with sensations, wrote Goethe, the great German poet.

I told the children about outstanding people whose names became guiding stars for many generations. Of course, you can't tell a little child everything. You mustn't bring down an avalanche of images and pictures on the child's head. You must not shock its heart and excite its soul endlessly. Let the child find out just a little for the time being, but let that little bit reveal the beauty of moral values to it. Let the child think about what excites it; let its thoughts and feelings fuse, figuratively speaking, let them remain in the heart of every child. Over a period of four years, I told my pupils about those who struggled for humanity--Spartacus, Tommaso Campanella, Ivan Susanin, Stepan Khalturin, Sofia Perovskaya, Nikolai Kibalchich, Taras Shevchenko, Thomas Miinzer, Khristo Botev, and Janusz Korczak. I told about the life and struggles of Lenin, of the Communist heroes Ivan Babushkin, Sergei Late, Kamo, Yakov Sverdlov, Felix Dzerzhinsky, Julius Fucik, and Ernst Thiilmann, and of the heroes of the Great Patriotic War, Nikolai Gastello and Alexander Matrosov, of the courageous struggle for scientific truth of Giordano Bruno, and of the great scholar and humanist Miklukho-Maklai.

The vivid example in which an idea is incarnated in living human passions and actions exercises a great influence on the inner world of the child. You don't need to explain to the children how to understand the essence of one act or another. When the idea and the image are brought together, the child understands the idea quite well. For the heroes about whom I told my students, their characteristic feature was a readiness to give all their strength and their lives for the people's happiness. This feature calls forth delight and makes the child think about the fates of other people. People who find their happiness in the service of humanity become moral ideals for the child.

It is difficult to imagine a complete education without the child's becoming engrossed in reading books about moral greatness until midnight so that its heartbeats more quickly with excitement. Moral ideals are born when the person scrutinizes himself and compares himself with that person who is his ideals of moral beauty, strength of conviction, courage, steadfastness, and determination in the face of difficulties.

The teacher must choose the stories carefully to bring the children to the source of moral values. The main thing here is the facts and events, which form the ideological meaning. In the lives of people who are ideals for the younger generation, it is very important to show the unity of their personal fate and the fate of humanity.

When telling the children about the life and struggles of Lenin, I dwelt upon those facts, which showed how he suffered over the fate of the working people. Everything that the great leader did had the happiness of the people as its aim. The children were seized by joyful excitement when they heard the story of how, during the difficult years of the Civil War and the years of devastation, Lenin showed great concern for orphans. I wanted Leninist humanity to enter the lives of the children as a great moral value, so that the youngsters saw themselves and the whole of the world around them through this moral beauty and truth.

The stories of Janusz Korczak, a national hero of the Polish people, made a big impression on the children. The children were amazed that this man went to his death together with the children that he loved. He could have saved his own life, but he considered such a thing dishonorable when thousands of innocent children were dying at the hands of the Nazis... Janusz Korczak became a symbol of true humanity for the children. A hot feeling of excitement arose in the children's hearts at the stories of the members of the 19th century revolutionary organization, The People's Will Stepan Khalturin, Sofia Perovskaya, and Nikolai Kibalchich. When I read about the steadfastness, courage, and faithfulness of Communists Julius Fucik and Kamo (Ter-Petrosyan), the children experienced a feeling of pride in humankind. They said: "It would be great to be like that. Those were real heroes."

I told the children a lot about the Young Pioneer heroes, about the feats of Valya Kotik, Vitya Korobkov, Lenya Golikov, Volodya Dubinin, and Vasya ShishLovsky who gave their lives in the struggle for the freedom and independence of their Soviet homeland. In addition, I tried gradually to reveal the most important features of Communist morality to the children-ideological steadfastness, courage, and irreconcilability to the enemies of socialism, peace, freedom, and democracy. To strengthen the ability to stand up for one's convictions as a matter of self-respect is one of the important tasks of education, the realization of which is only possible if, from an early age, the person began to work out an impression of good and evil incarnated in clear images. But these impressions alone are insufficient. Personal emotional evaluation is also necessary. The child must distinguish between what is dear to it and what it cannot abide. The moral education of youngsters consists in inspiring them with moral beauty, awaking the desire to create joy for people, to protect human dignity, and to value the moral principles of communism.

Young schoolchildren are standing at the sources of moral ideals. We teachers must make every child conscious of the beauty of moral courage and strengthen its belief in communist convictions so that elementary school pupils feel like a living, creative part of the working people.

A Thought About the Communist Party

One of the most important tasks of the school is to teach a feeling of love for the Communist Party of our country, belief in its principles, and readiness to struggle for its goals. Children hear the word Communist quite often. I tried to see that in their minds this word was merged with the brightest, noblest images of fighters for the liberation of our people from the exploiters, for the construction of socialism, for the victory over fascism, and for the communist remaking of society. I considered one of the aims of educational work to see that our children, as the heirs of the communist ideals of their fathers and grandfathers, be proud of them, and be true masters of their country, fighters for the construction and strengthening of communism.

I saw the attainment of this educational task first of all in the conversations about Communists. This cycle of conversations was called "People with Flaming Hearts" I told about the outstanding Communists of our country. The remarkable lives and heroic struggles of the Communists-fighters against czarism and for socialist

revolution--convinced the children that the highest happiness of the Communist is devotion to the people, the struggle for the people's happiness.

From the very first days of our School of Joy and until the day when the young men and women received their high school diplomas and began work or further studies, I read to the children about Lenin. In the beginning, I read about the years of Lenin's child- hood and youth. Every month, stories became more closely connected with questions of history, communist ideology, and the work of our party for a better future for the people. The children became convinced that the Communist Party is the cream of the crop, the very finest sons and daughters of the people.

The children began to meet with Communists. The stories of their lives and struggles became a part of the history of the Communist Party for the children. The children would never forget their meetings with old Bolsheviks V. M. Beskorovainy, A. M. Radzivill, or N. K. Gaichuk. The children were impressed by the fact that these fellow villagers of ours had stood at the cradle of Soviet power and had shed their blood for the victory of the workers and peasants. The children realized that Communists were people with strong convictions. At the same time they were modest people, and in spite of their venerable age, they gave their strength and reason to the building of communism. The children knew Radzivill as the best vegetable farmer, and Beskorovainy as a person with hands of gold--one of the most experienced machine operators. He told the children how the collective farm was created in the village, how the Communists learned how to drive tractors, sat behind the steering wheel, and plowed the first furrow on the collective farm's fields.

Beskorovainy had several conversations with the children devoted to the work of the Party for the best future for the Soviet people. He talked about the work of the kolkhoz Party organization. The children found out that the Communists on the kolkhoz worked to increase the harvest yields, and to see that the animal farm produced more meat, milk, and butter for us.

The stories about the Great Patriotic War were especially interesting. The children met with a participant in the partisan organization of S. A. Kovpak, Hero of the Soviet Union A. K. Tsimbal, with a participant in the battles for the liberation of Romania and Hungary from fascism, Hero of the Soviet Union N. S. Onopa, and with many of our fellow villagers-- heroes of the battle for the liberation of our native land from fascism. The conviction that Leninist causes and Leninist truth live on in the work of the Communist Party and in the labor of the people was strengthened in the minds of the children.

One Must Not Live Even a Day Without Concern for Others

Life shows that if the child only "consumes" joy without working for it, without putting forth spiritual effort, its heart may become cold, callous, and indifferent.

An enormous moral force ennobling children is the creation of good for other people. One of the educational tasks of the Soviet school consists in seeing that the child feels that there are other people around who need help, care, tenderness, warm-heartedness, and sympathy. The main thing is that the children's consciences not allow them to pass by these people, that the child does well for others not from a desire to be noticed by others, but from disinterested motives.

The source of the child's conscience, a willingness to do good for others, is empathy for the feelings of those people who are filled with grief and adversity. Sensitivity to the inner world of the person, the ability to respond to the unhappiness of another--with this begins the highest human joy without which moral beauty is impossible. In the School of Joy, my students had already made the first steps along the path to the science of humanity, learned to see the grief, sorrow, sadness, and anxiety in the eyes of those whom they met in everyday circumstances. This ability enters the moral beliefs of the adult and becomes an inseparable feature of the spiritual life only when throughout the years of childhood; a day does not pass without concern for people.

I always taught my students empathy for the feelings of other people and tried to get the child to put itself into the other fellow's shoes, to experience his need for help and care. The grief of another person must become the personal grief of the child; it must make the child think about how to help those in need. Personal relationships, the interaction between two people, play an exceptionally important role in the teaching of humaneness: It is easier to love humanity than to help one's neighbor. It is impossible to know people without concrete knowledge of the human personality. Human grief does not reach the heart of the child if it does not read the deep grief in the sad, pleading, suffering eyes of its friend. The child that does not know all the sides of human life-both joy and sorrow--will never become sensitive and sympathetic.

There was a lot of grief within our own class-we didn't have to look hard to find it. Laughter rang out and a spirit of cheerfulness reigned, but the eyes of some children were sad. Three years after Valya came to school, her father's health took a sharp turn for the worse. The little girl became silent and pensive. Nina and Sasha's mother was seriously ill, and they frequently stayed home to help their father with the housework. Shura's grandmother fell ill and she was in the hospital several times, first for a week and then for months at a time; this was a great grief for the little boy. While his grandmother was sick, the child stayed with his aunt, a very good woman who cared for Shura, but the separation from his grandmother caused the boy to suffer. One cold autumn day, Shura decided to visit his grandmother. Without saying a word to his aunt, he went to the hospital. He got wet in a rainstorm on the way, caught cold, and then fell seriously ill. Several days later, he was put in the same hospital where his grandmother was.

There was an accident in Volodya's family. His mother was a plasterer. Every day, she went to work on the bus. In the spring when the ground was still covered with ice, the bus collided with a car full of people, and Volodya's mother was seriously injured. The doctor said that she would be an invalid for the rest of her life. At the same time his grandfather, who had taken a great deal of care that Volodya follow the proper path in life, died.

Grief, but grief of another sort, occurred in Kolya's family. His father was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison for receipt of stolen goods. The moral atmosphere in the family became cleaner, but what had happened couldn't help but shock the boy.

Every day when I met with the children, I looked at their faces. What could be more difficult in the complex process of education than the sad eyes of a child? If the child is sad, its attention is not on what goes on in class. It is like a taut string: a careless touch can cause injury. Every child experiences grief in its own way: if you comfort one, it feels better; but kind words bring fresh pain to others. Educational skill in such cases consists first of all in human wisdom: sparing the pained heart, not bringing fresh grief to the child, not touching the wounded places in its soul. The student who is stunned by grief and confused cannot study, of course, as he or she did earlier. Grief leaves a mark on the thinking. The main thing for the teacher is first of all to see the child's grief, sadness, and suffering: to see and feel the child's soul. The manner in which the teacher relates to the child's grief, the measure to which he or she has the ability to understand and feel the child's soul makes up the foundation of the teacher's educational skill.

You should not call on the pupil who is living through grief or expect assiduity and diligence from him or her. You must not ask what happened: it will be difficult for the child to speak of. If the child has faith in the teacher, if the teacher is its friend, then the child will say what it can. If it is silent, do not touch the child's ailing heart... The most difficult thing in education is to teach feeling. And the oldest the child is, the more difficult it will be for the teacher to touch, figuratively speaking, the delicate strings of the human heart, the sounding of which call forth noble feelings.

To teach the child to feel, to see the inner world of someone close to him in the person's eyes, the teacher must be able to respect the feelings of the children, grief first of all. There is nothing more ugly in the emotional-moral relations of grown-ups and children than an attempt on the part of the older person to shatter the feelings of grief

with light-headed arguments such as, we adults know that you children just blow up your sadness all out of proportion...

First of all you must remember the child's emotions. It is impossible to teach this with the aid of some special methods. This happens only because of a high level of emotional-moral development in the teacher. Whatever sources the child's grief feeds upon, there is always something common: gloomy, sad eyes, which are staggering in their unchild like pensiveness, indifference, depression, and loneliness. The child living through unhappiness doesn't notice games or the amusements of its comrades; nothing can get its mind off its sad thoughts. The most delicate help, the best thing to do is simply to share its grief without touching the depths of its innermost being. Coarse interference could bring forth bitterness, and advice not to lose heart, to get a hold of oneself, if there is no genuine human feeling behind it, is perceived as irrelevant by the children. To teach children to feel means first of all to give them one's own emotional-moral standards. Emotional standards are impossible without an understanding of the spiritual state of the person. And such an understanding comes to the child when it thoughtfully places itself in the shoes of the person who is experiencing grief or anxiety.

When Shura's grandmother fell ill, the little boy was sad and pensive, and at the same time suspicious: if you said something to him, he jumped as if someone had touched his sore spot. One day I saw that his big brown eyes had filled with tears. The children said to me: "Shura is crying." It would be naive to expect that a child be imbued with sympathy for its friends or for an adult simply because it is a child. Empathy must be taught just as thoughtfully and carefully as children are taught to take their first independent steps. Empathy is one of the most delicate spheres of cognition--cognition with one's heart and mind. There must be a powerful means of teaching empathy in the arsenal of the experienced teacher-- language.

I chose a moment when Sasha was not in the classroom and said to the children: "If a person has some grief, you must not act surprised. And Sasha has a lot of grief right now. The only close relative he has is his grandmother. He doesn't remember his mother. And his grandmother has fallen ill. Maybe they will take her to the hospital, and then what will he have left? Put yourself in his shoes and you will feel what sorrow is. Do you remember the old man we met by the road! Do you remember what sad eyes he had? You felt then that the old man was sad. Why don't you notice the sorrow in the eyes of your friend? You have seen that Sasha has been quiet and thoughtful for a few days now. He is in the classroom, but his thoughts are at his grandmother's bedside. If he stays at home for a few days, don't be in a hurry to ask why he wasn't in school. It is difficult for a person to speak of his grief. And in general, if you see that a person is sad or suffering, don't ask nosey questions. Do some-thing to help. Don't pour salt on the person's wounds. If you know that some misfortune has befallen a member of your class, behave such that not a single one of your words or any of your actions will add to his grief. And another thing--think of how you can help Sasha and his grandmother. But your help should not be boastful: you should not say how good we are because we are helping our friend. It is never acceptable to parade one's goodness. If your heart doesn't tell you that you must help your friend, then no display of goodness will make you good people."

Sasha came back into the classroom, and I didn't say another word about him. The children felt why I immediately began to speak of something else. At the break they began to discuss how to help the little boy and his grandmother. The children brought him apples and fish--and all of this was done from the very purest motives. When the grandmother was taken to the hospital and Sasha started to live with his aunt, the children went to see them often. When they found out that the little boy had caught cold in the rain, had fallen ill, and lay in the hospital along with his grandmother, they felt great sorrow. On their free day from school, we all went to the hospital. The children brought apples and cookies for their friend. And Shura brought a bar of chocolate his father had brought for him. We waited half a day while all the children went to the ward to see Sasha.

This made me glad but disturbed me as well. All this was the result of a collective impulse. Some of the children wanted to do good for their friend first of all so that their good deed would be seen by others. Volodya said that he wanted to bring Sasha the new skates his father had bought for him and give them to him in the hospital.

"Did your father say you could?" I asked.

"Yes, he did."

"Then why bring them to the hospital?" Sasha can't skate right now anyway. Bring them to him when he is at home after he has gotten better."

Volodya didn't give his skates to Sasha. The inner impulse was very weak... That event made me think about the teaching of kindliness, warm-heartedness, and sympathy. These are very delicate and complicated things. How could I get the little person to do something good not for the calculated reward, but from the need to do good? What is the essence of this need for goodness and where does it begin? Of course in teaching sympathy, the collective spiritual impulse is very significant. But all the same, empathy must enter deeply into the personal sphere of the spiritual life of each child.

I tried to get all my students to do good deeds, to help their comrades or other people in general, from an inner need and for the experience of a profound feeling of satisfaction. This is probably one of the most difficult things in moral education: to teach the person to do good and at the same time to avoid straight- forward advice to do it this way. How can this be put into practice? Apparently the main thing is to develop the child's inner strength, that thanks to which the person cannot avoid doing good, i.e., to teach empathy. But how is this done? How can you reach a point where children automatically put themselves in the place of the other person when they see his or her grief, so that clear thought gives rise to clear feeling, so that the personality of the little child intermingles with the personality of the person who is suffering, so that the child sees and feels itself in the person experiencing grief?

Our teachers' meetings devoted to the most difficult and complex spheres of spiritual life and the inter- relations of children were gradually transformed into a psychological seminar. Not just the elementary teachers, but also those from the middle and upper grades took part. The object of our concern was the person-the child, the teenager, the youth. We read reports at the meetings of the psychological seminar and gave information on the inner worlds of particular children, on the sources of their intellectual, moral, emotional, physical, and esthetic development, about how the environment in which they spent their pre-school years and the way it affects their reason, thinking, feelings, will, character and personal convictions. The elementary teachers' reports prepared the teachers of the middle and upper grades, enabling them to influence the teenagers and young men and women. Everything served to strengthen the collective educational conviction that for the person we are educating to be in the sphere of influence of all the teachers, every educator must have a deep, thorough knowledge of every individual student.

We found that two or three hours were not enough to grasp thoroughly the very complex spheres of the inner worlds of some children. Thus, after my report on Kolya's personality, some of the teachers added very important details to my characteristics: how the child perceived everything that he saw at school in his emotional world, in other words, how he understood relations between people, and his own relations with other people. We came to a very interesting, and, in the opinion of the teachers, a new conclusion of the internal urge to do good, and of how the child makes itself do good for others.

The more the children showed sympathy to their friends who were experiencing grief, the more sensitive their hearts became. One cold day in February when the children were in the third class, Misha, Kolya and Larisa came running up to my house. They were upset about something.

"Vanya's brother Lyonya died," said Katya. "They sent his father a telegram, and he is going to Kazakhstan tomorrow. What should we do?"

The children's eyes implored: teach us how to help our friend!

The same day we learned how the tragedy had occurred. Lyonya, an eighteen-year-old tractor driver was taking hay to the animal farm. He was caught in a snowstorm on the way. He could have left the tractor and gone to the village, which was not far from the road, but he didn't do that hoping that the storm would blow over and he would be able to get the hay to the farm on time. But the storm grew worse and a freeze hit. Lyonya froze to death in the cab of his tractor... Vanya didn't come to school for several days. The children were sad; their twittering stopped. Everyone asked how they could help their friend. Someone suggested going to his house. I advised against that, "The boy and his mother and father and brothers and sisters are living through a great grief. If we go to their house, his mother will see us and remember that Lyonya went to school, and it will be even harder for her. Let's go to see Vanya later when his mother feels better. And when he comes back to school, don't ask how his brother died. It will be hard for him to think about it or talk about it. Be attentive and obliging to Vanya, and don't do anything to hurt him any worse."

When Vanya's father returned from Kazakhstan, he told me that one of the streets in a village in the virgin lands was to he named after his oldest son. The father told me, and I repeated it to the children. At that time, our class was getting ready to join the Young Pioneer. The children thought about whom they would name their detachment and each of the three units after. And they themselves said what I had expected: that the unit Vanya was in should bear the name of his brother Leonid who had died at his post. The little boy took this news to her mother. I advised the children to make an album in which each of us would draw something about school. Of course, each of the children wanted to draw something connected with Leonid and his school years. The older students showed us the apple tree he had planted when he was a third former. In the physics room, we found a model crane that Leonid and his friends had made. Leonid loved birds, and the memory of how he and his unit had made a little dovecote lived on in the school. The children wrote about all these things in the album. I drew a portrait of Leonid. We took the album to his mother. This gift was priceless for her: she was glad that the school was preserving the memory of her son. We made the same type of album for Young Pioneer unit that was named after Leonid.

It is very important that kind feelings and good deeds not be transformed into a mere show. As little as possible should be said of what has been done, and there should be no praise for good deeds - these are the demands placed upon educational work. The mast dangerous thing is that the child might consider its actions valorous and worthy of merit in its own mind. More often than pot, the school is at fault here. A student found a ten-kopeck piece someone had lost, brought it to class, and everyone knew that he had found it. This reminds me of an interesting thing that happened in one of the neighboring schools. A girl brought five kopecks she had found to class, and the teacher lavished praise on her... Then at the next break, three girls and one boy ran up to the teacher, all claming to have found money lost by their comrades --one had a kopeck, and others had two. They were waiting to be praised, but the teacher felt that some- thing was wrong and was indignant... This is how children become accustomed to putting forth "little pieces of goodness", and if they are not praised for these good deeds, displeasure appears.

Kindliness must become the same sort of ordinary state for a person as thinking. It must become a habit. The teachers tried to see that kind, sincere deeds left a feeling of deep satisfaction in the children's hearts. Warm sensitivity to the inner world of another person arises in the child under the influence of the teacher's words, and under the influence of the mood of the group. It is very important to awake impulses of warm compassion and preparedness to do good deeds in all children. But this impulse only ennobles the child when it takes the shape of individual activity.

My pupils didn't forget about their old friend, Grandfather Andrei. During the winter months, the old man lived in a little hut not far from the winter apiary. The children brought him apples and drawings. Grandfather was very grateful for every kind word. The children felt that loneliness was a hard fate and tried to do good for him.

One warm day in March, the children hurried to Grandfather Andrei's: they were going to help him get the bees out. That day was a holiday for everyone: the youngsters were glad when they saw how the golden-winged heralds of spring flew about. Along the road to the apiary, we went into an old woman's hut to drink some water. She gave us homemade cookies and asked us to drop by more often.

Olga Fyodorovna had lived through tremendous grief during the years of the war: two of her sons, her husband and brother were killed, and her daughter died from overwork in the coalmines in fascist Germany. I told the children about her hard life, and the children wanted to make friends with Grandmother Olga. They went to see her often. She allowed us her sons' and husband's medals and honors. A desire to bring Grandmother Olga joy arose in the children's hearts. As soon as it was time to plant fruit trees, we planted five apple trees and as many pears, cherries and grape vines in memory of her sons, daughter, brother, and husband. Then we planted trees for grandmother herself. It is difficult to describe the feeling of gratitude Olga Fyodorovna felt. On hot summer days we went to water the plants, although she could have done it herself without us. In the summer, the children spent entire days with her.

Grandmother Olga became the children's friend. The children didn't celebrate a single holiday without her. We tried not to miss the moment when the cherries, apples, pears, and grapes were ripe. We went to Grandmother's orchard, picked the first ripe fruits, and brought them to her. When the children were in the seventh class, Grandmother Olga fell seriously ill. She died a week after the school year ended. This was a great sorrow for the children. After a while, we found out that Olga Fyodorovna had left her hut and orchard to the children in her will. This will puzzled the head of the kolkhoz: how should it be interpreted that the students were the owners of the hut and garden? The collective farmers helped to solve this problem, which didn't fall under any legal norms. They said that the children should do their good works with the little plot of land. We invited Grandfather Andrei to live in the cottage, and he moved in with joy: it wasn't far from the apiary. When they were in the fourth class, Varya and Zina made friends with the October Children and prepared them to join the Young Pioneers. The children spent entire days in their orchard.

It is a great grief for a mother to have a son, killed in the fight for the freedom and independence of his homeland. Let our children feel and share that grief. Let the thousands and thousands of mothers whose sons lie in unmarked graves from the Volga to the Elba, from the Arctic Ocean to the warm waters of the Mediterranean Sea make friends with school-children. It is impossible to ennoble the child's heart if it has not experienced the great grief of our home-land--the grief of loosing twenty-two million lives, the grief of horrible tortures, fires, and destruction-- none of which our people can forget or forgive its fascist perpetrators.

The more deeply the child assimilates the grief of a mother, the more sensitive it will be, the more firm will be its convictions of citizenship, the more strongly the little person will feel responsible for the future of his or her homeland. Therefore, such a serious event as inviting a mother whose son died a hero's death in the Great Patriotic War to a Young Pioneer meeting or to the school in general must be arranged with great tact. This must not flash by as an ordinary educational measure for the children. A meeting with a person whose personal grief is an expression of the grief of an entire people must make a deep impression on them.

Molding a good citizen is one of the most complex problems, not only in the theory but also in educational practice. In this sphere it is of paramount importance that knowledge pass through the heart and enter the child's personal life. Knowledge of one's homeland and of what is sacred and dear to the Soviet people is not only information, which, after it has been assimilated, may be used, in everyday life. These are truths, which must affect the student's personal lives. They will only become sacred to the child if it comes to understand the greatness of its homeland via the greatness of the person.

"The memory of a people is an enormous book in which everything is written." And education of good citizen is senseless without the reading of this book, without a profound realization of every word and letter. That which we are accustomed to call the connection between school and life presents itself to me first of all as transferring

love of homeland and hatred of its enemies and conquerors who were the causes of great suffering and misfortune from the heart of the people to the hearts and minds of children. Every contact with the great book of the memory of the people is the most complex and responsible act in the formation of the human personality.

Labor Imbued with Noble Feelings

Work becomes a great teacher when it enters the lives of our students and gives the joy of friendship and comradeship, develops inquisitiveness and curiosity, gives birth to excitement at the overcoming of difficulties, opens the way to ever new beauties in the surrounding world, and awakes the first feeling of citizenship the feeling of being a creator of material values without which human life is impossible.

The joy of labor is a mighty educational force. In the years of childhood, every youngster must experience this noble feeling.

In the first fall of our school life the older students allotted us several dozen square meters of land in the school plot. We heed the ground, a task village children are quite accustomed to, and then I told the children, "We will plant winter wheat here, and then we will gather the grain and grind it. It will be our first loaf of bread." The children knew quite well what bread was and tried to work like their fathers and mothers; at the same time, there was a romantic element, an element of play, in what we were doing.

The dream of the first loaf of bread inspired us and helped us overcome difficulties. And there were more than a few: the children carried the little baskets of humus and mixed it with the soil, dug furrows for the rows of wheat, and selected the seeds one after another. Sowing turned into a real carnival. The inspiration of labor caught up all the children. The field had been sown, but no one went home. We wanted to dream, so I sat under a tree, and I told a story about a golden grain of wheat. I thought about the story and about my wanting the labor my students did in the years of childhood to be not only childish but to contain the first joys of citizenship. I wanted the child to enter societal life through work, as along a broad path, coming to know people and itself, experiencing the first feelings of pride as a citizen. I never forgot that work need not be easy. The measure of physical and spiritual effort the children put out would determine that very important process which is known as growing up. The child grows up as a result of labor. One must find that level of difficulty when the labor will be suitable for children and at the same time will help them grow up. Many years of experience convinced me that this goal is attained when the children's labor contains an element of the productive activity of adults, that is, a material result that is included in the relations of the members of the group.

The children waited anxiously for the shoots of wheat to begin to appear: they wondered how soon their field would become green. Then when the shoots appeared, the bays and girls ran to look at them every morning: would they grow quickly or not? In the winter, we covered the field with snow so the wheat would be warm. In the spring, the children were wild with excitement when they saw how the shoots covered the earth like a blanket, as the wheat sprouted stalks and heads. The youngsters were concerned for the fate of every head.

Harvest was an even more joyful holiday than sowing had been. The children wore their best clothes to school. Every child cut the wheat with care and tied it in little sheaves. Threshing was another festival of labor. They gathered it all to the last grain and poured it into a sack. Grandfather Andrei ground the wheat and brought us the white flour. We asked Tina's mother to bake bread for us. The children helped her: the boys brought water, and the girls brought firewood. Then there they were: four big, round leaves of white bread- our labor, our care and excitement. The children's hearts were filled with pride.

Then the long-awaited day arrived--the festival of the first leaves of bread. The children invited Grandfather Andrei and all their parents. The girls put the good-smelling pieces of bread on the table covered with an embroidered white tablecloth, and Grandfather Andrei put out plates full of honey. The parents ate the bread and praised the children and thanked them for their labor.

The children never forgot that day. At the festival, no loud words were spoken about labor or human achievements. The main thing that excited the children about the celebration was the feeling of pride: they had grown their own bread and brought happiness to their parents. And human pride at the labor of one's hands is one of the most important sources of moral purity and nobility.

Our festival of the first leaves of bread drew the attention of the other classes. They all wanted to grow their own bread. The children didn't give their teachers any peace until they found out why the others had a bread festival and they didn't.

This event gave the teachers food for thought. Everyone saw that the simplest thing--working the land and spreading fertilizer--could become something the children wanted to do just like walking in the forest or reading an interesting book. The teachers said that the lazy students who didn't seem to be interested in anything changed beyond recognition when it came to work. They wanted to do work. "What is going on?" we thought. And it all came down to one main thing--the feeling of inspiration. Diligence is first of all a part of the emotional life of the child. It will work when this work gives it joy. The deeper the joy of work, the more the child values its personal honor, and the more vividly it sees its part in common activity--its efforts, and its name. The joy of work is a powerful means of education thanks to which the child recognizes itself as a member of the collective. This does not mean that work becomes some sort of amusement. It demands effort and persistence, but we must not forget that we are dealing with children before whom the world is only just opening.

The children celebrated the festival of the first leaves of bread annually. The next school year, they chose a new plot of land and grew winter wheat, once again inviting their parents and their little pre-school friends. Even when my students were young men and women they continued to harvest the wheat from their little school plot with great excitement-they ground the wheat and baked bread-- and all of it retained its elements of play and romance. Joy of work cannot be compared with any other joy. It is senseless without the feeling of beauty, but here beauty is not only what the child receives, but first of all what it creates. Joy of labor is the beauty of existence: and in coming to know this beauty, the child experiences pride at overcoming difficulty.

This feeling of joy is achieved only by those who can put forth effort and know what sweat and tiredness are. Childhood need not be an endless holiday-- if there is no effort expended, but such as is not beyond the children's powers, the joy of labor will be inaccessible to the child. Higher educational wisdom consists in teaching the child the value of labor. For the people, work is not only a necessity of life without which human existence is senseless, but a sphere of the multi-faceted manifestations of inner life, a richness of character. The richness of human relations is revealed in work. Teaching love of work is impossible if the child does not feel the beauty of these relations. In labor activities, people see the most important means of self-expression and self-assertion. Without labor a person is an empty place, as they say. It is an important educational task to see that the feeling of personal worth and pride in every student is founded on successful labor.

In the first spring of their school life, the children planted a Mothers' Orchard--thirty-one apple trees and the same number of grape vines. "Children," I said to my students, "this orchard will be for our mothers. Mama is the dearest, closest person for each of us. In three years, the apple trees and grape vines will bear fruit. The first apples and bunches of grapes will be our present to our mothers. Let us bring them joy. Remember that your mothers have a lot of worries. We will reward them for these worries with joy."

Work in the Mothers' Orchard was inspired by a desire to bring joy to their elders, to their parents. Some children still didn't know the depths of that noble human emotion--love of one's mother. I tried to awaken that feeling in every child. Galya planted a tree for her stepmother, Sasha, for his grandmother, and Vitya for his aunt. No one was indifferent to that labor. In the spring and summer, the children watered the trees and did away with the pests. The apple trees and grape vines turned green. The third year, the first blossoms appeared, and then the first fruits. Everyone wanted the fruit on his or her tree to ripen faster.

I was glad that Tolya, Tina, and Kolya found joy in this work and that juicy apples and golden bunches of grapes ripened on their plants. The children picked the ripe fruit and took it to their mothers. This was an unforgettable day in the lives of the children. I remember the tenderness that lit Kolya's eyes when he picked apples to take to his mother.

In second year of school, the children's labor was inspired with noble feelings. Every child planted fruit trees in their parents' orchards at home - trees for their mother, father, grandmother, and grandfather. "This is my mother's or father's tree," the children would say with pride. Sasha planted apple trees in memory of his father and mother. Galya and Katya raised fruit trees in memory of their mothers without forgetting about their stepmothers who also got apple trees.

The children showed more touching concern for these fruit trees than they did for any other work. Everyone waited impatiently for the apple trees to bloom. They awaited the first fruits from the trees to pick and take to their mothers. This was not simply a series of tasks which the children fulfilled one after the other. These were steps in moral development, which allowed the children to experience the beauty of what they did.

The most sacred and beautiful thing in the life of a person is his or her mother. It is very important that the children feel the moral beauty of the labor, which brings joy to their mothers. Gradually a fine tradition was born in our collective: in the fall when the earth and labor give the person lavish gifts, we began to celebrate an autumn mothers' holiday. Every child brought its mother what it had created by its own labor and had dreamed about the whole summer or even for years on that day: apples, flowers, or stalks of wheat harvested from its own tiny school plot (every child had a corner for its favorite labor in the parents' garden plot). "Take care of your mothers"-that thought we strengthened in the minds of the boys and girls in getting them ready for the Autumn Mothers' Holiday. The more effort the child spent in labor done in the name of its mother, the more humane its heart would become.

We also began to celebrate a Spring Mothers' Holiday. We found a remote corner of the forest in which there were many berries in the summer, so the children called it the Wild Strawberry Nook. The children experienced great joy in the moments of contact with this wonderful place. The children wanted to share their joy with their mothers. And the children got the idea to give the first flowers beautifying the earth to their mothers. Thus the Spring Mothers' Holiday appeared. On that day, the children brought their mothers not only the first tender bells of the snowdrops but flowers they had grown in the greenhouse. In conducting holidays dedicated to mother, one must avoid sensation and "organizational measures". We tried to see that the mothers' celebrations were intimate family gatherings. The main thing here is not loud words, but deep feelings.

It is easier to love humanity than to do good for one's mother, says an old Ukrainian proverb attributed to the eighteenth century "folk philosopher", Grigory Skovoroda. There is a great deal of wisdom for the educator in this proverb. It is impossible to teach humaneness if the heart is not strengthened by affection for those near and dear to the person. Words about love of one's fellow-person is not the same as love. The real school, which teaches kindliness and sympathy, is the family; one's relations with one's parents, grandparents and siblings are the touchstones of humanity.

The labor of children should be the creation of beauty, for such is the demand for the unity of esthetic and moral education. In the first autumn of school life, we gathered sweetbrier seeds and planted them in a bed, which had been set-aside in a secluded corner of the school plot. We grafted shoots of white, red, crimson, and yellow roses to the sweetbrier. We created our own "rose garden". It is difficult to express the joy the children felt when the first flowers appeared. The little boys and girls were afraid to touch the bushes for fear of harming them. When I said that the roses would bloom all summer if the flowers were cut properly, the children were in ecstasy. They all wanted to take roses to their mothers. The children felt great pleasure when they were able to give their mothers a little bouquet of roses along with the apples at the Autumn Mothers' Holiday.

We planted a lot of flowers the spring of our first school year. We had to take care of them all the time, and watering them was an especially difficult task. At that time, the older students made a little water tower with a pump. The water was brought to the flowerbeds, which lightened the children's work, and everyone, even little Danko, could water all the flowers in half an hour.

I wanted flower growing to become a personal pastime of each of the children. There is probably no work, which is more ennobling to the heart than the combination of beauty and creativity, creation and humanity, which is found in taking care of roses. I saw to it that every child would begin to want its own flowerbed at home. In the third and fourth classes my students were already admiring the roses they grow at home.

Life has convinced me that if the child grows roses to admire their beauty, if the sole compensation for its labor is the enjoyment of beauty and the creation of that beauty for the happiness and joy of another person, that child is not capable of evil, meanness, cynicism, or heartlessness. This is one of the very complex questions of moral education. Beauty itself contains no magic powers to teach the person nobility of spirit. Beauty teaches moral purity and humanity only when the work, which creates the beauty, is humanized by lofty moral convictions, first of all, respect for other people. The deeper this humanization of labor which creates beauty for people, the more the person respects himself, and the more intolerant he is of deviation from the norms of morality.

The role of beauty in teaching morality became a subject of discussion among the teachers. We attached great significance to beauty as one of the means of influencing the inner world of the student, particularly his or her emotions while, at the same time, we were afraid of overrating the role of this influence. Under what conditions does beauty become a means of educational influence? We asked ourselves this question at a psychological seminar. The answer was the result of general analysis of the norms of the educational process. We shared our experience and analyzed the methods and means of influence of the teacher on the inner life of the students of the elementary, middle, and upper grades, and we became more convinced that there is no one all-powerful method which can insure success in education and at the same time compensate for the inadequacies and weak spots in other spheres of the educational process.

One might do an excellent job of esthetic education, but if the other elements and component parts of communist education have been carried out inadequately, then the educational influence of beauty is weakened, and can even come to naught. Every influence on the inner world of the child acquires educational power only when processes of equal importance are conducted concurrently. Under certain conditions, the person might care tenderly for flowers, delighting in their beauty, and at the same time be a cynic, indifferent, or hard-hearted. Everything depends upon the other means of influence on the inner world of the personality, which coexist with what influence upon which we educators set our hopes.

The teachers became convinced of these sources. The discussion of concrete, real-life situations brought us to the problem of the harmony of educational influences. In my opinion, this is one of the fundamental norms of education. I am far from thinking that this problem has been solved in our schools, but nonetheless, a lot has been done toward its solution. The essence of this problem expresses itself in one of the most important norms of education, which consists of the following: the educational effect of every means of influence on the personality depends upon how well thought out, purposeful, and effective the other means of influence are. The power of beauty as a means of education depends upon how well the power of labor can be revealed as an educational method, and how deep and well-thought- out the education of the reason and emotions is. The teacher's words acquire educational force only when the strength of the personal example of one's elders acts as well, and when all the other educational methods are imbued with moral purity and nobility.

There are hundreds and thousands of dependencies and conditionalities between educational influences. In the final analysis, the effectiveness of education is determined by the way in which these dependencies and conditionalities are taken into account, or more precisely, are realized in practice. In my opinion, all the tiresome

accusations that the science of education fails to keep pace with life come from ignoring the fact that any influence on the personality looses its force if there are no hundreds of other influences, and that any norm is transformed into empty sounds if hundreds of other norms are not realized. The science of education lags behind inasmuch as it has failed to investigate dozens and hundreds of dependencies and interdependencies acting on the personality. It will become an exact science, a genuine science, only when it investigates and explains the very delicate dependencies and conditionalities of educational phenomena.

...Several festivals of flowers were born. The spring festival of flowers was for lily-of-the-valley, tulips, and lilacs. On that day, we went to the forest and to the lilac garden we had laid out in the first autumn of our school life; every student gathered a little bouquet, trying to find an unrepeatable combination of colors. We went to the lawn and admired the bouquets. We took them to our mothers and to our friends Grandfather Andrei and Grandmother Olga. We invited the little pre-schoolers to the festival and made little bouquets for them.

The second holiday was the festival of roses. We gathered bouquets in the school rose garden and in the garden plots.

The third holiday was the festival of wild flowers. It gave the children the most joy of all. We went to the field in the morning when the flowers were especially beautiful. To gather a beautiful bouquet of wild flowers is genuine creativity. We took the bouquets to school, resting and dreaming of having wild flowers blooming in our garden. We made note of where the most beautiful flowers grew and gathered seeds there and dug up the bulbs in the autumn. Then we planted them in our garden, and cornflowers and daisies bloomed near the school.

The fall festival of flowers, or the chrysanthemum festival, was a sad farewell to summer. We worked very hard to celebrate it as late as possible... We protected the chrysanthemum bushes from cold winds and frosts, and covered them with paper caps at night. After the autumn festival of flowers, we transplanted the bushes into the greenhouse.

In the third class, the children first celebrated the festival of the snowdrops. There was still snow on the ground in the forest, but the earth had already awakened from its winter sleep. The first violet-blue and white bluebells had appeared in the clearings. That day, the children brought little bouquets to their mothers.

I tried to get the children to see the source of joy in work. A person should work not only to put a roof over his head, but so that there will be flowers blooming next to the house that he has built--flowers which give joy to him and to other people. From childhood, a person should work to create joy.

A little nook of beauty appeared in the garden plots of their parents a year after the children had started school. Almost all the children cultivated roses. In addition, each child had its favorite flowers. Viuya, Lida, Pavlo Seryozha, Katya, Larisa, and Kostya loved chrysanthemums. Sanya, Zina, Lyuba, Lyuda and Sasha cultivated carnations and tulips. Vanya, Vitya and Peuil planted several lilac bushes. I showed the children how to look after flowers, how to grow seedlings and pick out the very best place for the plants.

Love of flowers became the reason for an argument between Kolya and his mother. The little boy loved to work in the greenhouse. I gave him three-chrysanthemum bushes and showed him how to plant them. At the same time, we divided up good strains of tomato seedlings among the children. Kolya brought home a dozen tomato plants along with the chrysanthemums. His mother planted the tomatoes and Kolya, the chrysanthemums. Two weeks later, his mother saw the chrysanthemum bushes, which had rooted well, and threw them out. The little boy found the discarded plants by the fence, began to cry, and ran to his mother. The woman started to laugh: "You mean you're already starting to feel sorry for plants? What do we need them for? We've lived without them all our lives and will continue to do so." Kolya silently took the flowers and planted them behind the barn.

After some time, the boy brought his mother several sky blue flowers and said: "Mother, look how beautiful they are." The child put some very complex feelings into these words. What he probably wanted to pay was: "Mama, I wish that life in our family were as beautiful as these flowers."

The children worked in the "bird hospital" with great enthusiasm. After storms, we went to the forest and always found fledglings, which had fallen from their nests to the ground. Children's voices could be heard in the "bird hospital" almost any time... And in the hard winter frosts, the children put a bird feeder filled with pumpkin seed outside the window of the hospital. Many blue titmice came them to feed. When there was not enough food to go around, they chirped demandingly. The children spread seeds on the table, and the titmice flew into the room and pecked at the food. Gradually, the birds got used to the children, and stayed longer. On freezing nights, they didn't fly out again. They chirped merrily, perching on the children's shoulders, hands, and heads. On sunny days, the birds flew in to eat and then flew out at once. The children didn't want to part with their feathered friends. It seemed that the birds felt this: the children seemed to catch an apology in their peeping--please excuse us, but we can't stay for long.

Kolya, Yura, Sasha, Kostya, and Pavlo would stay in the "bird hospital" for hours on end. I told the children to build little bird feeders at home. Little shelves with pumpkin seed appeared near their windows, and Pavlo made a little birdhouse.

At first this might seem to have no bearing whatsoever on education. But actually, caring for living things teaches sensitivity and warmth.

Beginning with the third class, the Holiday of the Lark, of which I spoke earlier, became a unique holiday of labor and artistic creativity. The girls baked little larks of wheat dough. Each one tried to express the swift flight of the bird in her simple creation. The girls showed their larks to each other and found in them not just motion, but song. "Your lark is silent, but mine sings," was one of the remarks that could be heard on that day.

When the children grew up, they would begin to work in the fields and at the animal farm; they would become ploughmen and milkmaids, agronomists and gardeners. They must be taught to - feel the beauty of simple working on the land or on a farm. It was important that ordinary agricultural labor give them pleasure. And that is impossible without games and collective inspiration over work activity, beauty in the mutual relations of the group friendship, comradeship, and mutual aid. My students always felt close to group work and were concerned with its results. Our class grew accustomed to working together.

Early in the spring, we went to see Tanya's father at the animal farm. He picked out a warm spot in the barn and put four lambs in a pen for us there. He picked out the very weakest ones. We would care for these little clumps of life, coming to feed them every day with hay and warm milk until they were strong, I told the children.

It is frequently said that there are some children who are so lazy that absolutely nothing interests them, and some hearts so hard that nothing affects them. This is not so. Inspire youngsters (not teenagers -eleven or twelve is already late) to begin with such a task as, for example, caring for little lambs on the animal farm. Work with the children for a month or two, and you will see how the ice melts in the hardest of hearts. If the children enjoy working together they will become hard workers when they grow up. In our class there was not a single indifferent, lazy student, and that was the result of the children's being inspired by simple labor.

We found good hay and made flour of it for "broth for the lambs". We fed them milk. When the lambs started to eat green grass, the children brought them shoots of barley and oats from the greenhouse. And as soon as the grass turned green, the children brought them whole armfuls of fresh fodder. Tanya's father made a sheepfold near the barn where we let the lambs play the whole day. This was our "sheep-ranch".

In the third year of school, a new, more serious concern appeared--the boys and girls wanted to take care of calves, and yet another corner was set-aside for us at the dairy farm. The children grew greenery in the greenhouse the whole winter long for their lambs and calves. In the summer, we dried hay for the calves. Lots of the children went to the farm almost every day.

When spring came and the sheep and lambs were moved to the field-camp, the children felt lonely. They wanted to be in the field in the midst of nature if only for a day. On Sunday we went to the field. We let the sheep and lambs graze and gathered the hay, which had been mowed. The first spring grass was a healthy food for the lambs. In the summer after school was out, the children went to the field-camp almost every day. Life shows that the person will never love simple agricultural work if the beauty of daily tasks did not inspire him or her in childhood.

The flame of romanticism illuminated the work of the children in the school work-study plot as well. In the fifth grade, we were allotted 0.1 hectares of land, and with the aid of the older students, the children built a little house here with brick walls, a die roof, a wooden flea; a tiny furnace, a water- pipe, and electricity-everything just like in a real house, only not so big. "The Little Green House", as the children called their building, became yet another cozy nook where the little ones could read and listen to stories about nature. When the children were already in the third class, we did experiments with seeds in this little house.

Building the little house was both work and play. When the work was finished, the children had a more careful attitude to the things they created with their own hands. They understood quire well that the little house was the result of their labor. No kind of explanation could take the place of life experience

So that the child will respect a common property, it must acquire personal experience in working with others. The essence of material values is understood only when what is common becomes dear to the person. This quality must be acquired in childhood. Teachers often say that some teenagers are wasteful when it comes to societal property-why is it that teenagers can be so unfeeling? If you want a person to be thrifty and internally disciplined in the adolescent years and in early youth, if you want his or her concern for societal interests to have an unostentatious character, and to express heartfelt concern for things which are not his or her personal property, then in childhood he or she must come to value something societal. This thing must be integrated into his or her personal happiness.

The "Little Green House" was adjacent to the plot on which we planted wheat, barley, millet, buckwheat, corn, and sunflowers. We chose the seeds in the house and stored the harvest there. We also mixed fertilizer. The children's labor was inspired by the romance of cognition. The children worked thoughtfully. The secrets and laws of nature were revealed before them. I made sure my students were convinced by personal experience that the knowledge, which helps the person use the forces of nature, is acquired only by work. I told them about a grain of wheat, and of how labor rules its life. The children discovered the amazing world of life in the soil. We carried organic substances to the plot, and the soil became fertile. The children planted a hundred grains of wheat each and observed the way the plants developed with great interest. The attempt to "feed" the soil so that the heads of wheat would be fuller and the grains of wheat heavier inspired the children. Everyone wanted to feed his or her plants as well as possible with nutrient solution. This was genuine creativity for the children who were prompted by inspiration to execute the simplest tasks. They cut the shafts of wheat carefully and made piles of a thousand grains each to weigh. The one who had gathered the biggest harvest experienced great pride, and the rest of the children resolved to work better.

I became convinced that the children had grown to love plants and to feel the life of the soil. In the third and fourth classes, they grew wheat grains twice as large as what was generally cultivated in the field. We raised cucumbers and tomatoes in nutrient solutions in the greenhouse and the "Little Green House". In the winter, the children prepared the nutrient mixtures of humus and black soil, and in the spring, they carried it to the plot. In the fall, they gathered a rich harvest of potatoes and tomatoes.

Some of the children worked in the "green laboratory" as well. This was a little building which the middle schoolchildren built. Here, under the supervision of the older students, my pupil's conducted interesting experiments in horticulture and plant growing. Here, I showed the children how to graft samples of fruit trees to wild berry bushes and trees. By the second grade, all the children had gotten the hang of this delicate process. They felt the power of knowledge over nature and the unity of theory and practice.

The little boys and girls waited impatiently for spring to see the results of their grafts. When little leaves appeared on the shoots, which had been grafted, the children's joy was boundless. We laid out a collective nursery and they decided to raise seedlings every year. The nursery became another favorite place of work. In the summer after completing the third grade, we found a wild plum tree in a dense thicket. Each of us grafted some sort of cutting to it--some apricot, some plum, some peach. All the grafts lived. The children watched with amazement as the cuttings of the different sorts of fruit trees developed in the top of one tree. After two years, fruit appeared.

I have already said that nature is the richest source of thought, creativity, and the inquisitive rearm. In understanding her laws, the child becomes a person, and therefore it gradually comes to know itself as the highest stage on the long path of natural development. But nature herself cannot create wonder, develop the natural strength of the child, train its reason, or enrich its thinking. Without active strengthening, without labor, it is not possible to reveal and assimilate her secrets. Only when the person takes that first conscious step to use the forces of nature does she reward him or her--at first sparingly, and then more generously, as the person makes fresh efforts, simultaneously cognizing and creating. The more children labor, the more the secrets of nature are revealed in their minds, and the more new, as yet un-comprehended phenomena they encounter. But the more they have not yet understood, the more actively they think; perplexity is the surest catalyst for thought. From the moment the grain of wheat was sown in the ploughed earth until the harvest, the children came up with more than two hundred questions of "how?" and "why?" It would be difficult to find another such sphere of influence on nature which so stimulates thinking as working the land--cultivating trees, grains, and industrial crops.

I tried to vary the children's work to help them discover their gifts and inclinations. We built a room for the little children next to the school workshop. We put tables with vices there. And then I managed to realize an old dream of mine the older students made two miniature lathes and one drill for them. There were little planes, saws, and metal-working boxes with a selection of tools on the shelves and in the closets. There were also metal plates and wire--everything necessary for construction and modeling. The shop interested many of the little boys and girls. Gradually, a young craftsman's club was created. The children were especially interested in modeling, construction, and making fretwork.

We gathered in the shop after lunch and made several interesting models at once--an electric power station that worked on wind, grain-cleaning machines, winnowers, little buildings that looked like real, and a desk and closet for the tiny metal- working tools. The children worked collectively, making both wooden and metal details. The tinier and more exact the model, the more difficult it was to make it look like the "real McCoy", as the children paid, and the more interest they showed in their work.

The main goal I had in drawing the children into this work was to awake their talents and inclinations, to give them the joy of creativity, and to give them abilities and skills which would be necessary in the future. I tried to interest the children in what I demonstrated for them: I would show them how to use the tools to do wood- and metalworking. The skill of the teacher is the spark, which lights the flame of inclination and awakes inspiration. Our lessons in the shop began with my making a tiny wooden doll's bed before the children's eyes. The more the tiny bed began to look like a real one, the brighter the children's eyes shone. The youngsters tried to take part in the work. Many of them started to help me then and there: they planed or sanded the separate details of the bed. When we got to the model electric power station, I had not only helpers but also genuine co-workers. Yura,

Vitya, and Misha quickly learned to use the tools. Everyone wanted to work, and so we began to build several models at the same time.

Here a small digression is necessary. The source of giftedness and talent in children lies at their fingertips. Figuratively speaking, it is from the fingers that the tiny streams which feed the source of creative thought flow. The more sure and ingenious the movements of the children's fingers are, the more precise the interaction between their hands and an instrument of labor, and the more complicated the motions necessary for this interaction, the more clear the creative elements of the child's reason will be, the more precise, delicate, and complex the motions necessary for this interaction will be. The deeper the interaction between the hands, nature, and societal labor enters into the inner life of the child, the more astute, attentive, vigilant, and able to research in detail the child will be.

In other words, the more skillful the child's hands, the brighter the child will be. But some sort of instinct does not attain skill. It depends on the intellectual and physical strength of the child. Mental power is strengthened as skill is perfected, but skill draws its strength from reason. I tried to see that cognition of the surrounding world was an interaction of the children's hands with the means around them, and that the child observed not only with its eyes but with its hands, displaying and developing its curiosity not only in questions, but in labor.

From the first days of the School of Joy, my students made a herbarium and gathered seeds and samples of various species of timber. They studied the properties of matter not only in the process of observation but with the activities of their hands, equipped with the simplest tools--little hammers, knives, scissors, and chisels-which they used on various materials. In the first and second grades, the children learned to work with little knives. They cut delicate plates from different species of trees--willow, ash, poplar, oak, pine, pear, and cherry--sanded them, and glued or sewed them to sheets of paper, and compared them for hardness and other characteristics. They made letters and little figures of animals and birds from the excrescences on the trunks of the ash trees, as this was a very plastic material. All the boys and girls made themselves a "wooden alphabet", as they called the letters made from ash. There was a granite cave not far from our village. We went there often to collect rock samples. The children broke off chips of mica with their little hammers and put together a collection of various-colored stones. They made toy bricks of day and dried them in the sun, then built little model buildings. In the summer at harvest time we cut rye and wheat straw into even lengthened ribbons, and wove straw bands of them to sew into hats.

This was not just preparation for industrial creativity. In developing the dexterity of the children's hands, I developed their reasons. When we made a model electric power station, the children suggested that we replace the metal strips with wooden blades. "There must be some very sturdy and light- weight timber," said Seryozha, "that we can make the blades from so that they will turn in the breeze . . ."

In their four years of elementary school, the children made more than thirty working models of various things completely, each as complicated as the model electric power station, which put a tiny generator into operation. Every year, the children's individual inclinations were revealed more clearly. Shura, Vitya, Misha, Seryozha, and Yura grew to like metal and mechanisms. They could work with a vice for hours on end, and the time flew by without their noticing it. Sometimes it took a major effort to get them to go home. Observing the work the little boys did on the vices and miniature lathes in which they turned simple details of wood and pliable metal, I remembered how the children had already learned to cut wooden letters in the School of Joy and the first grade. It would have been naive to see some sort of outline for their future professions or specialties in these childish interests. Life experience confirms that skill undergoes complex transformations. Very rarely does a person become what he or she dreamed of being in childhood.

Physical labor is closely connected with intellectual education. Dexterity is the material incarnation of an inquiring mind, keenness of wit, and creative imagination. It is very important that every child make with its hands what it designs.

In the fourth class, the children made their own tools - little planes and jack-planes. Neither did they forget the simplest tools - the little knives they had used to carve the amusing figurer of beasts and animals, of fairy-tale witch Baba-Yaga and the Deathless Dragon, for the puppet and shadow theatres. Seryozha and Misha made two aquariums--one for the classroom and one for the Room of Fairy Tales.

Yet another interesting job gave the children great joy: we put together a little electric power station, which operated off an internal combustion engine. The station put out a low voltage current that was safe for children.

In the third and fourth grades, the children spent two hours a week at their favorite tasks. They could go to the "Little Green House", the workshop, the greenhouse, or the work-study plot. The ones who liked to work on the farm went to take care of the lambs and calves. During these hours each student did the work he or she liked best. I went to one place one week, and the next week, to another. In every group there were children in whom indignation for a particular type of activity was revealed. They became the organizers of the little work groups and inspired their colleagues by their examples. Yusa directed what went on in the workshop. Vanya led the horticulturists, and Varya, the gardeners. Sasha was in charge of the animal rearers. I was glad that these children could do a lot of things and learn significantly more than their playmates. The other children tried to imitate them, and their work took on the character of a competition of creative abilities.

Work entered the lives of my students as a joyful play of physical and intellectual strengths, as a reinforcing of self-respect. In childhood, every person should achieve significant success at his or her favorite task and see the material results of his or her creative abilities. The person should master something he or she likes to do, of course only insofar as this is possible for a child. People must learn to do something well and beautifully during their school years. The feeling of pride experienced in connection with success at a favorite endeavor is the first source of self-knowledge, the first spark of creative inspiration in the child's soul. And without inspiration, the joy of accomplishment, and the sensation of fully developed strength, there is no person and no deep certainty that he or she will find a place in life. I tried to see that there was not a single child in the school whose individuality and originality was not revealed via labor.

When I remember the childhood of my students, I see eyes shining brightly at the pride of a job well done. There was Seryozha with his little radio receiver. He made it in the fourth grade: his three months of assiduous labor were rewarded with great joy. Fedya stood next to his blooming peach tree: he had grafted a peach cutting to a wild plum and waited for it to flower and bear fruit. Valya sticks in my mind at that joyful moment when she brought a baby Lamb from the animal shed. She had taken this sickly, puny lamb and made it healthy and strong. Tina grinned at the sun and the blue sky when she looked at her crimson roses. She had gifted three rose cuttings to a sweetbrier, and the bushes had grown into amazing beauties. When I think of Sasha, a brown-eyed boy with a little sheaf of wheat pops into my mind. We calculated that the weight of the wheat he had grown on three-square meters of land would have yielded eighty centners to the hectare... Not far from the school well grows an apple tree with many branches. Every year when the tree blooms, I admire the unrepeatable nuances of the rose-colored flowers, and it seems to me that a little girl with blond braids is running up to the tree and saying: "This is my apple tree." That is what Katya said when the apple tree first blossomed. My memory of Kostya is a sad one: he held a little calf in his arms, but it did not respond to his caresses because it was ill.

Thus I remember all the children. I see children engrossed in their work. But I am far from thinking that this interest predetermined their paths in later life to any extent. If a child grows to love the world of living things, if work in the orchard or the field gives it joy, that doesn't mean that it must become a gardener or agronomist. Talents, abilities, and inclinations are like blooming rose bushes: one flower blooms and then another opens its petals. Each child had several interests, without which it is impossible to imagine a rich inner life for a child. But there was always one thing that stood out more clearly. Until a child has achieved significant success at some type of labor, it will not be remembered as a person. But as soon as work begins to provide deep personal joy for it, human individuality appears.

Work in which the person achieves perfection is a mighty educational force. In feeling himself a creator, the person wants to become better than he is. It is difficult to overestimate the significance of the fact that already in childhood, on the threshold of adolescence, the person realizes his or her creative strengths and abilities. The very essence of personality formation is located in that realization.

Here we stipulation must be made in connection with the problem of the harmony of the educational influences of which we have already spoken. Labor as a purposeful influence on personality is especially closely connected by a multitude of dependencies and conditionalities to other educational influences, and if these dependencies and conditionalities are not realized, labor is transformed into a hateful obligation and gives nothing to the mind or the soul. Our psychological seminar, which discussed problems of personality education, gave a lot of attention to the harmonious use of labor along with other influences. The discussion of the report on the role of the hands in intellectual education called forth gnat interest. The problem of the interdependence and interconditionality of labor and other educational influences is one, which our teachers are studying up till now.

You Are the Future Masters of Your Homeland, Young Leninists

I got my first helper when the children were in the first grade--a twelve-year-old Young Pioneer named Olya who was in the sixth grade. She asked the Young Pioneer Council to put her in charge of preparing the October Children to join the Young Pioneers. The main thing was that she loved children. (In our school, October Children and Young Pioneer leaders are not appointed; those who love children and want to work with them take these positions.) She helped me in a lot of things: she played with the children, went with them to the forest and fields, and told them about the Young Pioneer heroes and the feats of the Soviet people in the years of the Great Patriotic War.

Olya began a task, which has continued for over fifteen years and plays a big role in the ideological education of our Young Leninists. At my advice, she conducted the children's first meetings with the heroes of the Great Patriotic War. The stories of these heroes were so interesting that Olya wrote them all down. A hand-written journal gradually took shape from her notes. It was called, "Our Fellow-Villagers in the Years of the Great Patriotic War". Over her years of working with the children first Olya and then the Young Pioneers themselves wrote down over one hundred stories and put photographs of the heroes in the journal. Now there are over six hundred stories in it. This is a priceless source of teaching a feeling of love of one's homeland.

Contact with children was always an inner need rather than an obligation for Olya. I consider this need to be a wonderful talent—a talent of humanity. Those who possess this talent will become fine educators and will find great happiness in their work. Examine the children in the school attentively, and you will see boys and girls who cannot live without doing something for their little friends. In boys, this need often manifests itself in mischief, pranks, and tricks. A little boy will try to be the leader, to get his comrades to follow him, but he doesn't know where to direct his energies. I want to advise teachers not to try to repress this boiling energy. Naughty, mischievous boys are your potential helpers. You should be able to direct their energy in the necessary directions.

I tried to see that the preparations for joining the ranks of the Young Leninists and the whole life of the Young Pioneer detachments taught the children a deep feeling of love for our sacred land, which has been covered abundantly with the blood of those who fought for her freedom and independence. Love of one's homeland begins with admiration of its beauty. What the child sees becomes a part of its soul. Olya and I opened the children's eyes to the natural beauty of their native land and that, which was created by the hands of the Soviet people.

We went to the steppe and sat on the top of the hill. We looked at the broad fields sown with wheat, and admired the blooming orchards and tall poplars, the blue sky and the singing of the larks. Admiration of the beauty of the

land where our fathers and grandfathers lived, where we ourselves were destined to live, have our children, grow old, and depart from the earth is one of the most important emotional sources of love for one's homeland. There are countries in the world where nature is more abundant than our fields and meadows, but native beauty must be the dearest for our children. Children must not simply see how the trees are covered with white in spring, how the bees fly above the golden bluebells of hops, how the apples ripen and the tomatoes turn red--they must experience all of this as the joy and fullness of their Lives. Let them remember their child- hoods as a time filled with bright, sunny images: an orchard attired all in white, the unrepeatable sound of the bees above fields of buckwheat, the deep, cold sky of autumn with flocks of cranes over the horizon, the dark-blue hills and trembling haze of a crimson sunset, the willows bending over the mirror-like surface of the pond, and the tall poplars growing by the roadside - let all of this leave an indelible mark on their hearts as the beauty of life in the years of their childhood, as a memory of what is most dear.

But let this beauty enter the child's heart along with the thought that there would be no blooming orchard, no bees, no tender lullabies, no sweet dreams at sunrise when mama carefully covers your legs with a blanket, there wouldn't be anything at all if one cold, winter night, nineteen-year-old Aleksandr Matrosov hadn't fallen on the enemy machine-gun, covering it with his chest to draw the bullets away from his fellow-fighters, if Nikolai Gastello had not directed his flaming airplane at the enemy tanks, or if thousands and thousands of heroes had not shed their blood from the Volga to the Elba. We must give the child this thought precisely in those moments when it is experiencing the joy of existence. I told my students how the Soviet soldiers fought for the freedom and independence of our homeland right here in our village, on these fields, and under these trees.

The joy of being is not just a vivid expression of self-knowledge of the personality, but an evaluation of the surrounding world, the active relation of the child to what it sees around it. The logic of life in socialist society is such that for our students the beauty of the surrounding world is one of the sources of joy in childhood--the joy of being. Therefore, the educator must try to see that every flower, every blade of grass give the child joy. But does the surrounding world become dear to children only because it is beautiful? For joy of being is no more than a complex of pleasures which the child receives from the older generations. And the surrounding world becomes dear to little people when they see and feel the blood, sweat, and tears their grandfathers and great-grandfathers shed in the name of the freedom and independence of their homeland. The mingling of the joy of being with feelings of citizenship is ex- pressed very well by the Lithuanian poet Marcin Lievicius in his poem "Blood and Ashes":

Mothers, put into your children
Love for their Motherland so that
These lofty feelings make
The children's hearts
Braver and more noble.
Breathe into them that our sky
In the midnight brilliance of its starry landmarks
Is no higher or more beautiful,
But it's not the same as all the others have.
And those whose feelings are merged into one with
Your children's will be dear to them.

One's native land becomes infinitely dear when the joy of being merges with the feeling of responsibility before the people who saved this beauty. The unity of moral and esthetic education of the younger generation is expressed in this merging. Joy of being need not be untroubled. Teachers who think that the joy of childhood must be unclouded by stories of grief, sufferings, and sacrifices in the name of the happiness of the free citizen of socialist society are wrong.

In the sunny days of early fall, the branches of the apple trees bend with the weight of the fruit, the bunches of grapes ripen, the piles of wheat on the threshing-floor turn gold, and silver spider-webs float through the transparent air. Olya and I took the children to the edge of the village where a high hill stands, giving a beautiful view into the distance. From there you could see the bluish watermelons and an orchard beyond. Behind the orchard were the tall poplars, and then the steppe, the green fields of winter wheat, and on the horizon, the far-off hills in a dark-blue haze. The boys and girls experienced an unrepeatable moment. In the beauty spread out before them, they felt a part of their happy childhoods: their mothers and fathers came home from these far-off fields at night, bringing sparks of sunlight with them in their tender eyes. We sat on the hill, and I told a story of good and evil. The children rejoiced at the victory of the good.

A week later we went to the mound again, and then was something new in the wonderful picture of nature spread out before the children: autumn had scattered its first colors--the apple trees and poplars were bathed in gold, the emerald field of winter wheat had become brighter, and the sky bluer. Thus, every week at the same hour we went to our place to admire the beauty and experience the struggle of good and evil in the fine folk tales, to listen to the music of the autumn steppe, breathing the clean air, and dreaming of how we will come here in the spring to meet the lark. This corner of the steppe entered the life of the children and became dear to them. It was the first vivid image of their homeland forever engraved on the children's hearts.

You cannot awaken a feeling of homeland without perception of beauty in the surrounding world. Before you talk about the dear price the older generations paid for their joyful childhoods, you must open the children's eyes to the natural beauty of their native land. Let the child's heart always keep the memory of that little nook in its distant childhood. Let the image of its great homeland be connected with this little nook.

One quiet autumn day, I showed the children a barely noticeable depression in the top of the mound and said:

"Look at this depression. Time has smoothed it out, and grass has grown up over it... But one sunny autumn day just like today, our army was retreating beyond the Dnieper along this road. A young machine-gunner came to the top of this mound. He stopped on this mound to hold the enemy and keep them from getting to the Dnieper. Enemy motorcyclists appeared on the road. The machine-gunner destroyed them. The fascists began to shell the mound with mortar and guns. See how it's dug up to the south. The earth here is still strewn with deadly metal. The explosions stopped, the motorcyclists again came out onto the road, and the mound came to life once more-the enemies fell from the bullets of the Soviet soldier. The fascists sent a tank to the mound. It drew close to those trees over there and opened fire. The shooting stopped, and motorcyclists came out onto the road again. Once more the mound came to life. The soldier was badly wounded in the hand, the head, and the chest, but he continued to fight. Blood flowed into his eyes, and he knew that he was seeing the blue sky of his native land for the last time. But the youth's heart stopped beating only after a shell exploded next to his machine-gun. In the evening, the farmers came here, dug a hole, and buried the bloodstained body. The remains of the soldier lay here until the day the Soviet Army liberated the village from the enemy. The boy's army buddies came to the top of the mound and dug up the remains, which they brought to the village and buried with honor in a common grave We don't know the hero's name, nor does his mother know where her son is buried."

The children's hearts were seized with grief. The beauty of life and the beauty of this corner of their native land became dearer to the children. They looked at the world through the eyes of the hero. The youth gave his life so they could live happily and peacefully, so that the stars would twinkle in the heaven, so that the grass and apple trees would give off their fragrance, so that the tender song of the grasshopper would rise above the steppe, and so that on New Year's Eve, mother could put presents from Grandfather Frost under their pillows... The children fell quiet and looked at the earth, which had been covered with blood. They wanted to caress every clump of earth, every blade of grass and wormwood.

It is probable that a lot of my students had trouble falling asleep that night. Before their eyes was their native steppe, first lit up by the bright sun and then darkened with the smoke of battle. Pain seized their hearts: this hero

would never see the beauty they saw that day and would see the next, and even a year later. And from that thought, tears again filled their eyes, and in their dreams were the warm caressing hands of their mothers.

The morning of the next day before school began, Varya came to me. She recited a poem she had made up the evening before:

By the road to the steppe stands a high mound.

The winds have howled above it for many years,

The bright sun has shined on it; the autumn mists have floated by.

A cruel enemy came to our land.

A young hero stood on the fall mound.

He defended the road from the enemy.

Here on this ancient mound died a young warrior

With a piece of shell in his chest,

His bloodstained heart trembled on the earth,

The blue sky turned dark,

The sun was covered by block thunderheads...

We shall never forget you, who perished so that we might live.

There where your heart fell to the earth, we have planted an oak.

A week later, we again went to the mound. The children wanted to know who the hero was and where he was born, where he had studied and who his mother was. All that the children then saw and heard, they perceived through the eyes of the hero who gave his life for his homeland. The children wanted to do something to express their feelings. When the leaves fell from the trees, we brought a little oak to the top of the mound. No words are necessary when tender waves of kind feelings quiver in children's hearts. The children did it with profound emotion: we weren't simply planting a tree to make the mound green-- we were putting up a living monument to a hero.

The children knew that it would be difficult for the oak to grow on the mound, but they did not fear any of the difficulties. In the winter we protected the tree from the cold winds, covering it with snow. In the spring when the mound was covered with tender grass, the children ran every day to see if the tree had begun to put out buds. This was not just caring for a tree--it was meeting with a hero. The little oak turned green and in every little leaf, the children heard the echo of that terrible day. The old men who had buried the soldier helped us figure out the day of his feat. We celebrate it every year as a day of bright glory, remembrance, and sorrow. The children came to school early in the morning, and each of them brought flowers. They made a live wreath and laid it where, according to the story, the hero fell.

This little plot of land on the top of the mound became a symbol for the children of the heroism of the older generations who had defended the freedom and independence of our homeland. "You are the masters of the land for which the older generations shed their blood," I suggested to the children. "You must see that our homeland is rich and mighty."

One warm day, Olya and I took the children to the Grove of Heroes. This was a monument of glory created by the students of the school on the place where, during the fascist occupation, late in the fall of 1941, a tragedy marked by genuine heroism and self-sacrifice took place. The fascists cut down the kolkhoz orchard and built a concentration camp for prisoners of war there. Behind the barbed wire, out in the open, six thousand wounded, hungry, half-naked soldiers and officers of the Soviet Army were condemned to die. People were deprived of water, and on the cold autumn nights, they collected the hoar-frost from the frozen ground and ate grass. Dozens of prisoners died each day. With bestial cruelty, the fascists waited for them all to die so that then they could blow up the ammunition depot next to the camp and blame the Soviet army for blowing up its own people with bombs dropped from their airplanes.

The Soviet patriots set up a secret organization in the camp and prepared for a mass escape. Then in the cold of night when thousands of people were shivering in the rain and wind, the soldiers and officers crawled onto twenty places in the barbed wire. They went to their deaths: they lay on the barbed wire to make living bridges, and many people escaped to the steppe across their bodies. The farmers' hid more than four thousand people that night, and no one could find them--neither the Gestapo nor their henchmen. Four hundred heroes gave their lives so that four thousand doomed to death could once again take up arms and join the ranks of those fighting for the freedom of their homeland.

After the village was liberated from the fascists, the schoolchildren decided that this sacred place should become a blooming grove, a living monument to the heroes. They cleared the lot, filled up the ditches, and planted four hundred oak trees - four hundred living monuments to those who gave their lives to save their comrades. The oak trees grow taller, and from generation to generation, the legend of the heroic deed is passed down. Several years after the planting of the oak grove, a new generation of students planted their own oak trees next to the grove when they joined the Young Pioneers. Let the longest living tree grow where the barbed wire was covered with the blood of heroes, where the ashes of their hearts mixed with the earth. Every student planted his or her own tree when joining the Young Pioneers. It became a tradition for everyone joining the organization to plant an oak in the Grove of Heroes.

Olya and I came here with the children, and she told them about the deed of the heroes and showed them her oak tree. The children waited impatiently for the day when they would become Young pioneers.

Spring came, and only a few weeks remained until Lenin's birthday.' That day a festive meeting of the Young Pioneers was held to mark the induction of {Lenin was born on 22 April 1870. Every year this day is set aside as a holiday in his memory.} new Young Leninists. We went to the Grove of Heroes once again, and every child brought an oak seedling, a little spade, and a basket with humus. They planted the trees and watered them. Here, on the sacred place of a heroic deed, on April 22, their older friends put the Young Pioneer ties on the children. Here, the Young Leninists solemnly vowed to be true patriots of their socialist homeland.

Several times a year we went to the Grove of Heroes. Early in spring, we pulled the dry leaves and branches from the trees, and planted more trees in the place of those, which had been damaged by the cold. On that day late in autumn when the heroes had accomplished their feat, we held a Young Pioneer meeting there. Tall oaks grew in place of the barbed wire walls. The children came in silence, and each one laid flowers under his or her tree--asters and chrysanthemums flamed in the place where on that memorable night, the earth was red with blood.

We went to the Grove of Heroes on the happiest days as well--at the beginning of summer break or before a long excursion. There was always solemn silence in that sacred place. Here no one ran, played, or yelled: it was a place for admiring the beauty of nature, resting, or reading. The boys and girls whose fathers were killed during the Great Patriotic War came here. Here a son could bow his head before the grave of a father who perished far away on the shore of the Arctic Ocean or in the Carpathian Mountains. The story of the heroes who, by their deaths, preserved sunshine, flowers, and free labor for the Soviet people is passed down from generation to generation.

The oak on the top of the mound grew taller and taller. When a grown person saw the tree proudly raising its branches to the sky, his heart would beat faster and his homeland would become even dearer to him.

The decades will pass, those who fought in the war will pass on, and new generations will remember with admiration and gratitude the feat of those who fought in the unprecedented battle and saved humanity from the threat of fascist enslavement.

We must never forget the innumerable horrors of the war, and the disasters inflicted by it, the glow of fires, the moans of those dying from exploded bombs, the sobs of those driven into servitude in fascist Germany, the strong embraces of fathers leaving for the front, the tears of women receiving notice of the deaths of their husbands or fathers... The younger generation must lay the foundation for an eternal memorial to the fallen heroes. The school where we now study, during the occupation housed the fascist transit prison for Soviet young men and women sentenced to servitude. You must never forget that, children. You will grow up and have children of your own, and you should pass on your hatred of the enemy to them like a torch.

Before the war, there were 5,100 people in our village. 837 of our fellow-villagers - 785 men and 52 women-died heroes' deaths at the front during the Great Patriotic War. Besides the 837 who didn't return home from the front, another 69 died in the fascist death camps-they died of hunger and inhuman conditions. They were tortured, killed, and burned in the crematoria. The fascists traded in their ashes; the ashes of your brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers fertilized the soil of the peasants in the vicinity of Weimar not far from the fascist camp of Buchenwald. Let the ashes of our brothers and sisters, fathers and grandfathers pound on your chest. children. Let it pound on the chests of your children and grandchildren. Never forget that 276 teenagers, young men and women were seized from our village and carried to the fascist camps in Germany. Of them, 194 died in the death camps from hunger and over- work, and some of them were burned in the crematoria. Pavel's brother, who was carried off to the city of Baukhum, had his eyes put out with red-hot pokers for sabotage. Then he was nailed alive to a wooden stump. Tanya's sister was buried alive for communist propaganda. Koptya's uncle was thrown into an iron cage where he suffered naked for several days and then died suffering. Yura's cousin was torn to pieces by sheep dogs while he was still alive for an attempted escape. Valya's cousin had her baby torn away from her and its head beaten against the stones before her very eyes by a fascist officer. Lucya's aunt, a 26year-old woman was sent to the fascist concentration camp at Auschwitz with her two children-a four-year-old daughter and a five-year-old son. In the camp, the mother was separated from her children. The woman told the fascist officer, "They are ill; I beg you to let them stay with me." The fascist screamed: "If they are ill, we will cure them..." And before the distraught mother, threw the undressed children against the rocks, stomping the children's bodies with his boots...

I told the children, "We must not only remember all these things ourselves, but we must pass on this memory of human conscience to all the future generations." We decided to create a village pantheon together--a gallery of the portraits of the heroes who fell for the freedom and independence of the Soviet homeland. At the end of the third and beginning of the fourth year at school, the children visited all the families of the village.

Mothers gave us photographs of their children who fell in battle and suffered in the fascist death camps, and we put them in our Room of Glory and Sorrow. This was to be the beginning of the pantheon, which would be gradually completed by new generations of schoolchildren. This was the goal we set ourselves, It was our obligation to carry out this task so that there would never again be war, so that peoples would become brothers, and so that children would be born for peace and happiness, not war and death. This was our obligation before the peoples of the whole world--we must not forget or forgive anything so that the horrors of fascism would never be repeated.

During a camping trip, we spent the night on a high shore of the Dnieper. The children-went down to the spring in the ravine to get water several times, and every time, they had to make a circle. They had to go around a big boulder that was in the middle of the path.

"Why is that stone lying there?" the children asked with surprise "Why do people have to go around into the bushes?" "Why don't we push it out of the way?" With all good intentions, they cleared the path by rolling away the boulder. In the morning, an old fisherman came up to us. He asked where the stone was. The children expected him to praise them, but the old man shook his head and said: "That stone has been here for a long time. This is its place..." Then he told the story of the feat of three Soviet scouts. Coming across the river during the great battle for the Dnieper, they lay hidden with their machine-guns behind the stone and stayed there for a day

and a night carrying on a battle in which they were greatly outnumbered by the enemy. The fascists took their cannon and mortar and shelled them. For several hours, mines and shells burst about them, but the stone remained an impenetrable fortress. That night the Soviet army crossed the river and rescued the scouts. The soldiers lay behind the stone covered with blood, wounded by bullets and shell fragments, but un-subdued. The scouts were sent to the military hospital beyond the Dnieper, and no one knows their names. Only a boulder of granite has remained as a monument to the heroes' deed. The children went to the stone and stood in front of it for a long time. They rolled it from the bushes and put it back where it had been. Only then did they notice that bullets had chipped at the granite; and shell fragments. We found lots of pieces of stone on the ground, and every child took a little piece as a keepsake.

Since that time, the route of the young campers always leads past that sacred stone. Like the oak on the top of the mound and the Grove of Heroes, the gray granite boulder has become a symbol of the beauty of deeds of valor, awakening deep patriotic feelings in the young hearts.

A person's moral outlook and attitude to societal interests and labor for the good of his or her home-land depend upon the way he or she related to the heroic deeds of his or her forbearers during the years of childhood. I tried to get the children's hearts to beat faster at the thought that on that hill over there, where we work today, heroes shed their blood. Feelings strengthen the conviction that works on one's native earth for the good of one's homeland is a great happiness for which people entered into a struggle to the death. The voice of the conscience is awakened in the innermost corners of the child's heart: you are walking under bright sunshine and looking at the blue sky only because those who gave their lives to preserve light and life for you lie buried under the poplars and birch trees, the apples and oaks.

This voice reminds the Young Leninists that they are the future masters of their native land. The feeling of the master toward the material and spiritual values created by the older generations is the root of adult citizenship. Olya and I thought about how to inspire the children's work in the name of obligation to those who had defended the bright sun and the blue sky for them. One day the children came to their field: they had had to bring several centners of humus to the little plot of unfertile soil so the wheat would ripen there where earlier nothing would grow. The work was difficult and monotonous. Before the work began, Olya told the children about the heroic feat of Ukrainian Komsomol member Mikhail Panikako in the grim days of the great battle on the Volga in 1943.

The nineteen-year-old youth stood in a trench blocking the path of a fascist tank. The enemy tank reached the trench. The soldier brandished a bottle with an explosive mixture to throw at the tank and blow it up. At that instant, a bullet broke the bottle raised in his hand. The liquid exploded, and the fire spread across his clothes to his face. A living torch, leaving a trail of fire and smoke behind himself, he climbed over the trench and drew close to the tank. In his hand, Mikhail held his last bottle of explosive. He climbed onto the armor of the enemy tank. He struck the turret of the tank with the bottle, and it caught fire and spun around. In the last minute before the tank exploded, Mikhail stood up to his full height, raised his burning hand and shouted. The soldiers heard his battle cry, broke out of the trenches, swept the enemy away, and captured the street.

The children were impressed by the story. During those moments, the hero stood out to them, living and deathless, and seemed to say, "I gave my life for just such a plot of our sacred native land. How can anyone be indifferent to whether wheat or thistle grows on it?" At that moment, the voice of the conscience was heard in every heart: I must not be indifferent.

I do not think that the children must be told a story of heroic deeds every time, before they let out to work. One must not suggest to the child that if it is lazy and doesn't work as it should, it is not fulfilling its obligation to its homeland. The feeling of obligation is a sacred feeling, and the child must keep it safe in its heart. At the same time, it is important that heroic deeds teach it how to live, awakening the first notions of citizenship in the child's mind. I advised Olya to tell them the story of Mikhail Panikako's deed without making any connections between

it and the coming work, without any exhortations, so that the child view this little plot of its native land as a citizen.

The Children Join the Organization of the Young Leninists

In the spring of 1955 not long before the end of the third class, the children joined the V. I. Lenin Young Pioneer Organization. The Komsomol Committee appointed Olya their leader. She was an eighth former at the time.

The solemn meeting of the Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya Young Pioneer Detachment was traditionally held on 22 April, Lenin's birthday. Long before that day, Olya and her comrades began to prepare the children to join the ranks of the Young Pioneers. The eighth-formers told the children the heroic history of the Leninist Party, the Komsomol, and the Young Pioneer Organization.

Olya said to them, "Let your detachment bear the name of that person whose deeds inspire you the most, "and the children unanimously decided that their detachment would be named after Mikhail Pannikako, hero of the Battle of Stalingrad. The motto of our detachment was "Struggle and Conquer as Lenin Did". Our symbol was oak leaves and acorns for our struggle to enrich our natural surroundings.

Not just the students came to the Young Pioneer meeting, but the parents, participants in the Great October Socialist Revolution, veterans of the partisan movement and the Civil War, and the first Komsomol members who had set up the first Komsomol organization in the village in 1919.

The meeting was held on a big green lawn. The Young Pioneer Detachment of the eighth grade stood facing the third-graders, future Young Leninists. The head of the council of the eighth-grade detachment said that their detachment would cease its operations on that day and pass the torch to the Young Leninists of the third grade.

The solemn moment of giving the children their pioneer red ties came. According to the traditions of our school, the Pioneer Detachment, which was ending its activity, gave its ties to the October Children who were joining the Young Pioneers. So the boys and girls took off their Young Pioneer ties and put them on their little friends. Every student gave his or her tie to that child whom he or she had befriended. Among the students in the eighth and third grades there were brothers and sisters, and the older ones gave their ties to the younger like the dearest family heirloom. Taking the red ties, the children made the solemn oath of the young Leninists. They promised to be patriots as staunch and courageous as Mikhail Panikako, and to live up to their motto," Struggle and Conquer as Lenin Did". As a token of their joining the Young Pioneers, every child received a gift--a book about the life and work of an outstanding person. That meeting remained ever in the hearts of my pupils. In this ceremony the main thing is that the red tie be passed on from generation to generation of Young Leninists. The red tie is a symbol of revolutionary struggle and should be carefully preserved.

Struggle and Conquer as Lenin Did

Lenin taught that the struggle for communism is an everyday affair. Olya and I thought about how to get the children to take what went on around them close to their hearts, to get them to be concerned for the fate of the material values belonging to the people. Olya organized a group of young defenders of nature within the detachment. The children put the forest presence located not far from the school under observation. They walked along the belt and saw that someone had cut a ring of bark off around some of the trees. It was evident that someone wanted the trees to die so that there would be a reason to fell them; if the trees had died why should they continue to stand? The children were indignant: how did this happen? We plant and cultivate trees, and someone destroys them! They had to find out who had done this.

From that day, raids by the young defenders of nature began. In the evening, they set out for the forest preserve and waited for the culprits. Several days later, they were caught red-handed--two farmers came with a saw to cut

down the trees. The children told the administration of the collective farm about the people who were destroying the trees. The criminals were made to plant ten trees to replace every one they had destroyed. The children were glad: justice had triumphed. This is an indispensable condition for efficient moral education. The struggle for communist ideals becomes the source of noble feelings when the Young Leninists see justice done. This victory inspires them and gives them the new strength necessary to overcome difficulties.

The young conservationists were carried away by an interesting game, the basis of which was the drive for beauty and diligence. On one of their raids, the Pioneers saw that there were weeds growing in the yards of some of the farmers. The children brought apple seedlings to these farmers and suggested that they pull up the weeds and plant fruit trees. Three of the farmers were too lazy to do this. The Young Pioneers wrote notes from the Young Defenders of Nature which contained an appeal to these negligent people: "It is very difficult for us, the Young Defenders of Nature, to look at the weeds growing in your yards. It is likely that wolves will soon appear in your thickets of thistle. How do you manage to live in this mess? We implore you to pull up the weeds and plant apple trees and grape vines and to grow flowers in their place. We have left five seedlings and three grape vines near your house. The trees must be planted tomorrow. Plant them and water them well. And if you are too lazy to do it, we will come and dig the holes, pull up the weeds, and plant the trees. There will be an orchard, but it won't be yours-it will belong to the Young Pioneers."

The notes were delivered in an original manner: they were dropped through an open window onto the table. In the evening, so that no one would see, the seedlings were brought. This was all a game the children loved. They waited impatiently for the next day to come: what would the negligent people do! They walked dawn the street after school and couldn't recognize the yards: in place of weeds, the fruit trees had been planted... The news spread quickly through- out the school. Our detachment began to organize other groups of young conservationists within the Young Pioneers. The collective farm administration came to the older Pioneers with the request that they take the mulberry plantation under their protection: some of the collective farmers had been breaking the branches mercilessly. The Pioneers made several raids, and the breaking ceased.

Over the summer, the detachment took on the responsibility of preparing twenty kilograms of sorted wheat seed for the experiments of the hybrids laboratory. The children picked out the very best heads, found a dry place in one of the school buildings for their storage in the winter, and in the spring they threshed the grain and gave it to the agronomist. So much anxiety and excitement had gone into that work that when the sowing began, the children, who were in the fourth grade by then, went to the field to see with their own eyes how their grain was being sown. When the shoots appeared, they went to the field again. At reaping time, the Pioneers decided to help their older schoolmates bring in the harvest. I watched with joy as they gave a part of their own strength for others and became more receptive to everything going on in the world around them. We left the field, pleased to learn that the seeds we sowed had come up well. We walled by the kolkhoz orchard and saw caterpillars on the little apple trees. The children became alarmed. At these moments, the Pioneers were not thinking of their duty to society; they simply could not walk indifferently by a living thing, which was threatened with destruction. The children went into the orchard and did away with the caterpillars. They saved the apple tree and looked to see if the trees next to it were infested with pests.

The feeling that one is the master of one's native land is one of the most important patriotic feelings, which must be strengthened, in young hearts. Those people will become genuine patriots for whom, in the days of their adolescence, the fate of every head of wheat on the common fields, of every tree in the common orchard, every grain of wheat on the collective farm threshing floor, is just as precious as the deepest personal joy - a toy given to them by mother or father, a favorite picture-book, skates, or skis. That which belongs to society becomes deeply personal for the child when it puts part of its soul into its labor, creating something for people, when things of material value created by its own hands bring deep personal joy, when the path to this joy is filled with concern, care, and occasional failures. I have never stopped caring about the sources of children's grief's and sorrows. Is that which the child holds dear connected only with its personal happiness or does it take other people into consideration as well? The answer to this question was always a criterion of the moral qualities of

the child. I was glad when Kolya or Valya grieved when they saw that the stalks of wheat in the garden plot were bent down from a heavy shower. Until a child has experienced such misfortunes, felt pain, and suffered, the educator cannot rest easy because his student might enter life an indifferent observer.

Egoists and egotists come from those who lived out their childhoods without concern for people and who were consumers of joy only. I was alarmed to see that this danger was threatening my students Volodya and Slava. Their families waited on them hand and foot. The children felt grief only when their parents didn't buy them anything new and good. One must counteract these egoistic concerns with care and grief of another sort--concern for what is materially and spiritually valuable for people.

In the hot days of summer, I saw that the linden tree we had planted in the School of Joy had wilted badly. "Our friend needs more moisture," I told Volodya and Slava. I had taken them to the garden to show them something interesting and directed their attention to the tree, which had wilted from the heat. "The linden tree needs our help, and we can help if we want to," I told the children. "This type of tree, especially when it's young, loves damp air, moisture, and cool shade. Let us help our little friend. We can run a little hose from the water pipe over here. It's not too far, and we can direct it to the linden to make a little shower for it. The tree will always feel cool." In the beginning, the boys were indifferent to my words, but when I told them about the artificial shower, they became curious. The work started as an interesting game for the children--and there isn't a child anywhere who doesn't like to play. They began the game, and we ran a little hose to the tree, put a spray nozzle on it, and barely noticeable clouds of droplets began to form above the tree. In the heat of midday, the boys turned on the shower, and turned it off before evening. Gradually the children began to feel concern for the tree: how did it feel under the little shower? The children were glad when they noticed that the branches on which the new foliage had appeared straightened out. Thus an interest not connected with their personal happiness appeared in the boys' lives.

But that was only the beginning. As a jeweler polishes a diamond in the rough, looking at every facet, thinking how to approach the precious stone to get the best diamond, so must the educator think how to reach the innermost nooks of the child's heart. Volodya and I went to the forest several times to gather the best sweetbrier berries. Later we sowed the seeds and watered the green shoots. When it was time for grafting, we took white rose cuttings and grafted them to the sweetbrier. This was not simply work, but a careful touching of the child's heart. Gradually, he reached the point where the sources of his joys and sorrows were in the surrounding world and not just his own personal happiness.

I had to give Slava a lot of attention. He and Olya cured a sick lamb at the animal farm. At the start, caring for a living creature was like a game, but then it developed into an interest in work, and gradually Slava became a hard-working young animal lover. I will never forget how he came to me with tears in his eyes one cold winter's day. He complained that his favorite calf loved green oats stems, but the only thing they had in the greenhouse was barley. How could he go to the farm without any oats? So we started to grow oats, too.

Caring about that which is not directly connected with one's personal needs is an excellent cure for egoism in children. If the child takes a personal interest expressed in concern for the welfare of society, the vice of self-pity will never take root in its heart. This egoistic feeling seizes the souls of those children whose lives are centered around the almighty "I".

The Unit of the Brave and Fearless

There came a time in the physical and moral development of my students when they were filled with energy to the point of overflowing. This energy took the shape of strange, inexplicable, at first glance, actions. A drastic change occurred before my eyes: the shy became desperate, and the timid, brave and decisive.

One day we went to the field to see how the older students and collective farmers made haystacks. The boys and girls were interested in how the tractor- driver had attached a thick wire to his tractor, which would lift a whole haystack way up high. The wire stretched fifteen meters into the air. From the haystacks, we made our way to the combine. Then I saw that one of the boys had grabbed the wire with his hands and was being lifted higher and higher into the air. When I looked, Shura was missing. Yes, he was hanging fifteen meters up in the air. The children saw Shura and ran up to the haystack crying with joy. Probably they all wanted to enjoy the feeling of rising up to this dizzy height. I could hardly wait for Shura to get off the haystack, which he slid down like on a toboggan. I didn't know what to do-rejoice at the happy ending of his unusual journey or get the children away from there as quickly as possible.

I managed to quiet the children somehow and refrained them from doing the same thing. But I saw that they were very displeased at my caution. I understood that I had to make the trip safe, and not simply forbid it. We made a haystack under the wire, and one after another, first the boys and then the girls, made the trip.

In those years, we still had no permanent source of electric current, and the older students built an electric power station that operated on wind to charge batteries. The windmill was on top of a twelve-meter tower. At the top of the tower, there was a level wooden platform with a little hatchway through which the electrician could get to the motor. One day when a strong wind was blowing, the children were flying a kite. Everyone tried to make the kite fly higher than the others. Vanya said, "My kite will fly higher than all the rest." The little boy climbed up the tower, leaned on the wooden guard-rail surrounding the platform, and began to let out the cord. I saw with horror that the hatch-cover Vanya had moved to the side had slipped off the edge of the platform, and fallen to the earth. The child ran around the open hatchway and didn't look at what was under his feet. His eyes were glued to the kite. It was quite by chance that an accident didn't happen.

Children are irrepressibly drawn to high places. The sweet feeling of height gives children joy. But for us, teachers, these childish impulses lead only to anxiety. Almost All the children's actions which gave me cause for concern were connected with the magnetic attraction of high places...

Not far from school stood an old church. The twenty-meter bell-tower was crowned with a round, sloping cupola. I glanced up at the cupola one sunny spring day and saw the figures of three children standing by the cross. I recognized Seryozha, Kolya, and Shura. My heart froze. The children noticed me and tried to hide, running from one edge of the cupola to another. It would have been senseless to call the children. That would only have done harm. I went to the school and asked the teachers to take all the children to the forest or for a walk in the field and to send the older ones home, in a word, to act so that no one would notice the children on the roof of the church and raise an alarm. I went to the workshop, from which there was a good view of the bell-tower, and sat by the window with my head in my hands. Perhaps by allowing the game near the haystack, I had kindled a desire to enjoy heights in the children. Then I saw how the children crawled down from the cupola of the church along an old, rusted pipe, which was hardly supported in some places...

After a summer downpour, a waterfall appeared under the bridge across the pond. An old woman came to the school and told me to go and look at what my children were doing. I went to the pond. From the dam I didn't see anyone, but from under the bridge, I heard the children's squeals. Tolya and Vitya had tied a long rope to the railing of the bridge and had made a swing. They were swinging over the impetuous waterfall and squealing with delight.

Petrik, Vitya, and Kolya got a wooden barrel with the bottom half knocked out from somewhere and brought it to the high bank of the pond. The boys-- taking strict turns as none wanted to lose his place in line--crawled into the barrel and the other two pushed slightly, which started it rolling down the slope. The barrel rolled to the pond and stopped several meters from the water. Until this day I don't understand how they managed to do it without any mishaps. Happy endings to such events are most likely only possible for children.

We watched some loggers during one walk in the forest. They were preparing building material for the collective farm. The children watched with bated breath as the cut trees fell to the earth. We set out for home and didn't notice that Shura and Danko were missing. We were already resting in a clearing when an old woodcutter came up to us with the two boys and said that they had tried to climb a tree so that when it fell, they could fly down with it from the upper branches.

All of these events occurred within a period of about six months in the third and fourth grade. I felt that to restrain the children from such actions and simply to see that nothing had happened was not the way out. The powerful stream of their energy demanded not just activity; the children wanted to test their fearlessness in the face of danger. The thirst for brave deeds was witness to the fact that the romance of courage was knocking at the doors of my students' lives. The children's energy had to be funneled into the right channel.

The reader has noticed that the actions, which seem at first to be foolhardy, were mainly done by the boys. There was not a single boy who didn't give me cause for concern. Even Danko, whom I considered to be indecisive and timid, surprised me late in the autumn of 1955. He crossed the pond on very thin ice. To lessen the possibility of falling through, he pushed his books in front of him. The ice cracked and bent and was covered with water over the deepest place, but by a miracle didn't break through, and the boy got to school safely. After him came two of his schoolmates, but the ice broke in front of them, luckily right by the edge.

Of course one should guard against such events, but that is not all. One must go forth to meet danger and overcome it.

Thus appeared our Unit of the Brave and Fearless. All of the boys entered into its ranks, and after some time some of the girls joined with them. I thought up games and amusements, which demanded strength of will, bravery, and fearlessness. We found a high precipice on the edge of the pond. The bottom of the pond proved safe there. On a hot July day, the youngsters came there to swim. I showed them how to jump from the precipice and direct your flight. Immediately after me, Shura, Seryozha, Kolya, Vitya, and Fedya jumped. The next day, Yura, Kostya, and Petrik dared to jump. On the third day, Tolya, Misha, Sasha, and Vanya. Only four boys were left--Pavlo, Volodya, Danko, and Slava. Their comrades kidded them. The girls were swimming below, and they also began to egg the boys on. Tina came up to the precipice and wanted to jump. She dived, and it was beautiful. Larisa and Varya followed her example. The boys were ashamed. Finally, Pavlo, Danko, and Slava jumped.

Only Volodya couldn't make himself do it. I saw that the little boy was upset that he was afraid, but still he couldn't overcome his fear. We had to find a lower precipice for Volodya. He jumped from there with the girls, but he couldn't make himself jump from the high ledge. I had to spend a lot of time with him to get him to do brave things. When the children hung houses for the starlings in the spring, I managed to get him to climb a tall tree. This was the boy's first victory over fear. The children told me in secret that Volodya went to the precipice by him-self, undressed, sat for a long time, and made a running start, but was afraid to jump all the same. Following the first three of the bravest girls, Valya jumped off the precipice. No one had expected this of her. Valya's action confused Volodya. The boy closed his eyes tight and jumped into the water. After Valya jumped, Nina, Galya, Lucya, Zina, Katya, and Sasha followed suit, and after them all the girls jumped. I was convinced that girls have significantly more strength of will than boys. They can overcome fear and indecisiveness with great courage and without all the fuss boys make when they express their joy after they have done something brave.

When we were vacationing in the lap of nature after finishing the third grade, the children thought up the polar explorers game. According to the conditions of the game, on a remote island covered with thickets—an iceberg surrounded by water on all sides-were located the shipwrecked polar explorers, and on our side was the Big Land. We had to bring supplies (bread and potatoes) to the polar explorers. Between the iceberg and the Big

Land was a small lake. The rules of the game were that the supplies had to be brought in the dark of the severe polar night.

And thus volunteers came forth from the Unit of the Brave and Fearless. The children were a little bit afraid: it was said that someone had seen a wolf's lair on the island. But Shura and Seryozha set out on the night journey. We fastened a pack with bread, potatoes, matches and fatback to a thick pine board. We launched two old rubber inner tubes into the water--this was the launch in the game. The sun went down, and the lake and the little island were covered with fog: Stars appeared in the sky. The boys undressed and tied their clothes to the board, then quietly set off. After a minute they were no longer visible, and several minutes later, a weak splash was heard, and then even it died away. The whole Unit of the Brave and Fearless sat on the shore with our little dog Travka... An hour passed, and it was pitch-dark. Neither the island nor the lake could be seen. Suddenly in the darkness a weak flame appeared: it was the young polar explorers reaching the place of the shipwreck. They were sending the signal that the next pair could set out in its launch.

Again we fastened bread, potatoes, fatback, and onions to a board and put out the inner tubes. Vitya and Yura got ready. One of the girls told how in the old days, big pikes lived in this late, and that maybe they could be found there even now... The story was clearly told to frighten Vitya and Yura. Of course it was frightening for the boys to make their way through the black water, but now they wouldn't change their minds for anything. At the instant when Yura and Vitya put their feet into the warm water, a big splash was heard ahead. Of course, it was a fish playing, but the boys hadn't forgotten the story of the pikes. Another hour went by and the second flame shone through the darkness. Then both flames went out. That meant that the two pairs of polar explorers had united. We lay down, but no one could sleep.

A campfire blazed up on the island: the boys would while away the night, not closing their eyes until sunrise. Bunched into a tight circle, they would look to the east impatiently, waiting for the sky to grow light. And the next day as soon as the first golden rays of the sun peeked out over the treetops, the boys would swim back. Those who had not yet had the joy of overcoming their fear would envy them. And they who had conquered their terror would answer with the restraint that becomes a man: "It wasn't scary at all".

In the dark of night we sent all the boys out, even Volodya. When the game was in full swing, the girls wanted to know why the boys could go and they couldn't. I had expected that question, so Tina went to the island with Kolya, and Varya went with Tolya. The boys found dry hay on the island and made a bed for the girls.

Night, quiet, and seclusion--all of this interests children because in all this they see the romance of overcoming difficulties. The children thought up another interesting game--the geologists. Deep in the forest in an impenetrable thicket, about five kilometers from the edge of the forest, the girls built a hut and set up camp there during the day. This was the main base of the geological-prospecting party. The ruler of the game were that a group of geologists, the boys, had to get to their base across the taiga in the dark of night...The geologists carried rucksacks with mineral samples. When it was getting dark outside, the boys left school and had reached the edge of the forest in an hour. They had to find their way in the darkness, and in addition had to forge a wild taiga river and a mountain range. The girls were not allowed to give any kind of signals. It took a good two hours to cross the forest. The boys got to the main base after midnight, tired, but joyful and excited.

In August during a downpour, fourteen calves dropped behind the kolkhoz flock. The animals ran somewhere across the flooded meadow. The adults looked for the calves for a long time but couldn't find them. "Let us look for them," Shura and Vitya suggested to me. So nine people from the Unit of the Brave and Fearless, six boys and three girls, set off on the search with me. We took food, a compass, and two inner tubes for the crossing. The children were in an elated mood. We inspected the flooded meadow piece by piece. In some places, we divided into groups of two or three. In four days we had found eleven calves in the forest glade. The rest of the calves probably died in the swift-flowing stream that formed during the downpour. The days of the search stayed in the

children's memories. Galya, Lucya, and Sanya, little girls who were afraid of the dark, of frogs, and grass snakes, remembered it especially. For in those days, they met up with foxes and owls.

The summer after the fourth grade ended, we played alpinists. We let down a rope ladder, which we had tied in place beforehand into the ravine from a precipice. Our mountain camp lay below, and we were off to be mountain climbers. The assignment consisted of scrambling up an almost sheer wall, crawling onto the precipice, and then again coming down the ravine. A lot of the boys were already not afraid of heights, but at the beginning, even they were a little frightened. The first one to go up and return was Vitya, and after him, Shura and Seryozha. Yura came back when he was only halfway there. We had to find a precipice that was not so steep for the rest, and we played there for several days. The girls competed with the boys. The bravest and least afraid were Tina, Larisa, and Kostya. They teased Volodya and Slava who got dizzy at a height of three meters. In the end, all the boys and girls conquered the precipice.

The children experienced a deep feeling of joy in displaying their courage and fearlessness. Bravery and courage are moral features necessary to every person, not just in exceptional circumstances, but in everyday life and labor.

The less time remained until the end of elementary school, the more concerned I was: the children would soon be teenagers. They were already worried about questions of themselves; the boys and girls began to wonder, "What kind of a person am I? What is good about me, and what is bad? What do my comrades think of me?"

As adolescence approaches, so does the time for self-education. Thinking of the future, when the most important educational force would be the will and persistence of the children, I tried, in the years of their childhoods, to awaken interest in self-education. Every child had a schedule of work and play. The children got up at six o'clock every morning and did mo, washed off with cold water, ate breakfast, and did their homework. Before leaving for school, each child did no less than an hour of bookwork. I tried to see that constant observance of a schedule became a means of self- education. Volodya and Slava had trouble getting up in the morning because their parents didn't want to wake them and couldn't get them to go to bed early. I tailed not only with the boys, but with their parents. Slava became attracted to self-education and learned self-control. But Volodya still hadn't learned even that. His family taught him to be easy on himself.

We Say Farewell to Summer

After the end of the fourth grade, all my children-sixteen boys and fifteen girls entered the fifth grade. Twelve students had only excellent marks in all their subjects, and the school awarded than certificates of honor. Thirteen students had only good and excellent marks, and six children had satisfactory, good, and excellent marks.

I considered the main success in my educational work to be that the children had been through the school of humanity, had learned to hold other people's joys and sorrows close to their hearts, to love their homeland and to hate its enemies. They understood the transformational role of work, had mastered their native language beautifully, and had learned five things: to observe, to think, to read, to write, and to express their thoughts in words. I was convinced that children could be taught to read and write before the age of seven, that is, before they entered the first form. Once that goal is accomplished, the child's intellectual powers can be freed for thinking and creativity.

I considered it no less important that the children were morally prepared to enter this difficult age- the years of adolescence. In the elementary school, I thought of that time when the children would draw close to that invisible line which separates childhood from adolescence. Some had already crossed that line. The difficulties of adolescence had already begun in the fourth grade. ...

On a quiet August evening we went to our Corner of Beauty to bid farewell to summer.

The last rays of the sun played on the treetops; apples were ripening on the tree we had planted four years ago. A bumblebee was flying above the bunches of grapes on the vines. The din of a tractor floated in from the field. The girls brought sheaves of wheat and intertwined them with snowball berries. We sang a song of the quiet summer evening. The song died out, and the children looked at the evening sky. The music of nature, the memory of the summer with which we were parting--all of this echoed in the children's hearts. The surrounding world-- the evening sky, the crimson sunset, the amber berries, the bunches of grapes, the green wall of hops, the white chrysanthemums, and the buzzing of the bumblebee--the whole world spread before us like a miraculous harp, and when the children touched its strings, magical music sounded forth, the music of language. This is the music of joys and sorrows. I was also both happy and sad. You are already teenagers, my children. What awaits you in the future? I will be with you every day; I will lead you to youth and maturity. I was your guide for few years and have given you my heart. There were times when my heart was tired. When it was exhausted, I flew to you, children. And your gay chatter poured new strength into my heart; your smiles gave birth to new energy. Your inquisitive gazes awoke my thoughts... I see you as grown ups in my dreams, my dear children. I see every one of you as a courageous Soviet patriot, a person with an honest, burning heart, a clear mind, and golden hands.