

"No, we haven't any blue blood — only red blood"

MY BOY YURI

GREAT happiness has come to our house, and I want to share it with everybody.

My Yuri has been up higher than any man has been before, and flown around our planet.

He saw the whole world with its continents and oceans.

There is no point in hiding that I knew my son might not come back—the road was dangerous, and none had been that way before.

When I heard he was flying in a spaceship, I confess I could not hold back my tears. I looked up into the blue sky and thought, "Is he all right?"

The radio broadcast his words: "I

Mrs. Anna Gagarin talks about the childhood of the world's first Cosmonaut

After Soviet power was established, my husband and I were among the first to join a collective farm. We worked well and put an end to the constant want. I remember how well we had begun to live in the years before the war.

In 1934, our second son was born, and we called him Yuri. The eldest, Valentine, was then nine, and my daughter Zoya seven.

Father and I both worked, so Zoya had to look after the young one.

little ships: then, a little later, he began to make kites.

The war began just when we were getting ready to send him to school. It came to the Smolensk countryside, and the woods and the houses burned.

One day bull-nosed vehicles roared through the village, and after them came the nazis. They looted the collective farm, threw the women, children and old people out of the houses, and drove away the cattle.

We had to make a dug-out in the garden, and had to live there together with the children. Those were terrible days indeed.

Children are children even in times of trouble. Once Yuri and Boris began to play round a German car. Suddenly I heard a scream. I came out of the dug-out—and froze.

Yuri had bitten a soldier on the hand and managed to run away; but a ginger-haired nazi was holding Boris up in the air by his neck like a puppy.

I ran to him crying: "What are you doing, you monster! He's only a child!"

But there was no way of stopping the brute; he brushed me aside and hung little Boris on an apple tree by his collar.

When the soldier, finally went away I lifted Boris down, and only then caught sight of Yuri. All the time he had been standing a little distance away.

I think it was from that day—or a little later, when the nazis beat him up—that I noticed Yuri had stopped smiling and his gaze became more serious.

Then came a new sorrow. Nazis with tommy-guns came and took Valentine and Zoya away to Gzhatsk and loaded them, together with other young people, into goods wagons, and deported them to the West.

Only at the end of the war did we find out that Soviet soldiers had rescued them from a death camp and taken them into their unit.

Hunger is a terrible thing for grown-ups, but for children it is many times worse.

We ate once a day. All we had was some thin soup with a handful of oats or rye, and a piece of dry bread.

Yuri and Boris were just skin and bone. In the spring they would crawl out of the dug-out and crawl about the southern slopes of the gullies and pits for hours, pulling up the young grass, which they would bring to me and ask me to boil.

The Soviet soldiers defeated the nazis and liberated the Smolensk area. We went to live in Gzhatsk.

☆ First Day at School

As soon as the first school opened I dressed my boys in whatever we had and took them. I had known the teacher Yelema Lunova for a long time. She had taught me.

Next day Yuri, breathless with delight, told us the first lesson had been drawing.

"What did you do?" I asked him. "An airplane. Teacher said it was good," Yuri replied.

That was perhaps the beginning of Yuri's "flying" career. And his free time, after school and jobs

Commemorative Drawing by...



Pablo Picasso

feel fine". I believed it—and yet I didn't, for Yuri had never been one to complain. But all ended well.

☆ Like a Fairy Tale

What happened next you know yourself. Even in dreams such things do not happen. The whole of Moscow, the whole of our country, gave my Yuri a hero's welcome.

People came out into the streets; everywhere you looked there were flags and pictures of Yuri, and flowers. It was just as if May had come ahead of time.

When Nikita Sergeivich Khrushchov embraced and kissed Yuri, I was so happy I did not know what to do! Could this be my son?

And that was only the beginning. It was just like a fairy tale—the celebrations in the Red Square, the reception in the Kremlin. But you cannot describe it all at once—and there are no words that can describe it either.

My son had become a Hero of the Soviet and a Pilot-cosmonaut of the U.S.S.R.

I could not get to sleep for a long time that day.

☆ Poor Peasants

From time immemorial our family have been peasants in the Smolensk district. Before the Revolution the land was poor and there was much want in the homes. There was no war in which our villages were not burnt, and if not, then hunger knocked at the door.

We would go out into the fields early in the morning, Valentine would go to school, and Zoya would look after the house and Yuri.

Two years later Yuri got another brother, Boris.

The children grew up healthily. But don't think they never ailed. Can you stop children catching cold when they run about the meadows in their bare feet?

They were all the same. Turn your back a moment, and Yuri would be running in his bare feet across the wet grass and paddling in the stream.

They were four children, so there were many troubled, sleepless nights. Mothers will know what I mean.

Unlike his elder brother, Yuri was not big; but he was a healthy lad. The difference in age didn't stop them getting on well together. Valentine would make a hook, while five-year-old Yuri would make a rod out of hazel with his knife.

Then, at dawn, they would creep out of the house and hurry down to the river.

They would catch gudgeon and roach, and cook them over a fire, always giving some to Zoya and little Boris, as well as bringing some home for our supper.

In the evenings, Father worked at his carpentry. His bench was in a shed next to the house. Yuri liked to watch and, when Father turned his back, Yuri would take his place.

☆ Life Under the Nazis

At first he made whirligigs and

about the house, he spent at the work bench. He made gliders and airplanes. He went to the aeromodellers' club and took part in a song-and-dance group.

His liking for airplanes also had its bad side. I remember how once the teacher came to call upon us. My "airman" had made a new model glider and taken it to school to show his friends.

It struck a man who was passing by, on the head, and he, of course, complained to the head teacher. Yuri went and apologised to the engineer.

There had been several such "misdeeds," so the teacher called to talk to Yuri and his father and mother.

She did not scold him but asked him what he wanted to be, and talked to him about the importance of persistence in achieving one's aim in life.

Her words made a deep impression. He became attracted by books. His shelf became crowded. There was Jules Verne and Tsiolkovsky, and books about the feats of famous Soviet fliers.

By that time Yuri had firmly decided what he wanted to be. "I must be a pilot," he firmly declared.

☆ Always a Mother

Together with his inseparable friend, Valentine Petrov, Yuri went in for sport a great deal. "A pilot must be strong and fit," he often said.

As soon as the snow melted I would hear: "Your Yuri has gone swimming with Valentine." I would ask him if it were true, and he would reply: "Yes, we've decided to toughen ourselves up." There were never any idlers in our family.

During the holidays the children went to work on the State farm or helped their father. Valentine and Zoya set out on their own roads. Zoya became a nurse and Valentine a driver.

Yuri decided to leave school and go to a trade school. He told his father and I that he wanted to get a trade as soon as possible—to stand on his own feet and then take the road of which he had dreamed.

So our son Yuri left the nest. The parting was hard. After all, a mother is always a mother. It always seems that if your son is near you it will be better and quieter.

A story in our paper recently said that someone in America has said Yuri was the son of Prince Gagarin. We thought it very funny.

No, we haven't any blue blood only red blood—the same as that spilt by the workers and peasants when they overthrew tsarism and all the princes with it.

What these capitalist scribblers think of! But we have no time for them these happy days.

A great joy, a great festival has come to our household.

We are boundlessly happy that our Yuri did his duty.

News In Brief

AFRICA

TSHOMBE'S ARREST

There is no honour amongst imperialist stooges. Kasavubu, Mobutu and Tshombe united closely against their common enemy, Patrice Lumumba, true leader of the Congolese people. With the connivance of the UN they jointly undertook the murder of Lumumba, and proceeded to blockade the lawful Congolese Government in Stanleyville.

Then the fight for the spoils began. It seems now that Tshombe is to be the sacrifice agreed upon by the imperialists in order to try to gain some world support for the Mobutu regime.

Mobutu has now hypocritically tried to shift the full blame for the murder of Lumumba on to the shoulders of Tshombe.

But the world will not be deceived. The advanced African states who supported the Casablanca Charter have voiced their opinion quite clearly: the lawful Government headed by Gizenga in Stanleyville must be restored to office.

ANGOLA MASSACRES

The savage and indiscriminate slaughter of Angolans by the Portuguese army and secret police continues, as it becomes ever more clear that Portuguese dictator Salazar means to fight to the death to maintain his tyranny. Whole villages are bombed and burnt by the colonialist forces in Angola, who, like the Nazis, are trying to "teach the Africans a lesson."

Meanwhile all is not going well in Portugal itself for Salazar. There is a mounting campaign for the ending of the Portuguese dictatorship, the removal of Salazar and negotiations over the future of the Portuguese colonies. Many senior Government officials were recently sacked for urging an end to hostilities in Angola.

ASIA

LAOS DEFEAT FOR U.S.

The full enormity of the US defeat in Laos is only now beginning to emerge. Not only has the US failed to turn that country into a cold war base in East Asia, but she has also suffered the humiliation of:

- Having to acknowledge the right of the country to adopt a neutralist foreign policy and to elect a Government containing Communists as well as non-Communists;

- Having to agree to a 14-nation conference at which the People's Republic of China is represented;

- Being rudely told by her NATO and SEATO allies that they were not prepared to send troops to fight for a US-dominated Laos.

Lines on the Liberation of Cuba

By Graham Greene

Prince of Las Vegas, Cuba calls!
Your seat's reserved on the gangster plane,
Fruit machines back in Hilton

halls
And in the Blue Moon girls again.

(Reprinted from the New Statesman, 28 April 1961)

NHLAPO RETAINS HIS TITLE IN THE BEST FIGHT FOR YEARS

From Robert Resha

JOHANNESBURG.

BY a narrow margin, Enoch "Schoolboy" Nhlapo retained his South African Lightweight crown when he defeated Sexton "Wonderboy" Mabena at the Bantu Sports Ground, Johannesburg, last Saturday.

This was Nhlapo's second hardest fight in his career of 36 fights, of which he has lost only three. (His toughest fight, in my opinion, was the one in which he lost to the then boxing maestro Elijah "Ellis Brown" Mokone in 1957.) All in all, this was the best fight seen in the Transvaal since the Mokone-Nhlapo scrap four years ago on the same ground.

On a cool Saturday afternoon, it was as if the angels and forefathers of these two fighters had descended on the Bantu Sports Ground to watch this finest exhibition of the art of boxing.

Both fighters received deafening applause from the audience when

they entered the ring. This was followed by a tense silence, punctuated only by the words "Fiver for Nhlapo, O.K." "Fiver for Mabena, right."

Mabena entered the ring half a pound heavier than the champion. Without any waste of time, he gave Nhlapo the feel of his celebrated left but the champ was not to be intimidated, he countered with his left too. Thereafter and throughout the fight, Mabena attacked with beautiful, well-timed lefts to Nhlapo's head and body and now and again he came in to mix his right and left.

SERVED NOTICE

In the third round Mabena came in a fury and, throwing lefts and rights, got Nhlapo's gum flying out of his mouth. Nhlapo, immediately realising what was in store for him, let loose terrific rights to the body and the head. But this served as a notice to Nhlapo that if he mixed with Mabena his chances of retaining the title were limited, for Mabena seemed to be too ready to meet the champ in the centre and his left hand was capable of dealing out every punch in the book.

Following this round the champ

decided to test the challenger with his double-fisted fast work but before the gong called for rest Mabena was countering with hard lefts which made the champion retreat.

ON THE RETREAT

From then onwards the champ was forced to fight on the retreat. He waited for Sexton to attack and then replied.

This is the first time I have seen this courageous son of the soil retreat. His policy hitherto has been to go and meet his opponent in the centre, if not right in his corner, and be with him on every inch of the ring. But even in his retreat he did not miss the opportunity to come in.

It was in the seventh round that Sexton Mabena became the great. In that round, and that round only, he reached the standard of Mokone at his best. With scientific boxing backed by excellent timing and beautiful footwork he nearly mesmerised Nhlapo, who was only saved by his cool-headedness and ability to absorb punches. Mabena did not repeat his performance in this round.

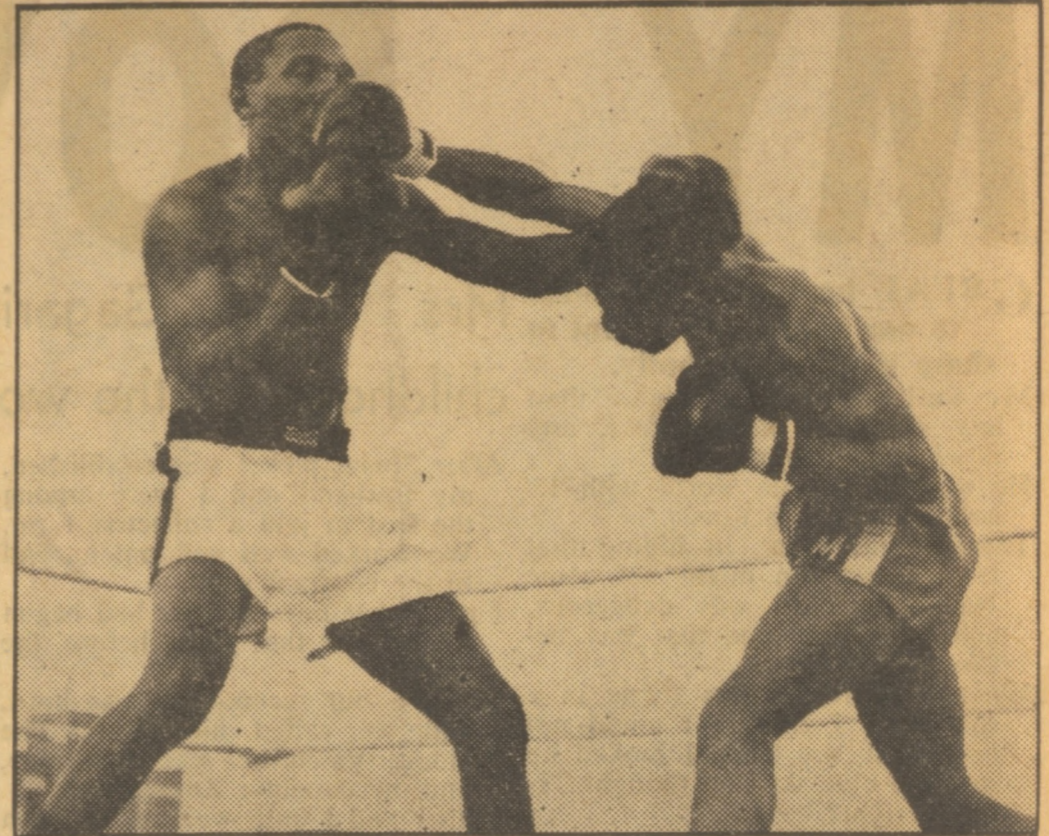
In the round that followed he tried the same again but the champ was now ready and for some time the boys stood toe to toe, forcing the tense crowd to stand up in appreciation.

In the last round Mabena again came in to attack. He threw everything he possessed in a bid to knock out Nhlapo, but Nhlapo's defence stood firm.

CLEAN FIGHT

Here was a clean fight—no holding, no warnings. In fact, for this fight the referee could have been spared the tiresome walk round the ring and allowed to join the spectators. Here were fighters who had no grudge against each other. They seemed to be fighting more for the love of the sport than for l.s.d. In between rounds, as the gong went to give them a breather, they touched each other—a touch that spelt sportsmanship.

MABENA HITS OUT



"Wonderboy" Mabena slips off a left from "Schoolboy" Nhlapo and counters with a terrific right to the face. The champion jerked and retreated.

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HONOUR FOR SOUTH AFRICAN

Bassa Co-opted to World Table

Tennis Board

THE International Table Tennis Federation at its Congress during the World Table Tennis Championships in Peking, co-opted a South African on to its Advisory Board.

He is Mr. Cassim Bassa, of the S.A. Table Tennis Board. This is a fine gesture to South Africa: no doubt the ITTF was mindful of the way S.A.'s non-racial Board—which won international recognition through the efforts of Iswar Amin, Eric Ernstzen and Andrew Samuels—has been handicapped by the S.A. Government by the refusal and withdrawal of passport facilities.

Congratulations to the S.A. Table Tennis Board! May this honour stimulate sound growth towards a truly national non-racial body.

E.P. NEWS
★ A gay multi-racial crowd gathered in New Brighton last week to bid farewell to Duncan Pikoli who is going overseas to play pro-rugby. A special feature was the rousing send-off given to him by the Swans Rugby Club.

★ The separate rugby unions in the E.P. will be combined this season for the Knockout Competition, all clubs playing together. This is a big step forward to integration. Other unions please note!

APOLOGIES

to correspondents P. Kwaza (P.E.) and L. Himson (Kimberley)

* SCOREBOARD *

* by RECORDER *

for not having space last week to carry all their news.

SASA Snippets

The SASA Executive meets on May 25 to discuss several important points including:

★ The application to be represented at the Athens meeting of the Olympic Committee in June.

★ A letter from the Chancellor of the Olympics, M. Otto Mayer, that S.A. will not be discussed at the meeting.

★ Representations made to Ghana and Nigeria to press for a discussion on racialism.

★ An invitation to the Secretary Mr. D. A. Brutus, to address the annual general meeting of the S.A. Soccer Federation.

The Secretary's home was raided by the Special Branch recently, but no SASA material was taken.

★ The S.A. Table Tennis Board has reaffirmed its pledge of full support for SASA.

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