

Our Café

We brought sugar, cheese, jam, milk, honey, bread, biscuits, tea, coffee. The invitations were already made.

The guests came, Senja and I were the waiters. The guests drank tea and coffee and ate hot sandwiches and biscuits.

There were prices in our menu. We wrote down the orders on pieces of paper. Then we brought what they had ordered. The most difficult thing was to count the money.

Ilja, Class 2

Vasja, 22 years old

I live in Dostoyevskii house and share a room with Pavlik.

I like working in the woodshed. I work with Daniel and Beatrice on the farm, I muck out.

I work in the woodworkshop with Aleksei and sand toy cars.

I love going shopping for food.

In the summer I watered the garden, in the autumn I harvested the vegetables> carrots, potatoes, beets.

In the house I sweep.

Sometimes I sing songs with Daniel.

At Christmas I took part in the play, I was a shepherd. There were lots of guests. We met the new year with a party. There were fireworks.

Now snow has fallen and it is very beautiful.

My name is Vika and I am 25 years old. I have lived in Svetlana for many years. I like it here.

I take the pig buckets from all the houses to the pig shed, lay the table for lunch in my house, wash the dishes. On the farm I cut up the beets with a spade.

In the afternoon I work in the paper workshop and the woodworkshop. I go to my parents in St. Petersburg for the festivals, and I miss the village.

It is very beautiful here.

Lots of guests come and I like talking to them.

Seminar retreat on the theme of the festivals of the year

Our small “rainbow room”, our only gathering place for all of the Svetlana people, always left one with the feeling that it needed something to improve its atmosphere: it had a sort of neglected sadness, discomfort, a feeling of the past fallen asleep. Now it is a beautiful hall with space for all our guests, the seminar teachers, us and our work.

We waited for this seminar a whole year, but the results surpassed all our expectations: here was our circle of English, Germans, Norwegians, Finns, Russians, all so different in their languages, understanding of the world, habits, but united by the one image of the festivals of the year... and we gazed silently... this was when we were looking at the results of the seminar... in minutes of wordless depth, as the whole world order revealed itself as the fullness of the Present, as all the rhythms of the year appeared in front of us in a bright image, giving the soul its powerful strength...

Four days together with Allmut Ffrench, who flew to us from William Morris Camphill Community, led conversations and drew the moods of the year, trying to create that united image. “Brighter than light is conversation.” And now these pictures, which were drawn during the seminar, all resound together.

Each morning began with singing with Daniel and at the end of the seminar there sounded a quite difficult and rather sad Russian song. Then we drew, and after lunch there were three workshops: two with clay (led by Daniel and Boris) and in the third pictures of the elements were made in wool.

Daniel modeled the Platonic solids with us; he had to work a lot during the seminar because the cowshed also required his care.

Masha and Oksana made pictures from wool with us and the sitting room of Serafim Sarovskii House turned into a bright, cosy workshop for four days. Each day four pictures were born here on one of the elements – and at the end there was a huge bright... Boris modeled animals with us, the result was a beautiful, big herd, only here the cows developed out of eggs... And by the way, each day Boris came to us in Svetlana across the river by boat – and this almost at the end of January! Believe it if you can. We were all waiting for snow, as we usually have it here in January – white, fluffy, transforming our Svetlana into a fairytale, but, alas, it didn't fall... But the fairytale happened anyway: on the first evening the Svetlana people gave a fairytale puppet show of Ivan the King's Son and the Grey Wolf. And our Pavlik, who so far had shown very little interest in anything, apart from food, played with the puppets after the performance for a whole half-hour. On the second evening there was not a lecture, not a gathering, not a conversation but a meeting of the five languages English, German, Norwegian, Finnish and Russian with the light of the Zodiac, led by Elena Pechalina. And here each language sounded 12 times, each had its own turn to let sound the qualities which are brought to us by each sign of the Zodiac. The Finnish language impressed us by its special individual strength, firmness and decisiveness of will. It is a secret language. It is so very different from the other languages we heard. I kept thinking: it is such a short distance, from us it is only three or four hours drive and it is a completely different world. It amazes and moves. Some of the inhabitants of Svetlana have no possibility to travel anywhere. And for them the world is not a map, but the faces of people and the sound of their speech. A real experience of culture comes first-hand, through people and the gifts of their work. A great thankyou to all who took part in the seminar and helped us to live through it, to lift up our routine life full of work to the beauty of meeting one another, and to fill our life with new musical forces.

P.S. Come and visit us again, dear Camphill people. We now have a little cosy hotel apartment. Come with time for art, and for resting, and for work..... and for conversations in the quiet of the evening,,
- What is brighter than light?
- Conversation.

News

We had a seminar and Daniel and I modeled with clay. I arrived in the village on the 23rd of February (some years ago! editor). I got to know Minka and Johannes. I cut the beets. I lived in the small house. On the 5th December I first met Vasja, on the 23rd I met Oksana. I lived with Daniel and we celebrated New Year and Christmas here in the village.

We went on an excursion to Staraja Ladoga, we went to a church.

I chop wood.

I live in St. Petersburg, there are a lot of festivals in St. Petersburg. On the 18th February is Maslenitsa (carnival, ed.)

There is a lot of snow in the village. I have a cat at home, and in the village there are Johnny and Hishik the dogs.

We went on an excursion with Mark, Oksana and my friend and comrade Minka.

I have a sister called Sveta and a nephew called Vova. Sveta lives and works in Denmark with Stin. They also have Orthodox and Catholic festivals there, and in Denmark there is the North Sea.

In the village we work until the weekend and on Fridays we have English lessons with Sarah and singing with Daniel.

On the farm I work with Vasja and Beatrice.

I used to live in the small house, now I live in Nansen house and I want to move to Serafim Saraovskii house.

Sergei

In the village I help Nastja in the kitchen, I help a lot. Today I made a carpet out of wool, and sometimes I work in the woodshed with Lyonya and Alex. Here everybody works very hard. I really like singing and dancing. We made beautiful pictures. I ate lunch in Serafim Saraovskii house. I have a new boyfriend

called Sasha. I would like to send you all our handmade cards. I also help Daniel in the small house. I would like to go and visit another village, I am sure that with you it is very beautiful.

Sveta

Christmas in Svetlana

Before Christmas we wanted to change our rainbow room. This is the room where we gather every Monday for our meetings and also for festivals. Now the festivals were Christmas and New Year. As you probably know, our calendar here in Russian is two weeks later, and the Russians celebrate Christmas from 6-7th January. In Svetlana we celebrate both the European and the Russian Christmas. After we improved our meeting room, Noah appeared in a mural on the wall, traveling in a boat and above him is a rainbow. Also for the European Christmas we prepared a play together with the villagers about a king and a shepherd who are trying to find the way to Christmas and to that star which should help them. The play was called "The Dream-maker". Less than three weeks after we started rehearsing we were already on the stage in front of an audience. Our dream-maker, the shepherd and the doctor gave very lively performances.

After the first Christmas the village became quite empty, because many of the villagers went home. But with those who remained, a bit more than half, we celebrated the second Christmas. This time the coworkers put on a puppet show of the "Green snake and the beautiful lily". And then Russian Christmas was also on a Saturday and this was a magical day. After our Bible Evening, which we have every Saturday, we went to a church. You will be asking, probably, what is so magical about that?

Maybe not so much, but with us there went all our villagers without any discussion, many of whom do not go outside at all or are afraid even of walking a few steps around the house, when it is frozen. For me it was the first Christmas for many years, when I was able to meet again the miracle. And this Christmas gave me back the belief in Christmas miracles, which I lost when I became an adult.

Alex

He is simply called Pavlik – a small, chubby person of 21 years with red hair.

Did you ever hear of Carlson? Of Carlson, who lives on a roof and eats only jam (if there is no jam, he will also eat wafers)? From the outside Pavlik looks exactly like Carlson, except for the propeller of course, but his character is entirely the opposite. And he doesn't eat jam (or rather I should say not only jam), but whatever he is offered; he just doesn't really appreciate noodles, mushrooms, beans and anything similar which in the least bit reminds one of worms (although no, it's not true, recently he has started to eat noodles).

Why did I say that he eats whatever he is OFFERED? Well, because he himself never asks for anything, the most he will ever do is look at something with a sad gaze and then you understand. "Pavlik, do you want more soup, or dessert?" For an answer he nods his head. "Pavlik, do you want a sandwich?" And again a nod, and if he has had enough, he shakes his head.

Pavlik doesn't speak. Sometimes one can see that he tries, but it doesn't work. Instead of "What?" he lets out an almost inaudible sound "o". Pavlik's parents died and he lived with his brother, who says that a long while ago Pavlik spoke, but then became silent and now hasn't spoken a single word for years. But he is able to express himself very well (and humorously!) through mimicry and gestures. Happiness and unhappiness, yes, no, don't know, fed up, go away, don't want.

Pavlik's favourite occupations are to sleep and to sit on the sofa. He can sleep for almost 48 hours, and when he gets up (or rather sits on the sofa) he still looks sleepy. He mostly wakes up only towards evening, when others are going to sleep, and at this time he feels lively, he smiles, laughs, sometimes very loudly and long, which doesn't always impress his room-mate Vasja.

Occasionally Pavlik likes to write or draw squares, listen to fairytales (although often it is not clear whether he understands anything), but most of the time he spends in himself, in his own world and then it is very difficult to get through to him, he doesn't hear or see anything, and sits on the sofa in the pose of a sleeping lotus, and only his constantly moving jaws reveal that Pavlik is still alive.

Pavlik doesn't like moving. For a long time he wouldn't go out of the house, and on the 25th December at Christmas a miracle happened, it was actually possible to persuade him to go for a walk. That was a festival for everybody. And strangely enough his second excursion outside was also at Christmas, this time the Orthodox Christmas, in the night of the 6-7th January. We went to the service in the church and when we invited Pavlik to go with us, he accepted with joy.

Less than a month has passed since that day and in this time Pavlik has gone for a walk a few times, and nearly always joins the evening activities, meetings, Bible evenings, which for him is huge progress, if one takes into account that for some months his only walk was from his room to the sitting room.

When Pavlik first arrived, he was given tasks in the wool workshop and paper workshop., but this didn't come to anything, because he didn't want to leave the house. He went to the wool workshop a few times, which is in the same house where Pavlik lives. There he wound a ball of wool (nothing more was possible so far), but soon he rejected even that. He also learned fairly quickly (for Pavlik) to rinse the dishes.

For a long time, 1.5 or 2 months, he didn't want to wash. Finally we decided to use force, but it turned out that this wasn't so easy. Pavlik resisted, sat on the floor, held onto everything he could, and it seems that his life depended on not going into the bathroom. Somehow carrying him (fortunately he is not very tall and not very heavy (50-55 kg), it was possible to get him into the bathroom, where he peacefully undressed and got into the bath. After the bath he looked very pleased with himself.

It was also a big effort to cut Pavlik's toenails. It took two people to get him to the bathroom, but three to cut his toenails. In such moments Pavlik looked like a martyr.

Because he constantly sleeps, even with open eyes, and at such times doesn't hear, people think that he is half-deaf, and because of this in the beginning they talk very loudly to him. And of course he wakes up immediately, or at least that is what it seems like, because he reacts to the shout, lifts his head; but in his eyes there is a sort of indecision, non-understanding of what is happening and what is wanted from him, and because he doesn't answer the questions or it is very difficult to get an answer, people think he doesn't understand anything at all. Pavlik has excellent hearing and he understands everything or almost everything, one can see this especially in the evenings, when he fully wakes up.

And now, as I am writing these words, Pavlik is sitting on the sofa with a pen in his hand and is writing and writing something, something known only to him, because no other person in the world is able to read what Pavlik writes. Probably it is an important document or a letter to someone or a note to me for the Svetlana News.

I hope that Pavlik will find his home in Svetlana, that he will find friends and he will start to speak again.

Lyonya