

Little Land (from Trilogy: Little Land, Rebirth, The Virgin Lands) by Leonid Brezhnev, © 1978 in the USSR, English translation of Little Land: APN Publishers 1978, © Progress Publishers 1980. Printed in the USSR, International Publishers, New York.

Little Land is translated by Pavel Shikman and is edited by Peter Tempest. Strangely, it is the only one of the three pieces that seemed to need editing (should we read doctoring?) in addition to straight translation.

To make things even more strange p. 399 of this English language edition says: Request to the readers. Progress publishers would be glad to have your opinion of this book, its translation and design and any suggestions you may have for future publications. Please send all your comments to 17, Zubovsky Boulevard, Moscow, USSR.

So much for pseudo-democracy, insecurity, not to mention covering for doctoring documents.

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We certainly did not want war. But when it began the great Soviet people courageously joined mortal combat with the aggressor.

I remember the Dnepropetrovsk regional committee of the Party calling a conference of lecturers in 1940. I was then thinking hard about political education fostering in people a patriotic spirit and a readiness to defend the homeland. And we were discussing just that. As everyone knows, a non-aggression pact had been signed with Germany. The papers had photographs of Molotov meeting Hitler and Ribbentrop meeting Stalin. The pact was giving us a breathing-space, time to strengthen our country's defence capacity: but not everybody appreciated this. I remember as if it were today one of the people at the conference, a good lecturer by the name of Sakhno, getting up to ask:

"Comrade Brezhnev, we have to explain the non-aggression pact: that it's in earnest and anyone who distrusts it is engaging in provocative talk. But people don't seem to have much faith in it. So what are we to do? Should we explain or shouldn't we?"

It was a rather awkward moment: four hundred people were sitting in the hall awaiting my reply and there just wasn't time to ponder the matter.

## "Yes, we must explain it," I said. "And we'll go on explaining, comrades, until fascist Germany is razed to the ground!"

At that time I was secretary of the Dnepropetrovsk regional committee of the Party with responsibility for the defence industry. And though maybe some people could indulge in complacency, I had to keep my mind every day on what lay ahead of us. [...]

[...] Plants producing purely peacetime goods were switching over to war production [...]