

Leonid Kotliar With His Friend Alexandr Pohitelyuk



On the left is my friend Alexandr Pohitelyuk and me in Germany. After the Victory we worked at the Soviet car repair plant 'Porsche'. I sent this photo home signed on the backside: Here is a proof that I am alive. To my dear parents from their 'prodigal son'. Stuttgart, summer 1945.

In 1945 we were liberated from the labor camp by the first French army supported by American troops and there was French administration. 1 May was coming and I decided to make a parade on a truck. There was a food delivery truck parked near our barrack. I made a carton poster, drew red

stars and wrote 'USSR' on the cabin. Anybody could drive this truck along the streets in Stuttgart singing Soviet songs. On 8 May my compatriot Zhenia found a radio and we installed an antenna on the roof of our barrack. Radio station 'Freedom' announced that on 8 May at 23 hours in Berlin the act of unconditional capitulation was to be signed in Berlin. Soon Moscow confirmed the announcement of European radios. Volley firing blasted the quietude in the town: the Harrison of Stuttgart made grandiose fireworks in honor of victory over Germany. I didn't even try to hold back my tears on this night of victory.

There was a center of repatriation of Soviet citizens established in Stuttgart. 5 former officer prisoners were at its head. In early 1945 they worked at the Porsche plant where Soviet sample cars were designed and manufactured. It was a sensitive plant and German troopers were going to execute the officers, but chief engineer helped them to escape. They reached Paris and came to the office of general-major Golikov responsible for repatriation at the direction of Stalin. He gave them documents, uniforms and guns and authorized them to organize a repatriation agency in Stuttgart. They needed trucks to transport people from all over the place. So the center opened a Soviet car factory on the basis of the Porsche plant where they repaired vehicles found on the roads. After the victory engineer Vinogradov authorized by the center to manage the plant offered me a job. We repaired broken cars and our guys were drivers, so we made sort of a vehicle yard as it was. At the beginning I manufactured license plates, but then I became responsible for filing documents. Sasha Pohiteluk, a Ukrainian guy, was our logistic supervisor. I went shopping with him. We lived and had meals at the plant and worked for free assiduously. American suppliers provided us, ex-prisoners, with food. There was a barrel of good non-alcohol beer at the entrance to the diner and for dinner French commandants provided us with dry red wine. I still have a certificate confirming that I worked at this Soviet car repair plant. I was eager to find out what happened to my dear ones and on 5 August I left Stuttgart.