The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Experience 'The Last Summer' Before the War

Life before WWII began in diaries and artifacts

April 21, 2020



"Metro" by Vadim Kotarsky, age 13, 1937 **www.togdazine.ru from Museum of Children's Drawings**

As we approach the 75th anniversary of the end of what is called in Russia the Great Patriotic War, how about experiencing the pre-war years through diaries, books, films, stories, archival material and other sources?

Alyona Alyokhina and Anna Yevsyukova had the idea of creating a site that was a portal to that time period, focusing on the daily lives of Russians in Moscow, Leningrad, Paris and the south of France.

On the site, The Last Summer, you can read (in Russian) the diaries of Zinaida Gippius, Yelena Bulgakova, Vera Bunina and four other lesser known diarists, illustrated with photographs, films and other archival materials. Click on the city to access the diaries.

For more diaries, click on about the project or here to get to an enormous archive of diaries, a

project of the European University in St. Petersburg. Materials are in Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian, and are easily searchable.

You can also click on the page about the project and scroll down to the visual archive, also accessed here. This is a gold mine: thousands and thousands of documents, photographs, films, books and more from "then" — the arts, culture, literature, architecture and daily life of the 1920s and 1930s.

You might read Daniil Kharms' letter written to Tamara Meier in 1930, or investigate architecture here, or read a facsimile edition of Alexander Vvedensky children's book "Who?" There are people and places, archives, podcasts, books, and something like "fun facts" about the times and the people who lived during it. It seems to cover everything from children's drawings to the Great Terror.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/04/21/experience-the-last-summer-before-the-war-a70064