



islands

of

death

S . P I D H A I N Y

ISLANDS
OF
DEATH

S. PIDHAINY

BURNS & MacEACHERN

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TO MY FATHER
AND
ALL THOSE WHO DIED
AS HEROES ON SOLOVKY

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PREFACE

In the lower reaches of the White Sea, in the latitude of Central Baffin Land, is a bleak little archipelago known as the Solovky or Solovetky Islands. Their isolation is absolute for most of the year, for from October until June they are cut off from the mainland by ice floes.

First colonized by monks in the fifteenth century, the area came under the rule of the Russian Tsars. With Ivan the Terrible, the lonely monastery became a place of confinement for exceptional offenders, who mouldered to death in black unventilated caves in its vast eastern wall. Abolished as a prison in 1905, the place of incarceration was restored in the early twenties by the Soviet government and placed under the control of the OGPU.

Only one man has ever escaped from Solovky. With that daring exception, its Arctic ramparts have never lost a prisoner. Some of its victims have, however, been transferred elsewhere after serving their term on the islands and have later managed to make their way to freedom. Among that number is S. O. Pidhainy, an innocent Ukrainian intellectual and author of the present book.

His story, told with simple veracity, reveals the existence in Soviet Russia of a system of slavery more vast, more brutal and more inhuman than any that history has known in the past. Merely to have survived from years of such suffering speaks much for the vitality of this Ukrainian writer. Every Canadian and American should read his chronicle in order to see the fate that the Kremlin and its North American agents have planned for the free world that we still possess.

WATSON KIRKCONNELL

Acadia University,
Wolfville, N.S.

INTRODUCTION

Any knowledge of life in Soviet Russia can only be gleaned from the limited accounts published in the daily newspapers, or from those who are brave enough to write truthfully of their own experiences.

I feel privileged in writing this introduction to *Islands of Death*, because I truly believe that it is only through books such as this, that the free people of the West will understand and appreciate the horror and menace of life under the Communists.

It must appear unbelievable that such a vast number of people would willingly submit to such conditions, but in this book you will read of the difficulty of avoiding a living death in the labour camps which are to be found throughout the U.S.S.R.

The worst of these camps have always been in the North, in or close to the Arctic Circle, and of these, the Solovky Islands Camp is known as one of the most horrible.

The Ukrainians have always resisted Soviet domination and because of this resistance, thousands upon thousands of them have been forcibly placed in labour camps to serve terms of ten years or more. Under the conditions prevailing in these camps, a great percentage die and there is rarely an opportunity of any record being published to reveal the life they are forced to lead.

In this book, we have an exceptional account from a man now living in Canada, who, by his own efforts and courage, escaped from these horrors.

There is no doubt of the authenticity of this story, and the tragedy is, of course, that these conditions still exist today for hundreds of thousands of ordinary human beings in different parts of Russia and the countries which are occupied by the Communists.

We must fight this evil for the sake of humanity and I only hope that the message in this book, will be taken to heart by every freedom-loving man and woman.

IGOR GOUZENKO

CELL SIXTY-SEVEN

On January 17th three GPU guards were driving me to the place where true heroes had sacrificed their lives. Large flakes of snow were slowly settling on the ground and it seemed that we were driving just as slowly. When we arrived everyone was silent, as if standing over a grave, and it was not proper to speak. Feeling unconcerned, I got out a cigarette and began to smoke. With the cigarette, I was taken to the office of the commandant on duty, and was ordered to undress completely. They lifted my arms, put my feet apart, opened my mouth and generally made as thorough an examination of me as if I were a horse being sold at the market. Then I was ordered to dress, and two guards took me to cell sixty-seven and banged the door behind me. I lay down on the bed, smoked another cigarette and fell asleep. I slept restfully and in the morning I felt indifferent to everything. In this manner I began my adventures on Chernishevsky Street in 1933, the year that brought so much suffering to the Ukrainian people in Soviet Russia. Russia.

Cell sixty-seven was a fashionable dwelling. It had five beds, and the floor was inlaid. The beds had mattresses, blankets and even pillows.

The other inmates of the cell did not pay any attention to me that night, but in the morning they introduced themselves, and gave me instructions on how I should behave at the questioning. My fate depended on my behaviour at the examination, they said, and I would be either shot or left alive.

“Do not admit anything, even if the examining judge produces factual evidence. Do not admit anything for any price, and it will be easier for you”, advised my companions. “Remember that the Bible says, ‘Let thy words be few’, warned Bondarenko, a man who gave an impression of honesty and kindness. Before imprisonment he had been

chief of the planning section of the Department of Agriculture in Ukraine. I thanked my new friends for their advice and I wondered how fate would deal with me.

After a short time, the examining judge decided to call me forward and I was brought to him.

The NKVD at Chernishevski Street did not maltreat me physically. They had two separate treatments, one for educated people, and one for simple prisoners.

To break down educated men they used the more refined method. Such persons were kept on a very meagre diet. They were not allowed to sleep and to make sure that the prisoner did not fall asleep, an armed guard sat beside him. At the first sign of sleepiness the guard would either push his gun in the face of the prisoner, or hit his toes with the butt end. When the prisoner was on the verge of insanity and was beginning to have hallucinations, they showed him his crying wife and children in the distance.

The man was informed that unless he signed the confession prepared by the NKVD, his wife and children would be shot as well as himself. The examining judge then persuaded the prisoner that nothing could help him and no one could do anything for him, but if he signed the confession then everything would be all right.

Many a man could not stand such heavy pressure and methods, and with a mind half-crazed from lack of sleep and fear for loved ones, would sign the fatal paper. Now the examining judge would suddenly change his manner and treat him as if he were a bosom friend. He would put a cigarette in his mouth and give him water with his own hands. Then he would be taken to his cell where he would fall on the bed and sleep.

On awakening he would try to remember what took place. Realizing what he had done, he would cry, beat the wall with head and fists, call the examining judge names that are not in the dictionary and demand an attorney. From such behaviour the NKVD would conclude that this man deserved different treatment. After gagging and tying him they would drag him from the fashionable cell to the

cellar, where the common people were imprisoned. To teach him a lesson and to equalize the treatment of prisoners, he would be beaten and a few teeth knocked out. In this way an educated man would be made conscious of his privileges and duties.

I escaped all these experiences at Kharkiv NKVD but I saw how other inmates of my cell were tortured and forced to sign confessions. However, I was not allowed to sleep for two days because for some reason the examining judge thought that my name, Pidhainy, was a pseudonym and demanded my real name. During these two sleepless nights I was expected to recall to memory my real name. However the judge found in my file, among the reports of informers, that my father, also named Pidhainy, had been shot by the communists in 1922. He was pleased with his finding, and remarked that "evidently, the apple didn't roll far from the tree. The father was a bandit and the son is the same".

I kept silent.

"Were you a member of a comsomol (a society of communist youth)? I know that you were not a member of a comsomol. You were afraid that your 'proletarian' origin would be discovered", said the examiner sarcastically.

"Don't you worry, GPU (later NKVD, still later MVD) knows everything. It knows all that is in the air, on the earth and three metres under the earth."

I reverently bent my head to show that I was convinced that GPU was omniscient.

After that the examiner began to lecture me on the communist fight with the Ukrainian counter-revolutionary movement. From his speech I formed the impression that my examiner knew nothing about the Ukrainian struggle, had no facts to accuse me of anything, and was not very smart after all.

At the end of the conversation I was persuaded that I was lacking in appreciation of his craftiness. He declared that he intended to arrest all readers and subscribers of Ukrainian Communist journals then printed in Ukraine.

He mentioned the journal "Ukraine" a (scientific and historical journal of the Ukrainian Academy of Science), "Life and Revolution", and "The Prolitfront". He said that he would also arrest all those who agreed with the outstanding Ukrainian Soviet writer Sosiura. The magistrate said that Wolodka Sosiura had himself confessed that he had two souls; one that of a Ukrainian Communist, and the other of a Ukrainian nationalist.

"You are a historian and a marxist and probably you agree with Sosiura?" he inquired. I answered him that I did not agree with Sosiura but with Pidhainy.

"Sosiura at least fought in the Red army, but your father fled to the forest." I did not answer him.

Suddenly he said to me, "Do you think that GPU shot the army commander Tyutyunnyk?" I said that it did not make any difference to me, and did not say anything more. The examining judge told me that I was to be sent to another place where I would become more talkative. That was all.

A week later I left fashionable cell sixty-seven. I was leaving a sobbing Bondarenko, aforementioned chief of the planning section of the Department of Agriculture. He had advised me not to sign, but had signed himself. He was crying quietly and wringing his hands, all the time looking wildly at the grating of the window. He did not become insane. Bondarenko was shot fully aware of what was taking place and bravely facing his torturers. One of my former inmates of cell sixty-seven told me this later.

I was taken from Chernishevski Street to the station in the black police truck, which was called the "Black Crow".

On the train four guards cleared one compartment of Soviet citizens who were not yet arrested. They ordered me to lie on the middle shelf in the compartment and prohibited me to move in any way.

I lay on my shelf and the guards took turns sleeping. Late at night I asked the guard to take me to the washroom. He consented and appeared to be very friendly and considerate, and told me that he sympathized with me. In the

washroom he said that I was being taken to the GPU at the city of Rostov. If I would like to send a few words to my family he would be very glad to drop it in the mail box for me.

I was impressed and thought that even among the guards of the GPU there were good kindly men. In the meantime the guard gave me a piece of paper and a pencil. I wrote three short innocent sentences and signed my name. We shook hands and marched back to our compartment.

"This is evidently an important bird", I heard from among the passengers as I climbed to my shelf again. I liked the remark.

I smoked my clay pipe and thought about my family, and about the landlady, evil Palageia Lukianovna, who was threatening to throw my family from her dwelling. They had no means of livelihood as the country was being ravaged by a famine organized in Ukraine by Stalin. I thought about all that I had left behind at Kharkiv but I did not think at all about what was awaiting me at Rostov.

"Get up!" came the order.

All the passengers had already left the cars. On the station platform I was met by four guards of the Rostov GPU. One of them ordered me to follow him. We were passing by the side doors, but crowds of people were everywhere and they watched us with interest. It looked imposing indeed.

I am a man of small stature and thin, but I was guarded by eight well-fed husky guards. One preceded me and seven followed, all with guns ready.

"Yes, I appear to be an important bird", thought I, and in a few moments was climbing into the 'Black Crow'. They brought me to a door and ordered me to enter. As I stepped over the threshold my hat fell off and I thought it was a bad omen. I picked it up and followed the guard, entering a small room. The guards banged the door and went away laughing. My cell was a small toilet room with ruined pipes. The floor was covered with ice and everything was extremely cold. I thought that they had put me in that

cell just temporarily as they probably did not know where to place me.

Only a very naive man could think so. I spent three days in that room. Three times someone asked from behind the door, "Any complaints?" and immediately left. At first I thought about the fashionable cell at Kharkiv, but at the end of the second day I could not think. At the end of the third day I was lying on the floor in a high fever. When the governor of the GPU jail came, I told him in a voice weak from hunger and cold, "Better shoot me. I can't stand it any longer".

"But you can do this, can't you?" shouted the governor, and pushed in front of my face the letter which I had written in the train and given to the guard to mail to my family. I was silent. Everything was clear.

Indeed as the Marxian doctrine (widely quoted in Soviet Russia) states, "The condition of existence determines the character of thinking". The governor went away. I remained, with the thought that I would be left to die in the ice-cold toilet room. I was again mistaken.

His excellency governor Kukushkin granted me his forgiveness and ordered me transferred to cell fifty-four.

CELL FIFTY-FOUR

Cell fifty-four with its iron bedsteads (no mattresses or blankets), automatic locks, dirty floor, and stinking pail for the necessities of nature, seemed to me to be a first class apartment. All this I noticed a little later. Entering the room I looked for the radiator, and without paying any attention to anyone went over to it. I leaned over it, enjoying the little heat it had. I embraced and caressed it as if it were someone I loved dearly. My fingers were twisted from cold and my whole body was numb.

It took at least an hour before I began to pay any attention to the other men in the cell. I think I looked rather queer as no one in the cell had disturbed me.

"How wonderful it is in your cell", were my first words, and the rest of the men laughed.

"You are right, comrade. It is so quiet here that soon we will howl like dogs.

"Do not complain", said another.

I sided with the second man and told them about the guard who was so interested in my family, about the letter and my three days in the small toilet room with frozen pipes.

I spent the whole night against the radiator and if I had had at least 100 grams (about 3½ ounces) of bread I would have felt that I was the happiest man on earth. In the morning I was given 200 grams of bread (the kind they used to give to prisoners in jail in 1933), and some hot water. After breakfast I felt so well that I began to approach that stage of well-being when a person is ready to forgive anyone anything. Suddenly the lock clicked and the governor entered the cell. This was the same man that yesterday had pushed my letter to my family in my face.

All my colleagues jumped up and stood at attention. I tried to do the same, but probably did not do it very well, as the governor asked me in a hoarse sneering voice, "How are you now?"

Standing at attention, I thanked "the citizen commander". He grunted with approval, and went away banging the door behind him.

"How did you come to know him?" my inmates asked. "This Kukushkin is a dog." I explained that this was the man who had kept me in the frozen toilet room for three days.

"Well comrade, you're lost. He won't leave you alone" concluded Hastings. Hastings was an Englishman, a former commercial traveller for a large trade company. He called it "The New Russian Company".

After the visit of Kukushkin I acquainted myself with the other prisoners. As it appeared, all who were confined to cell fifty-four, without exception, were charged with spying against Soviet Russia.

Hastings was charged with spying for England. Engineer Rem, a Ukrainian Belgian who had worked at Donbas, was accused of spying for France, Kelerman, a German pastor from the German communities on the Don River, was charged with spying for Germany. Lastly an old peasant from the province of Podilia was there for spying in the service of Rumania.

Among all these "traitors" (as I learned later) I alone was imprisoned for a supposed political crime.

I was not accused of spying, but was charged with taking part in a secret organization which worked for the destruction of communist rule in Ukraine and in Kuban Cossack Country (North Caucasus), by organizing an insurrection. The purpose of the organization was to establish a Ukrainian Capitalistic People's Republic.

In spite of the fact that I was a "criminal" of ideological character and not a "spy" as my other colleagues, I was treated with the utmost severity. I was put on a reduced ration and prohibited to correspond with or to see my family. Although many food parcels were sent to my colleagues they very rarely received them. This was in accordance with the campaign organized to keep food away from Ukrainians during the Soviet organized artificial famine of

1933. This famine was created by the Russian Communists in a move to suppress the resistance of the Ukrainian population to the Soviets. It has gone down in history as the most cruel, unnecessary, and not-to-be-forgotten story of inhumanity yet heard of.

After my meagre breakfast, I left the radiator and decided to occupy the fifth iron bedstead. All of them were locked for the day. Only now, I noticed that the fifty-fourth cell had millions of bedbugs and cockroaches. They were yellow and black varieties, and had long feelers.

The door had a small opening with a cover. A guard in felt shoes silently marched up and down the corridor every two minutes. He would come to the door, open the cover and look in the cell. This happened regularly. The cover made a grating sound every time the guard moved it. Engineer Rem could not stand this noise after five months, and stopped his ears with cotton. I could stand it, but at times it got on my nerves too.

All my companions were of refined, quiet natures. I liked the German Protestant pastor especially. He looked at everything from the religious point of view. He was unmarried and his niece brought him something every Saturday.

The pastor's situation was tragic. Every Saturday he shortened his belt. Originally he had been a stout man, but was now losing weight rapidly.

"You know, the examining judge told me that he would make me look as thin as a pencil", said the pastor once. "I think that I really will look like a pencil soon", he added with sadness.

Once weekly we were given the newspaper "Pravda". The pastor and I read it but the rest did not want to.

"Read it", advised the pastor. "The government gives it to you with the charitable idea that you hardened counter-revolutionaries will be able to understand your sins and confess them before Kukushkin as soon as possible", he added sarcastically.

"I have nothing to confess", answered Rem with irritation.

"Think it over", said the pastor sternly, imitating the examining judge.

"I have thought it over for eight months."

"Young man, what is eight months in comparison with eternity?"

"I read 'Pravda' with pleasure", continued the pastor. "When I read it I always recall the customs of the old German prisons. In those times the prisoners were not made to build canals, railroads or factories. They were expected to repent, read sacred books and sing psalms. Those who showed the most enthusiasm for these exercises were released from the jail sooner than the others. This caused the whole jail population to fill the neighbourhood with unearthly noises and singing from morning to night. Thieves, murderers and the rest of the inmates would try to show their repentance by singing religious songs at the top of their voices.

Not very far from one of these jails lived Immanuel Kant, the famous philosopher. When his nerves couldn't stand any more of this kind of "religious" singing, he attacked the German government, demanding that this method of reforming prisoners should be stopped. In this he was successful. However, as we see, this ancient custom has been called to life again in Soviet Russian prisons, where prisoners are urged to repentance by government newspapers like 'Pravda'."

I always laughed at these historical excursions of the pastor, but he himself remained serious.

"It was in reading the newspaper 'Pravda'," he continued, "that I found the reason for my arrest. The reason is not only in the fact that I am a pastor and therefore 'opium for the people' from the point of view of the Soviet government. It is not because I am a spy. I never was one and never will be. The real reason is altogether different. It is because my way of thinking is radically different from that of Russian Communists."

"Look at what is written here."

The article had the heading "Machines, horses and men".

"Do you understand it?" continued the pastor. "In the first place are machines, in the second place are horses and men are at the end. To me this goes against the grain. All my life I have put men first, animals second, and machines last."

"Quiet, father!" warned the peasant Mykyta.

"Have they brought anything?" inquired the pastor, turning.

"Someone is at the door", said Mykyta. The pastor, as usual came quickly to the door to see who it was, and found a guard with the pail of slops that constituted the food for the "animals".

"What is it today?"

"Fish" answered the pastor.

This 'fish' was warm dirty water with a number of rusted smelly heads from salted herrings. We were given about one pint each. The pastor always asked the guards to give us more of the fishbones. The guard always cursed us, called us gluttons, and, except on very rare occasions, gave us less than was due to us.

When we received less than we expected we all turned against the pastor, calling him an old tactless priest, and he, with a guilty look, would go to his corner.

"I cannot understand it", he said. "Do they grudge us that which no other creature will eat?"

"It is possible that they have orders to refuse it. Their service in the police demands it. I served too and I know the rules", said Mykyta.

At that point Rem could not control himself any longer.

"Rules! Orders!" he shouted. "It does not make any difference to you what kind of order you are under. You will sell one another, eat human flesh, die from starvation, but none of you would ever dare hit the 'citizen governor' on the snout."

"There you are mistaken, for I myself threw a police

inspector from a carriage into a ravine during the revolution", Mykyta defended himself.

"That shows that you were an idiot", Hasting joined the conversation. "If that pre-revolutionary police inspector was still with us, you would sit together with your wife Hapka and would eat curd-dumplings. You would not need to try to run away to Rumania in search of food."

Whenever the conversation took an antagonistic turn, the pastor would say a few pacifying words and we would all sit together around the table to eat from the common pan.

While we ate we watched one another to make sure that everyone dipped his spoon in at the same time as the rest. Everyone was afraid to miss his portion and we all ate as if under command. When we had swallowed the water and chewed the fish bones, we sat around the table as hungry as before. Usually at this time someone would begin to tell stories.

More often than anyone else Hastings would talk about his adventures when he was a commercial traveller. His trade company, with headquarters in the city of Novorossisk, was one of the largest of its kind.

He always spoke with enthusiasm and interest. The expression of his face would change and his voice would rise and fall. The subjects of his stories were always about his meetings with different kinds of people, most often with representatives of large industrial and commercial firms in Europe. He told about sumptuous dinners, where many delicious courses and wines were served; wines that were one hundred or even two hundred years old—that did not pour from bottles but slowly flowed out. There were stories of commercial secrets, and of beautiful chorus girls and their love of money, and the great delights they had with them.

Then there were sweets from the ends of the earth, fruit of all kinds, and cigars whose smoke alone would lull and soothe a person. Rem's eyes shone while Hastings told his stories and everyone listened with attention. For some reason I watched how the yellow and black cockroaches

fought for the smallest bits of bread that fell on the floor from our table as I listened.

Peasant Mykyta always doubted. Every time Hastings finished his stories he would come to me and say, "I do not think they would receive even a Czar that way. By God, he lies, as only a landowner's soul can lie."

Once, during the "blissful" after-dinner time, evidently to revenge himself on Hastings, Mykyta began to tell his story. He showed himself to be a good artist, skilfully imitating the mannerisms of Hastings in story telling.

Mykyta closed his eyes in the same way, raised, lowered, and changed the tone of his voice, in much the same way as Hastings but his subject was different. He told how he and his godfather Trochym had once enticed, killed and eaten the bitch of a local chief of police at Ozeriany. He spoke slowly, describing how hard it was to entice the bitch as she was not hungry.

They were finally lucky enough to lure her into a shed and put a lasso around her neck. Then she was at their mercy. It took only half an hour to kill, skin and dress the carcass. After cutting it in pieces they took the meat to the hut of Trochym to fry. The bitch was fat and the meat was very delicious with salt, pepper, and onion sprinkled on it, described Mykyta with enthusiasm.

Hastings listened to the story with a sour expression on his face. The pastor remarked with a sigh as was his custom, that, as far as they were concerned any kind of bitch — lean or fat — would be welcome for dinner. All of us agreed at that juncture that we would eat anything offered us with the exception of wood. Peasant Mykyta's appetite was stimulated so much by his own story, that he seriously asked us, "If a man ate wood, would he die?"

Being told that such was indeed the case, he looked regretfully at the bars which kept him from an opportunity to steal and eat more police bitches.

So our day passed, monotonous and depressing. Outside the cell someone shouted, someone called, and then suddenly all was quiet. Someone was dragged and as he was dragged

we could hear his death-rattle. Somewhere locks rustled, someone struggled, groaned, and again everything was quiet. Only the guard was there quietly passing the door of the cell, regularly opening and closing the cover of the eye hole.

Then suddenly, "Who is on 'P'?" asked the guard through the hole.

"Pidhainy".

"Get ready".

My first examining judge in the Rostov GPU when I was brought to him, began his conversation with a lecture on the principles of proletarian morality and ethics. He showed me my ill-fated letter to my family as proof of my enmity to the proletariat, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. He talked long about the faithfulness and incorruptibility of GPU personnel.

I listened, but said nothing.

Then he began to speak about the history of the counter-revolution on the Kuban, the motherland of the famous Kuban Cossacks.

The judge then asked me if there was a large Ukrainian population on the Kuban. I told him that it should amount to at least 70% of the whole population.

My answer brought the crisis. The examining judge became red faced, called me all kinds of unprintable names and promised to get even with me. In his rage he hit the table with his fist and demanded that I remember that there were no Ukrainians on the Kuban.

"Kuban", he shouted, "belongs to Russia. There are some saboteurs, bandits, and followers of Petlura there, and you are one of them. You are demoralizing good people. And all this pestilence comes from Ukraine, Kiev and Kharkiv."

It is necessary to say that the examining judge was well informed about the events that took place on Kuban. He personally took part in the devastation of Kuban by the Soviet Russian army in 1922, when tens of thousands of Kuban Cossacks were shot during May and June, in the

time of the so-called "Red terror" which was proclaimed by Moscow.

I did not like this first conversation with the Rostov examiner. I again recalled that my hat had fallen off when I stepped over the threshold of this unforgettable institution at Engels Street.

The questioning continued in the "normal" way. At first I was not allowed to sleep as they called me for questioning all night through. First they called me at half-past eleven. (Our beds were unlocked at ten o'clock and locked up again at 7 in the morning. During the day the guards did not allow anyone to sleep, even in a sitting position).

At the first interview the examining judge would ask, "Are you ready to confess?"

"No" would be my answer.

"Take the prisoner back."

The guards would take me back. But after an hour I was again called up to the examiner. This was kept up through the night.

Or they would use the method (known to me from Kharkiv) of keeping their victim awake all night. The guards changed at certain times, but I was left to stand, till one of the examining wardens would shout, "Take away this scarecrow," and the guards would take me away.

On the whole, the examiners at Rostov were more temperamental and energetic men; men with southern blood. This helped them a great deal to make up a case against the counter-revolutionary organization called the "Union of Ukraine and Kuban". To this organization GPU joined all those arrested in Northern Caucasus, and all that had any connection at all with the question of the Ukrainian National minority in USSR.

However this affair was not developing as fast as was desired by the examining judges, and they became irritated at my obstinacy.

"Why is it so hard for you to do what you are told?" the judge asked me on several occasions.

"Sign the confession and don't play for time. In any

event your case is lost. We are the authority and you are in our hands. We can do anything we please with you. No-one in the whole wide world can help you. Your song is finished. You are in our power and must trust us and do as we tell you."

I kept silent. After these "friendly" conversations I was whipped, beaten and thrown out of the examiner's room. Then the guard would drag me back to my cell.

The more one advances in some matters the more obstacles one has to overcome. After some time I was not able to walk, and two guards, ironically called "archangels", had to drag me to the examiner. The jail physician gave me permission to lie down, not only at night, but during the daytime also. It was impossible not to allow me this, as I could neither sit nor stand.

Most jails are places of suffering. Soviet jails intensified this suffering a hundred times. And while normally the jail serves to protect society from the criminal element, Soviet jails served to protect the ruling criminal clique from any citizens who showed signs of dissatisfaction with their rule, or were suspected of entertaining such feelings.

Cell fifty-four, and millions of other cells throughout the Socialist Fatherland had only one task. That task was to destroy a man morally and spiritually, and if not to kill him outright, at least to make him physically incapable of resistance.

We were all doomed to die, but longed to live. For some time now I had been living on sheer willpower alone. I would say to myself, "Today is the 27th, will I be alive on the 1st of next month?" And I would use all my willpower to remain alive till the 1st. After the 1st, I would concentrate on living another five days. When they were up and I was still alive, I concentrated on the next week, and so on. This was the only idea that ruled my mind and kept me alive.

The questioning continued relentlessly.

On April 30th during a dark and stormy night, when it seemed the wind and rain would shake even our jail, the

guards pushed into our cell, a man with the facial features of a Mongol. I alone was not sleeping as I had a bad toothache. My teeth had begun to loosen, and to fall out.

He threw his bag down, came to the centre of the cell, and turned to me asking, "Are you ill?"

I told him that I had a bad toothache but otherwise was not ill.

"Why then, do you look so emaciated?"

I told him that this was the result of starvation. He looked with apprehension at my skeleton. Out of his bag he took a loaf of bread and two herrings. These he put in front of me on the bed.

"Eat it", he said, "but not all at once, otherwise you will die. It is all for you."

I looked at the bread — real rye bread, at the herrings, and at this man of Mongolia, whom I had never seen before. I put his gift on the table and thanked him, but remarked that although he appeared to be a very good man, he appeared to be just as naive. I said that he forgot the fact that in a short time he would be reduced to my condition and perhaps worse, and I refused to accept his gift. Then he shook my hand, and we became fast friends.

He was a Calmuck by the name of Kushlinov. In 1920 he had emigrated to Czechoslovakia with his parents, and lived in Prague.

He graduated from college there, and became a teacher in the only Calmuck high school in Czechoslovakia. About a year ago he had returned to USSR with a few students to build an "Independent Calmuck Socialist Republic".

This was my first acquaintance with western Europe. Kushlinov could tell me truthfully and without fear about the life of the European people. He could say whether it was really rotting away, or if it had bright prospects for the future.

Somehow it was easy for us to understand one another. With this Asiatic I had many things in common. We had a common jail. My people, as well as his, were being persecuted and exploited by the Russians. He loved his people

and dreamed of their liberation, of a free life for this small peace-loving nation of shepherds in their steppes. Kushlinov told us about the Calmucks and about Europe. He left Europe, because western Europe always stressed that he, as an Asiatic, belonged to a lower race. When he went to a store, they tried to sell him the worst cuts, and joked that they were sorry they did not have any horse meat for him. When he was buying bread, they would try to sell him stale bread. When he would enter a restaurant, waiters would disregard him. The people would watch how he ate and acted. It was no wonder that he had become easy prey for communist propaganda, and returned to Soviet Russia with a few of his students to form a Calmuck Socialist Republic. Accused of spying for Czechoslovakia, he and his friends were arrested and sent to Leningrad. From the jail in Leningrad, they were sent to Rostov.

Kushlinov did not regret leaving Europe, but he was sorry that his honest and hardworking nation was perishing in Russia because the civilized world had forgotten them as well as other unfortunate nations under the Russian heel, and had consented that they be left for the Russians. He cursed Communists and Russian Imperialists. Often I asked him to tell us about Calmuck customs, religion and life. He was always ready to share with us all his knowledge of the Calmuck people and his eyes would shine, and his voice become tense when he told us about his people. We all listened with great interest to this Asiatic educated in Europe. (Kushlinov was condemned to ten years hard labour in slave camps, as I learned later while serving my term at Solovky Island.)

Everything continued without much change. Brutal examinations and starvation were our daily fate. I was losing strength quickly in spite of the fact that I ate Kushlinov's loaf of bread myself, as he only pretended to eat his share. The guards had to carry me in for questioning. Finally I had the honour to be questioned by the chief representative of the North Caucasian GPU, comrade Yevdokimov.

I noticed that when he saw me he was surprised. Evidently he was expecting to see a very strong and powerful man. Instead he met an emaciated young man about 25 years old, with a beard.

He turned away from me and began talking into space. He said it was necessary that I confess, as my confession was necessary for the welfare of the proletarian revolution, and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and as a Soviet person I should confess.

I answered him, "It is indeed a very sad affair for the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat if the whole future of the proletarian revolution depends on my confession."

He took my answer as an offence and said, "Our reports that you sucked in counter-revolutionary ideas with your mother's milk are evidently true. The only thing you are good for is to be shot."

I answered that there was no need to shoot me, as I was going to die soon in any case.

Yevdokimov ordered me taken away.

During one whole week I was kept in suspense, expecting the execution. In Rostov GPU, men were taken for execution, not only from the death cells, but from all the cells. It was hard to know who was "mortal" and would be taken to be shot, and who was "immortal" and would be allowed to live for some time longer.

We knew by certain signs when a man was taken to be shot. In such cases the cell was entered at night by Kukushkin himself, and instead of two guards he had four. The prisoner was order to get up quickly and follow him, still undressed and leaving his shoes behind him. This always took place between two and four a.m.

One night I heard the drunken Kukushkin and his retinue of four above my ear. I got up and asked if I was to go "without shoes".

He knew what I meant and said, grinning, "Yes, go without shoes". All my friends immediately got up and sat on their beds.

"Lie down" commanded Kukushkin, and they all lay down again.

"Hurry up, hurry up". I stepped into my rubbers, and throwing a coat over my shoulders, said "goodbye" to my friends in the cell.

For the first time in three months I could walk without the help of the guards. But still, two guards held my arms firmly.

Strength returned to my feet as I walked, and I thought, "This is the end".

Suddenly my heart was filled with a deep grief. With all my being I wanted to live and to pray to God. Why I wanted to pray I do not know, but with great intensity of feeling I began to repeat, "I believe in the only God" . . . It was all I could remember. I had forgotten the rest of the prayer long ago, so I continued to repeat these few words over and over again.

It seemed to me that we walked through all eternity. We passed corridors I had never seen before, went through a basement, climbed up some stairs, then down again, and finally stood in front of a door.

Kukushkin knocked and I was taken into a small room. In a corner sat one of my examining judges. He smiled pleasantly at me, greeted me politely by my first name and that of my father, (as is the custom in the Ukraine), and asked my forgiveness for disturbing me at such a late hour. He asked me to sign a paper stating that I had received the charges the GPU had made against me.

The paper stated that I was hereby informed that I was being accused of taking part in the counter-revolutionary organization "Union of Ukraine and Kuban". After I signed the receipt the examining judge apologised once more, and wishing me good night, ordered me taken back to the cell. Two guards grasped my arms again and I walked back, but Kukushkin and the two other guards remained with the examiner.

When I was pushed into the cell and the door had banged shut, all my friends surrounded me. They shook my

hand, greeted me, and were very happy. They foretold that now I would not be shot. The pastor added that he thought that I would come out of jail alive and well.

I was happy beyond measure and could not sleep, walking the cell all night. My friends tried to persuade me to lie down, but I couldn't till they forced me to. Then I fell asleep and slept all the next day. Awakening I planned to live again by will power, but now I concentrated on keeping alive in stretches of three days at a time and not five.

One morning the guards took Hastings somewhere for examination. Next day they came and took away his belongings. Peasant Mykyta was also taken away with his belongings. This meant that he most likely was transferred somewhere, if not shot.

The pastor, Kushlinov, Rem, and myself were the only ones left in the cell. One day we were surprised by an unexpected event. The small opening in the door through which we received our food, opened, and Kukushkin put his head through and shouted, "This is for Pidhainy". Then he pulled his head back and poured about two pounds of dry bread on the floor from a bag, banging the little door he went away. We were all surprised and myself most of all. We looked at the crumbs of dry bread and did not know what to think. Finally the pastor said that "every gift is a blessing".

I told them to gather the bread and put it on the table, and we all sat around. The bread was not only stale, but covered with mould. There were pieces of bread of all kinds in the pile. Some were made with corn, some with bark, others with rye, coffee leaves, etc.

We wondered what had happened to Kukushkin. Why had this contemptible creature, a real henchman of the Soviet Union, and a brute of the highest order, made such a present and especially to me? Yesterday he was ready to torture and kill me without mercy and today he brings all these pieces of bread, left to the GPU by the labourers and peasants they had shot. These were workers and peasants who had supported the revolution against the Czar, now

had become victims of revolution. We never learned the meaning of Kukushkin's gift and we did not have the time for philosophizing. We asked the guard for some hot water, and with the hot water, the mouldy pieces of bread, and the salt, we started a feast. First we wished eternal peace to those who left the pieces of bread, brought to us by their murderers.

"You know what", said Rem, "When Kukushkin could not get permission to send a bullet through the back of your head, he decided to keep you alive with the thought that this life will become so unbearable to you that you will commit suicide".

"If that is the case", I answered, "Kukushkin will be terribly disappointed as I haven't the slightest intention of dying".

When I went to sleep that night, I thought, "Is it possible that for a moment, that beast can have become a man, or after drinking a quart of vodka, does he regret his moment of weakness in giving these crumbs of bread to a counter-revolutionist who, for some reason, escaped death at his hands?"

This act of Kukushkin remained a mystery for us, just as much a mystery as his dark, drunken, brutal soul.

Two weeks after this incident, the guards came, took my belongings, and dragged me through the corridors. I recalled that this was the very same way I was brought to cell fifty-four. We passed the doors of the ice-room in which I had spent three miserable days, then stepped over the threshold where the hat had fallen off my head.

SPECIAL TAGANROG CORPS OF GPU

I took my hat off, and waved it in farewell to the Rostov GPU Corps and all its horrors. The doors of the "Black Crow" opened and I was dragged inside. Seated on the bench with me were two guards of the GPU. The "Black Crow" moved on. The guards smoked silently till it became stifling. Added to this discomfort was the fact that I didn't know where they were taking me, or why.

In cell thirteen where I was unloaded I found that I was in the special Taganrog Corps of GPU.

The mighty hand of GPU was removing me farther and farther from the centre, and I found that the farther from the centre were the jails of GPU, the more brutal and inhuman were its agents. The condition of the prisons was primitive beyond imagination and the regime as a rule, was wild, cruel, and without restraint.

Cell thirteen and all the dungeons of the Taganrog GPU were situated in deep cellars, where no ray of sun could penetrate. These cellars were built in the time of the Russian Czar Alexander I, whose reign was infamous for the brutalities of police chief Arakcheev. The architects of those days had not planned the buildings for the use of the present day GPU, but the GPU found them perfectly suitable for its purposes.

Taganrog had very few buildings for the GPU, and as a result there was a lack of space. The prisoners could not lie down, and had standing room only in most of the cells.

When I was thrown into the cell, a place to sit was found for me, only because I was not able to stand.

My situation was now improving. I was informed that the investigation of my case had been completed, and my case sent to the Moscow GPU for a decision. All I had to do was wait. In the meantime my wife was able to secure permission to see me. The meeting took place in the presence of the examining judge. We did not know what

would be safe for us to talk about, and the time allowed us was very short. Taking leave of me my wife told me that on May 13, Mykola Khvylioviy, a famous Ukrainian Soviet writer had shot himself, and on the 7th of July, Nicolas Scrypnik, Minister of Education of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic had also committed suicide.

This news gave me to understand what took place when one was "at liberty". I wanted to live, but lost my interest in that kind of "liberty". Better to be in jail, as an open enemy of Russian Communism, than to be free, and forced to serve them in daily fear and uncertainty.

Cell thirteen was filled with representatives of various minorities in the USSR. There were Kuban Cossacks, Don Cossacks, Greeks and Armenians, but there were no Russians. Most of them were peasants and city labourers. In this cell I alone represented the intelligentsia. Due to this fact, I was the one called to decide any contentions that arose in the cell, and my decisions were considered final.

At times, some of the Cossacks would discuss Lafaki, one of the Greek prisoners.

"How is it that Lafaki is not tired of telling lies?"

At this, Lafaki felt that he was being mortally offended, called the Cossack a "cock", and said that all Cossacks were bandits and horse thieves. He said that it was only due to the Greek population that it was possible to live without danger in such cities as Taganrog or Mariupol. The Cossacks took up the argument and called all Greeks "frog-eaters". The Greeks accused the Cossacks of their ignorance of frogs, fish or anything good in general. Finally an Armenian said that only French people and possibly Calmucks eat frogs. In this way the bantering disagreement would die out.

Lafaki was unperturbed. In a short time he would start another argument. He was persuaded that he was the only one in the jail without reason to be there. All the rest had evidently done something bad for which they had been arrested.

Every morning he would say, "I think I will be released

to-day". He thought a great deal of himself and asserted that a person with his training and ability should not be kept in jail. As an architect he took the credit for all the new buildings in the city of Taganrog. If there was any discussion about Taganrog, he would shout, "Ask Lafaki, ask Lafaki". The other Greeks smiled at Lafaki, and serious Endeka called him a priest's bell-ringer. Lafaki would answer that grandchildren are not responsible for the crimes of their grandfathers. (His grandfather was a priest, and had been defrocked for his revolutionary activities.)

On the whole, Lafaki's talkative nature was the only diversion the prisoners had, and his arguments and complaints kept their minds off the inhuman existence they led, at least for a while

Among the prisoners was an old and emaciated Cossack labourer from a Don Collective state farm.

In the same building but in another cell, two of his sons were imprisoned. Fedko was 13 years old, and Pavlusha was eleven years old. The father was accused by the GPU of poisoning twenty horses which belonged to the state farm, with arsenic.

The two sons witnessed against their father, saying that they had seen him take the capsules given to him for his sick wife, and strew them over the feed for the horses. The father denied everything.

The children were well fed by the examining judge and given candies.

One day the guards unexpectedly pushed both children into our cell. On seeing them the father rushed to them with anger, but was held back and made to sit down. Then he began to cry like a small child.

"My little children, my falcons, my cursed children, why did you betray your father?" he cried hysterically.

The boys wept. They told their father that he need not be afraid. They said that the examining judge himself told them that they would be sent away from the accursed state

farm and that he swore that their father would not be punished at all. All he wanted to know was the truth. The boys then told the judge that they had seen their father strewing something over the feed for the horses.

The father was almost insane. Two hours later he was called to the examining judge. Downcast he pushed his way among the sitting and standing prisoners to the door. There he halted.

"Goodbye, children, I forgive you everything, my sons".

"Hey you! Do not stop for any farewells. Move on quickly." shouted the guard.

At night the father was pushed back into the cell half naked. The sight was so horrible and repulsive that it was hard to describe.

The man stood in underpants alone and with his boots on.

He shouted, "Lice!"

All those who were near the door rushed away from him. The prisoners made space near the pail for the natural necessities.

"Stand here" ordered Endeka. "Help gather the lice off him."

Then with the help of Endeka and two others, the two sons of the unhappy man began to pick the lice from him and throw them into the pail.

"It is impossible! It's ridiculous! Bang on the door! There are millions of lice." shouted Lafaki. Indeed it was impossible to take all the lice off him, and we had to bang on the door and shout.

Everyone stepped back as we saw the shower of lice that fell on the floor from the body of the labourer from the collective farm. He was in agony from bites all over his naked body. Blood flowed freely from open cuts and scratches on his skin.

There was not a spot on him which was not covered by lice stuck firmly to the skin. They were of all sizes and with-

out number. Finally, hearing our noise and banging, the commandant of the jail came with a few guards.

"Idiots!" shouted the jail warden. "Did I not order you to take this scarecrow to the bath, and not to the cell?"

They took the man away. Late at night they brought him back dressed in rags taken from some men who had been shot earlier. All the hair on his body was shaved off, and the body covered with iodine. Moving slowly, he entered the cell and fell down. The prisoners moved to allow him space to lie down.

"Where did he get the lice?" was the question.

This was an exclusive method of questioning at Taganrog GPU. Other Soviet jails did not use this method to extract confession. Taganrog GPU had a special room in the cellar, where they kept a proper temperature and humidity. This room was isolated and filled with lice. The prison, its inmates, guards, and even the examining judges were infested with the parasites. So it was no problem at all to fill the room with millions of lice. The most obstinate prisoners were thrown into that room. Many became insane having been in it only a very short time. Some ended their lives right there by breaking their heads on the walls of the cellar. No one could stay there longer than a day. In that same room, our unfortunate man who kept silent and would not admit the accusation of GPU, suffered untold agonies.

Two days later he was shot. They gave his sons the worn boots of their father and pushed them out of the jail into the streets. It was the year of famine, and the children knew that they would die of starvation. They stood near the prison gates and begged, this time not for their father, but to be allowed to live in the jail. They knew that their father had been shot. In this way they sat near the gates of the jail for three days. Some of the guards allowed the children to come into the jail yard. The man who cleaned the primitive outhouses in the jail yard and who lived in the cellar of the jail, gave them shelter. The children sold their

father's boots to the man in charge of the bath-house for two rations of bread. They were later seen helping the cleaner to empty the pails from the outhouses.

Slowly our cell was emptied of its inmates. The prisoners were sent to their final destinations or shot. Every day men were called forward "with belongings". At the end only three men were left in our cell, Cossack Michailenko, Lafaki and myself. Originally the cell was built for four men, but on my coming it contained about thirty prisoners.

Lafaki was sad and depressed. From time to time he would say "Rabble! Liars! Speculators! I, an enemy? Idiots! I, a poor Greek, an enemy!"

Finally I was transferred also. I was moved to cell ninety-eight. It was a bright and dry cell, located on the third floor. This "comfortable" cell also had its share of vermin.

I was alone. After such a long time in a crowd, with no privacies whatever, I was happy to be alone in this cell. One morning the lock clanged, and a beautiful girl entered my cell. Whether she was in reality beautiful, I do not know. But she seemed to me to be so. I still remember her. She had blue eyes, golden hair and she looked so sympathetic and childish. She kept herself official and businesslike. She was one of the secretaries of the examining section in the jail. She brought to me, as good news, a copy of the decision concerning my case.

It read: "For participation in the Ukrainian Nationalistic organization 'Union of Kuban and Ukraine' which had as its purpose to overthrow, by armed insurrection, the Soviet Government in the Ukraine and North Caucasus, and establish again a Ukrainian People's Republic, Moscow GPU College resolved on 8.VIII.1933 (A description and reference to the corresponding Soviet law followed) to isolate me for eight years in a reform labour camp on Solovky Island."

When I read it I began to count on my fingers when I would finish my term. The girl began to tell me that I was

a lucky man as I was to be sent to Solovky Island where there was a well-established prison camp. I told her that I felt very happy but would like to know when I would be released.

The girl told me that I would not stay the eight years. At the most I would serve three years. After three years the foundations of socialism would be firmly built, the enemy classes would be liquidated, and all who were at that time hindering the building of the socialist state would be freed. They would be persuaded then that all that was done by Joseph Visarionovich Stalin was without a fault. I saw that my beautiful girl was well trained in GPU ideology. I thanked her and she left. I remained with my thoughts.

Now I wished I had some company. I wanted to leave this jail and as soon as possible to go to the Solovky Island or anywhere else, but not to remain in my cell.

Not very long after, I was taken away to the distributive cell in the basement of Taganrog GPU.

"What did you get?" shouted someone as soon as I entered the cell.

"Eight years" I answered.

"Then they left two years to dish out to you later". Everybody laughed. As a rule most prisoners if not shot, were condemned for ten years.

"In our cell there are 148 men altogether" continued the cell "statistician". "Our years of punishment add up to 1371 years. You have eight years. Now the total is 1379 years." He went to a place on the wall where the number of years was written, stroked it out, and wrote in 1379.

I was interested to find out how the prisoners were divided according to their terms of conviction.

"I will gladly give you the information" said the same man. And he read the information on the wall: 119 men condemned for ten years; 13 men, counting you, for eight years; 17 men for five years. Altogether 149 men."

I spent a few days in that cell, during which the "statistician", as we called him, diligently kept the record of years and men.

ON THE WAY TO SOLOVKY

One day, 176 persons representing about 1700 years of imprisonment were taken to the station and loaded in the cattle cars. We were surrounded by guards who held their guns in readiness, while behind them huge growling police dogs waited. Some distance away stood a group of weeping women.

Three bells rang, the conductor blew the whistle and the train began to move. For a short distance behind the train, women, children and aged men ran. At first we could hear the cries. Then it became silent and only the wheels of the train could be heard knocking steadily.

Suddenly from one of the corners a song started, "Wife will find herself another, but mother will never find another son". Our soloist was a hardened young criminal.

"This is the seventh time they have caught me, but I will run away this time also. I will try to escape till they shoot me. In any case a bullet is awaiting me."

He spoke with a heroic air.

Political prisoners and criminals were kept together in the same cars, but the criminal prisoners were antagonistic towards us. We were traitors, spies and enemies, they were real "criminals".

I hoped that our train would go through Kharkiv. And so it happened. When we were unloaded we were sent to a Kharkiv prison for prisoners in transit.

This prison was the same as the rest; a huge building with large cells, and many prisoners of all descriptions. There was a complete absence of order, and therefore more liberty. On the following day I was able to let my family know about my arrival.

During the artificial famine in the Ukraine there were a number of cases of cannibalism. As a rule the "cannibals" were shot by GPU or allowed to die of starvation. These poor people never lived long, as they already were on the

brink of death from starvation, and committed these crimes only after becoming insane from hunger.

The artificial famine was being eased at that time by the communist government. From the year of famine in 1933, only 325 persons from the Ukraine charged with cannibalism remained alive, and were brought to Solovky prison. I will write about them later. The resistance of the Ukrainian peasants was broken at the price of millions who died from hunger. Beginning with September, a ration of 600 grams of bread (about one and a third of a pound) was established. What seems strange, but true, is that thousands of people were saved from death during the year of "famine" only because they were imprisoned in jails. In jail they received up to two hundred grams (6-7 ounces) of ersatz bread every day, while free men could not get anything.

The population of our cell changed, as every day new men were brought in, while others were taken away. The gathering was heterogeneous, but original and interesting. There were Monarchists, Trotskyists, Social-democrats, Ukrainian patriots, Communists, pickpockets, bandits, and members of the Ukrainian underground. There were also criminals of all sorts. All religions were represented there, and men of all races from Gypsies to Japanese. The highest representation was of the Ukrainian people.

A famous Ukrainian scientist, Prof. Semerenko was one of us. He was condemned to ten years hard labour for his opposition to the theories of the Russian scientist Michurin, whose theories were approved by the communist party leaders.

It was here that I got a first hand acquaintance with the "educational" work in Soviet jails. An old jail chapel was converted into a club room. We were brought to this club room and ordered to listen to a lecture. A young man was delivering the lecture in good Ukrainian, on the theme, "Ukrainian Nationalism — a chief danger".

The lecturer criticized Khvyliovy, and Scrypnyk, two outstanding Ukrainian Communists, who had lost their

faith in communism, and committed suicide. He greatly praised the chief Russian henchman in the Ukraine, Postyshev, and above all, Stalin. No one listened to him and no one contradicted him. No discussion was allowed during these lectures but this did not matter because no one ever thought about or took such lectures seriously. We all knew that tomorrow this very same lecturer might turn into a listener like ourselves. Neither his enthusiasm or craftiness would help him during one of the periodical party purges.

"Rabble" was the conclusion of my neighbour, a Trotskyist. "Let Stalin make as many counter-revolutionaries as he can out of us, then we will surprise him."

In this prison I was forced to go to the bath and disinfect my clothing about 27 times during thirty days. The water as a rule was ice cold and they burned my clothing. But it was not deliberate on the part of the jail authorities. It was rather, accidental, as some of the inmates, during the same time, were not sent to the bath even once. The prisoners as a rule were bathed and their clothing disinfected before they were sent away. Almost every day they assigned me to go with a group of prisoners. On such occasions we were taken to the bath-house and our clothing was disinfected. But later the authorities would find out that this group was not being sent to the same place as I was, and I was left out. The purpose of the bathing and disinfection was to delouse the prisoners. However, after a whole month of bathing and disinfection, when the guard examined me again before sending me on to my destination, he found that my clothing still had vermin. I was taken again to the bath-house. Finally I was sent away with a group of prisoners. The cold bath and delousing daily had brought me to the verge of collapse, and I was scarcely able to walk to the railroad station.

We were loaded again into cattle cars and sent up north. This trip was a story of human misery and brutality. Some cried, some sang, and someone was robbed, while someone else was beaten. All of us knew that imprisonment and jail was our common lot at the end.

In Moscow we were sent to the Butyrki prison. Again I met hundreds of people, but especially do I remember the "gilders". There was a large number of them. When they were taken for a walk I could see them. Most of them were Jews. They were all suspected of possessing hidden gold and were kept in prison and questioned till they surrendered the gold to GPU. Among them were old men and women. They were dressed very shabbily and were divided into a large number of social groups. Those from small towns were dressed like the rest of the Soviet people. There were dentists, workers in different Soviet co-operative and trade organizations, speculators, black market operators and rabbis.

The "gilders" were poorly fed. They were abused in every way, beaten, questioned and kept in the prison until in despair they had to provide the required sum of money as ransom for a measure of freedom. But there were those who were strong enough to pass all "examinations" without giving in. They were freed after some time, but such cases were rare. Those who had gold with which to pay the "ransom" were glad to do so.

A great number were not able to stand the tortures and died. When a "gilder" died, he was reported dead and was buried. No one worried about such "trifles".

The station at Butyrki which was used as a transferring point for the prisoners was a place of utter confusion. Very often over five hundred prisoners were gathered at the station for deportation to different prisons and slave camps in Siberia and Northern Russia. It was a place filled with sorrow and tragedy. Wives met their husbands who were being sent to different concentration camps. Often old friends met who had not seen one another for a number of years. They would learn that they were condemned for ten years of hard labour as members of some counter-revolutionary organization, to which they both supposedly belonged, and about which neither of them had ever heard. I myself met a few members of a secret society called the "Union of Kuban and Ukraine". I never thought that they

would be arrested. But here no one wondered. Everyone had to accept grim reality and take his place in the cattle car. At such places there are no parting scenes. No one takes leave of another. All are prisoners and all have to go.

We were taken to "Kresty" (a prison at Leningrad) from the station at Kursk, in open trucks. Rain poured down upon us as with great speed we passed palaces, bridges, and monuments. Ice began to cover the Neva River. Finally we arrived at Kresty. Kresty was renowned for its sadistic art of torturing prisoners. If in other places the GPU crucified innocent people, it was here that a slow blood-letting process that turned the strongest men into complete physical and moral wrecks took place.

Once I had tried a dash for freedom, when a group of prisoners was taken to unload lumber from a freight ship. I could have escaped if I had had more experience. But my attempt was cut short by the guard. I was beaten and given three days solitary confinement.

The guards at Kresty had different methods. They did not shout or curse as much as at other places, but instead gave a prisoner unmerciful beatings on any pretext.

The method of re-educating the prisoners practised at Kresty was also different.

In one cell, a prisoner who was condemned for some criminal affair, stole a piece of bread from his comrade who was also being punished for some crime. When the owner of the piece of bread found out the culprit, he took a brick from a stove in the cell and without any show of emotion killed the thief in the presence of all.

The murderer was judged by the common court and condemned to death. Because such murders happened often, our "educators" decided to discuss the death sentence before a gathering of the prisoners.

The chief of the "cultural-education" section made a fiery speech presenting the murderer as one of the worst criminals in existence. At the end of his speech the chief asked the prisoners to give their opinion on the subject. At first he asked everyone generally. Then he asked the

prisoners individually, pointing to one or another. But no one wanted to speak, neither the political nor the criminal prisoners. The chief tried it for half an hour without any success.

“Well, Comrades, if we are unwilling to discuss the crime we will then take a vote”, said the chief in a friendly manner. It was prohibited to call the prisoners “comrades” and the chief thought he had made a great concession condescending to do so. Just at that moment a prisoner got up and asked permission to speak.

“If anyone steals a bread ration in prison he is stealing the blood of his comrade, and it is a grave crime”, began the prisoner. The face of the chief was lit up with satisfaction.

“But the most tragic thing is that this is not an exceptional case. During the few months of my stay here at Kresty, I found that such thefts and murders were common occurrences. I ask all present, who is to blame for all this? Shall we blame those who kill or those who created such inhuman conditions and made beasts out of men?”

Suddenly, as if from under the ground, hundreds of prison guards with guns ready for action appeared. From the platform on which the chief of the educational section stood, two machine guns shone in the hands of the guards. A command was given to keep complete silence.

A group of guards took the speech maker away. He walked bravely without looking back.

“To your cells”, came the order. After that the authorities avoided asking the prisoners to take part in their judgments for prison crimes.

From Kresty we were taken in the “Black Crows” to the local station. We were packed in closed police wagons. Some prisoners lost consciousness before we came to the station and one old man died. The guards cursed his dead body, but as this could not help their problem in any way, they had to take the body back to Kresty.

When the train began to move, all began to speak about Zvanka. Zvanka was the central distributive camp for the

prisoners who were to be sent to different slave camps on Solovky, Kem, Kol, and Murmansk.

If there existed a semblance of some rights, however meagre, that a prisoner had before now, when he came to Zvanka he was at the complete mercy of every GPU official. Even arbitrary Soviet laws ceased to exist. Any insignificant tyrant from the GPU had unlimited authority over the bodies and souls of his prisoners.

Zvanka was notorious for its brutalities, robberies, beatings, and tortures and we were happy beyond measure when Zvanka refused to accept us for some reason, and we were sent to Kem.

When we looked through a small barred opening in our cattle car we saw only snow-covered swamps, dark forests, and stunted trees. Our feelings were of deep anxiety and foreboding.

The only prisoners who felt at home were the criminal who appeared carefree and sang songs.

We were slowly moving into the snowcovered north. From time to time groups of prisoners were taken from our train. At the station of Kem, a GPU slave driver pointed his finger at me and ordered me to get out.

I joined the ranks of about fifty prisoners who were already waiting. I did not know any of them.

Only one guard was assigned to us. When I saw this, I felt free, as I had become used to being guarded by at least two.

The guard looked friendly, smiled occasionally, and did not shout or curse us.

“Straight to the bath-house, fellows, to that big wooden building”, commanded our guard. We marched to the bath-house without fear. Our greatest enemy was not the trial at the bath-house but the people who were in charge of it. Veheraksha camp was an improvement upon my other prisons. Now I could go to the outhouse without the guard, and the inconveniences of the public use of the pail for natural necessities could be forgotten. I felt as though I was entering an altogether unfamiliar sphere of life. From

now on I was free from the examining judges and their tortures. Here I began my life as a convict who had escaped death only by chance.

However I was mistaken. The change was not so great after all. The bath-house of Veheraksha was not much different from the bath-house at Kharkiv or Taganrog. It had the same windows with broken glass, the same ice-cold water the same dirt, and the same brutal attendants. In fact, everything was the same, only transferred to the 65th parallel of northern latitude. We were robbed of all our clothing, and given rags called the prisoner's outfit. We were warned that no one was allowed to wear civilian clothing.

Our clothing was immediately appropriated by the attendants. We had known beforehand from others, that, sooner or later, we would be relieved of all meagre belongings, and, to avoid the more brutal method that the guards used to obtain our possessions, we left the articles in the hands of the camp authorities. Although we knew we would never get them back at least we wouldn't be abused for them.

After an ice-cold bath, we were completely shaved. I was able to retain my beard only with great difficulty. Up until then there had been no reason for the GPU to shave it off. If I had been a priest, then the beard would have had a religious meaning, and would have been shaved without mercy. But with me it had no political significance and I was allowed to keep it. After that we were taken to the medical commission.

The medical commission consisted of a physician and a number of suspicious-looking individuals. This commission found all of us in perfect health and put us in the first category of work. This was called the "Tractor" category. There were three divisions of capacity for work, but they existed only in theory. All the prisoners, without exception, who had hands and feet, and no matter how crippled or old, were forced to do the hardest work during the first six months. Only after the hard-work trial, if the prisoner

remained alive, could he get his lawful category of capacity for work. There were three categories: the first gave very hard work, the second was nearly as hard as the first, and the third was a little easier and was granted to men half incapacitated. In this third category the prisoner only had to do 75% of the task in order to obtain a full credit for the job. During my eight years in concentration camps, I was often very seriously ill and near death, but was never granted the third category. Instead, I was given the second or "horse" category.

Finally all the formalities were completed. We became real jail-birds and were taken to the barracks where our home was to be.

THE ORGY

As I entered the barrack, I ruefully recalled the beautiful girl at Taganrog who had praised the old concentration camps at Solovky as being the best.

Our barrack was a small wooden building, rudely constructed. Light shone through gaps between carelessly laid logs. The snow sifted in freely. In the centre of the room stood a small box-stove called a "bourgeois", but besides this there was no furniture at all. At least it was better than being unloaded in the bush in the winter and ordered to build a barrack for ourselves which often happened to other prisoners.

We made a fire in the box-stove and the barrack was soon filled with smoke and a little heat. After we had closed the holes with rubbish, the room became warm and we were able to take off our prison coats which were called "Bushlats".

However, as soon as it became warm enough, we were visited by a great number of new guests. There were thousands of them and they began to fall on us from the ceiling. All who occupied the top platforms had to come down to the lower ones, and finally had to move to the earthen floor which was damp and cold from the snow. In this way the bedbugs won complete victory.

Some of us were so tired that we decided not to pay any attention to the blood-thirsty insects, and, covering our heads and hands, tried to sleep. Other more sensitive men made their beds on the floor, first pouring some water around them. Some remained sitting, and others, not knowing what to do, walked back and forth. I lay on the lower platform and covered myself as well as I could. When the bedbugs reached my skin, I killed them without exposing my hands, otherwise a new batch of them would have attacked me. I resolved that I would have sleep at any price.

Thus we began our first night in the "well-established" concentration camp.

About twelve o'clock at night everyone was ready to go to sleep. We fastened the door of the barrack with a wire to protect ourselves from uninvited guests. Someone blew out our improvised lamp which was made of a wick floating in fat. All was quiet and peaceful.

Suddenly in the middle of the night the door of the barrack shook with violent blows and opened with a great crash. A drunken crowd rushed in, singing profane songs, shouting, and whistling. The prisoners jumped up.

"Do not move!" commanded a large man with a fat face. He held an axe in his right hand and a lantern in his left.

"We have come to greet you with a house-warming party", he said. "Light the wick!" Someone lighted it.

"Put the wood in the stove." The "Bourgeois" began to belch smoke again.

With the light we could now clearly see the merry crowd which had come to "welcome" us with this uproar. There were about twenty well-fed young men and girls, their ages ranging from 13 to 30 years. They called themselves "minors". I recognized one man from the medical commission.

They scattered through the barrack, and each one, selecting a prisoner, demanded a present from the "free life" from him. When a prisoner began to open his bag, the "minor" grabbed whatever he liked or could reach. This was unrestrained robbery. Some prisoners tried to defend themselves while others gave away all they had without resistance. Some even joined our "guests" as if they belonged to the group, and began to help rob their fellow prisoners.

One prisoner threatened that he would complain to the camp warden. He was immediately grabbed by two minors and dragged to their chief, who was called the "Pachan" in prison jargon. He did not take part in the robbery but stood in the centre and supervised the activities of the rest.

"Put your foolish head on the log and I will chop it off. Then you will know that I am the lawful authority here!" he said.

The whole band roared with laughter. Now without any restraint they grabbed suitcases, cut the bags, and dragged everything into a common pile. Three of them, armed with steel bars stood at the door.

In one corner there was a struggle. Two minors were trying to wrest a valise from a prisoner who refused to give it up. Others came to help their comrades. The struggle increased. Then the Pachan came swinging his axe and the rest gave way to him. He took the valise and brought it under the light.

"Bring the key, we must not ruin the valise."

The owner brought the key.

The leader opened the valise. But to the surprise of all, there was nothing of value in it which would justify the fight put up by its owner. The leader took everything out and began to feel the lining.

"Here it is", he cried, and pulled out an envelope.

"Money" shouted some of them. But to their great disappointment the envelope only contained two pictures and a lock of a woman's hair.

"This is a nice looking deshovka (an insulting name for a woman)" said the Pachan to the prisoner, who was a university student. "Is she your woman?"

The student told him that that was the picture of his fiancee. He said that they could take all his possessions if only they would leave the pictures and the lock of hair for him.

The crowd of minors evidently found this funny, and Pachan laughed so much that he had to hold his sides. He looked with contempt at the student.

"You are a hopeless fool" he said. All the minors listened to him attentively.

"You are crazy. You are an idiot. What are you prizing so highly? That red hair and that pretty little snout? I am sure she sold you to the GPU and is now dancing naked

with them like these deshovki that I have with me here."

The student turned pale and rushed furiously at the Pachan. He was knocked down immediately by a skilful blow from the chief.

"Lie there, you nitwit, you woman's rag, or I will order your head to be cut off" threatened the Pachan who had one foot on the student's back. The girls took the valise outside and the chief left the young man after a while.

The student, grasping his head in his hands, lay crying on the floor. His pictures and the lock of hair were left on wooden platform.

"Get up, Brother!" said the Pachan in a friendly tone. "Take your precious treasures, as you call them. At one time I was just as big an idiot as you are, but now I am different."

"Hey! Red-head!" called the Pachan. "Run to the doctor's helper and tell him to give us something to drink. Tell him that he will receive some money for this favour. If he refuses, tell him that I myself will speak with him."

"Let us drink, shpana (the name for the prisoners used by criminals)" shouted one of the girls, as she took off her wadded trousers.

The student got up slowly and came to the Pachan, who returned the pictures and the hair to him.

"Take care of them, brother" he said, "but soon you yourself will want to throw them into the out-house."

"No, she is different. She is not like the rest. She could not be compared with these girls", answered the student to the Pachan, as though he were a friend.

"Oh no! She could not be compared with anyone." The Pachan laughed sarcastically. "My friend, I had hundreds of those 'incomparables'. But I changed after the first one proved to be like the ones I knew later. At first I was just as big an idiot as you are now, even though I was not a student. I knew all kinds of them. They were all creatures for sale. It did not matter who they were; wives of engineers, common prostitutes, religious commoners, fat peasant women, Communists, or actresses. All were repul-

sive rabble. They were dishonest and mercenary. Even the women scientists, who seemed to think only about their careers, were all the same, only more repulsive and cynical.”

I listened to the Pachan with surprise and interest.

Finding everyone's eye upon him, he grew eloquent. Shopenhauer and Nietzsche were nothing in comparison with the philosophy of this 35 year old syphilitic. He attacked the female sex with a hatred and feeling that I had never seen before. His speech was interrupted by the return of the red-head who set some bottles filled with face lotion, ether, and real spirits in front of him.

“I stole this from him,” confessed the red-head, producing a small bottle of Valerian drops from his pocket. Everyone laughed. They came to the Pachan with cups and he filled them with the liquids, drinking the real spirits himself. The girls demanded drinks more than the rest.

“Hey, deshovki!” shouted the Pachan, who had become drunk; “Show me your class.” The girls immediately stripped off all their clothing and danced a wild dance before him.

Only the “wife of the Pachan”, a girl of about fourteen years of age, did not take part in the revels. Instead, she sat screaming loathsome oaths.

The men played on combs for the girls, made noises with spoons, danced with them, and sang profane songs all the while. The walls of the barrack were shaking from the stamping and banging. The men had no restraint whatsoever, and it is impossible to describe what took place before our eyes. The Pachan praised the boys for their boldness and the girls for their readiness to please. He promised to reward them all. We, the neophytes, watched this orgy with fear and trembling.

At the end, one of the girls came to me, drunk and tired. My head was bent and I was half asleep. She took my beard in her hands, and, trying to smile, asked, “How about you, grandfather? Don't you care for girls?”

I could not help laughing as I said no. Just then one of the men slapped her on the face.

“Deshovka” he hissed. The girl, her nose bleeding from the blow, went into a corner to cry.

“Old man”, said the heroic fellow, “give me something that you do not need. We did not touch you to-night.” I opened my bag. He took my shirt and socks, then thanked me, tied up my bag, and went away.

The Pachan was the first to leave the barrack with his “wife”. Soon after we heard the clanging of the gong that called the prisoners to work in the morning. (The gong was a piece of rail which was struck by an iron pipe.) The remaining “guests” rushed from the barrack.

A guard appeared and ordered us to get up.

“We are up already” said one of the prisoners. “We do not have to get up as we never went to sleep.” The guard pretended that he did not understand us and left the barrack.

We prepared ourselves for the first day of labour.

BLAT, MAT AND TUFTA

It was snowing. Carefully we walked in the darkness to the place where we were to work. The yard where logs were loaded into freight cars was lighted by electricity. A man dressed in a new prisoner's coat asked the guard how many prisoners he had.

"Forty-eight" answered the guard.

"Who has worked in concentration camps before?"

Two men said they had. He looked at them and asked one, "Do you know how to load the logs into the cars?"

"Yes" answered the man.

"Then he will be your brigadier" said the foreman. He took down the name of the man and ordered him to supervise the rolling of the logs.

I was staggered. On the left hand side of us were the shining train rails and the box-cars. On our right, stacks of timber stood, almost as big as Egyptian pyramids. There were innumerable logs, that had been brought up by the river, by trucks, and by carts. Hundreds of men were moving the logs to the freight cars and loading them up. This required strength and skill, and I had had no previous experience or knowledge of that type of work.

There were times when I lost my balance, and, not having enough strength to hold the log, endangered not only my own life but those of the other prisoners. The workers in my group cursed me and the next day refused to let me work with them.

The brigade had been divided into groups of six. Each section had to roll and load a certain number of logs into the cars. The brigadier sent me from one group to another until, in the end, he asked the foreman to transfer me somewhere else. I was not feigning inability to work but simply did not have enough strength.

During the first week at the concentration camp, my fellow prisoners cursed and laughed at me because I could

not perform the hard labour. The brigadier was a quiet man, and often defended me, but there was no doubt that I was a burden to them, because, quite often, they had to do my part of the work.

When the brigadier finally sent me to the foreman, the latter sized me up from head to foot, and asked, "What was your work when you were at liberty, old man?"

I told him.

"Oh yes, I understand. It is something educational", he said, with pride, letting me know that he had also partaken of "education" in some way. "But, my friend," he continued, "I do not have any soft work for you here. You will have to become accustomed to it." He turned around and went away. My brigadier also went to his brigade, and I was left alone.

It seemed that the only thing left for me was "Tashkaturka" which was a death camp for the disabled, simulants, and men sent there to be punished. This camp was ruled by a few criminal Pachans. The inmates were allowed about ten ounces of bread a day, and a prison soup made from the stale heads of herring. Other prisoners had warned me about this camp and I was afraid that in my condition I would be sent there to die a slow death. For a whole hour I walked from place to place as it was very cold. Finally I ran into the foreman.

"Oh, it is you again. Well, wait for me", he said. He went away. In this way I spent a whole day, until at night the brigadier took me back to the camp with the rest of the men. On the way, he met the foreman and asked him about me again.

"Assign this old man to clear the tracks and give him full credit for his work", was the answer.

I thus learned that it was possible to escape work at the concentration camp and still have the regular portion of bread. In prison jargon this deception was called "Tufta", and was used everywhere in the concentration camps.

It worked like this. When the prisoners moved the logs to the freight cars, they tried to get credit for the logs pre-

viously brought, or else they tried to get their work registered twice. If they had to move logs 50 yards, they tried to show them as moved 100 yards. When cars were loaded with short logs, they masked the empty space behind the front logs so well that they often got credit for 40 cubic yards, while actually the load was only 20 cubic yards. The work was so skilfully done that no one suspected that tufta had been used. Very often the same cut wood, although only delivered once, gave the prisoners two credit marks. This was achieved by the removal of the overseer's marks, which showed that the work had been already counted.

Varieties of "tufta" were without end and showed great imagination on the part of the prisoners. At times, loading tufta took more time and work than the actual task, but the prisoners preferred the hard way. Some of them were so skilful that they did it in the presence of overseers, and remained undetected.

However, the overseers and the foremen themselves were first-rate experts in the loading of tufta for the higher authorities. In turn, the administrative bodies of the concentration camps and important GPU officials used tufta in the work given to the head GPU offices of the USSR or corresponding national departments.

Tufta was a spell-bound circle. Its existence was well known and the heads of national planning departments always allowed a certain percentage for it in their calculations. This was the "method of production" that reigned not only in the concentration camps but everywhere in the USSR.

There are three pillars on which all the concentration camps stand; they are "blat," "mat," and "tufta".

I was not brought up in sheltered surroundings, yet in my past life I had never heard such repulsive and blasphemous swearing or "mat" as was cultivated by the GPU in the concentration camps. At times when I was eating, these extreme forms of "mat" struck my ear with hammer-like force. At such times I had to go away to a quieter spot. The worst swearers at the camps were the girl minors.

I was worried about Tashkaturka and my future. I had become used to the barrack, to the smoking stove, and to the stench of the coats and felt boots hanging on the wall. I had become used to the bedbugs and the swearing. I could even tolerate the criminal element, the minors, who were friendly towards me, thinking, on account of my beard, that I might be an old priest who had been persecuted because of his faith.

The minors visited our barrack and brought herrings to us in exchange for belongings that we had been able to hide. They also sold their cheap tobacco or exchanged it for bread.

One night the stove was burning and everyone was sitting or reclining on the bunks after the twelve hours of hard work. Someone asked me to tell them a story. They thought I would have some interesting tales to tell as I was considered a man of some education.

This was not new to me. In prisons and in distributing cells I had heard volumes of adventures and stories. They were told mostly by the urki (criminal prisoners) who loved this form of art above everything. They would listen to the stories all night long.

Others joined in, asking me to tell them something of interest. I wondered about what I could tell them. Finally I decided to tell them about the country of the rising sun — Japan. I had read much about this eastern country and had remembered some of its legends.

I told my fellow prisoners about the 47 Japanese samurais, the geishas, their religions, festivals, and customs, and the legend about the creation of their island. In telling the story I forgot my surroundings and became lost in my own recollections as I tried to make the tale interesting and original. I talked for about two hours and everyone in the barrack listened attentively. I notice that some minors had come into the barrack and were listening quietly.

When I finished, all thanked me heartily, especially the minors. To them, I became a man of great learning. One of them came to me afterward and told me that it was

necessary to bribe the foreman so that he would not send me to Tashkaturka and instead would give me some "blat" work. When I lay down to sleep the brigadier came to me and he also advised me to bribe the foreman immediately because he had already said that he would send me away.

"But what will I give him?" I asked.

"Your coat from 'freedom'. In any case it will be stolen from you, if not to-day, then to-morrow. They have already tried it once."

This was good advice.

The next morning I went to work with the company. The brigadier asked the foreman, in my presence, if he needed a good winter coat with a persian lamb collar. He also told him that I would like to sell it to him. The foreman looked at me and said, "All right, at night".

I then went away with the brigadier to join the labourers. No one cursed or shouted at me. I either sat quietly or assisted in the work if my help was needed.

This was my first experience with "blat". "Blat", or bribing is a universal, unwritten law of the USSR. It is practised from the very top to the bottom of the Soviet structure, and it helps many to withstand the rigours of the communist system.

The next day I was sent to work as a driver of the cart transport. My winter coat had helped, and from then on I was assigned to blat work which, as I thought, was not as hard as loading the logs.

I went to a large barn where all the drivers were gathered. A former university student and member of the Union of Communist Youth was in charge of us. He had been expelled from his first year in the university and had been condemned to three years hard labour for hooliganism, which must have been something unusual, having in mind communist behaviour in general.

The youngster cursed all the drivers with profane oaths. He struck one of the sleigh drivers with a "knut", probably for some misdemeanour, and ordered him away, threatening that he would send him to Tashkaturka. I was told to take

his place and was sent to the jail storage to cart potatoes, and was also given a helper.

However this "blat" was not easy, as I was unable to carry or even move the big bags. The men and young women who worked at the store cursed me and called me "old man". I kept silent. My long beard and worn out appearance made them think that I was well on in my years. This misunderstanding helped me a great deal, as the people did not expect much from a grandfather. However my troubles increased the next day, as I did not know how to harness horses in the Russian way.

I had grown up among Cossacks in Kuban. Kuban Cossacks never used the Russian arc and harness. I could easily harness two or four horses in the Cossack way, but I did not know how to fix even one horse with a Russian harness. Adding to my difficulty, I was so weak that I could not fasten the tongs of the horse's collar. My ignorance in these matters became apparent the next morning, and the overseer cursed me violently. Threatening to throw me out, he taught me how to harness the animal. The next day one of the drivers helped me. The overseer cursed me again but still did not send me away.

When the other men helped me after that, they made me very down-hearted by saying, "You will never make a good driver". I listened to them with great concern. In future I was often helped with the work, but my life there became worse than Tashkaturka could have made it.

However, one morning everything changed. I did not expect that my fame as a story teller would reach the ears of the overseer. As a rule my education never did anything good for me and caused me a great deal of trouble, but finally it came to my rescue in this situation.

When I reported to the overseer, he abruptly said to me, "To-day you will not go anywhere". This startled me, but I was ready for anything. When all the drivers had left, followed by select curses, I stood near the barn and thought about Tashkaturka. Then the overseer called me to his cabin which he used as a combination office and bedroom.

When I entered, he closed the door, looking around to see if anyone was nearby. He then apologized to me for his cruel treatment. He told me that he himself had been a student, and had always treated his professors with great respect. He had thought that I was a common "snout", a wild "kurkul" (well-to-do peasant). Such people, according to him, had to be cursed and beaten, otherwise they would not work.

Finally he told me to sit down, and asked me to be his helper and companion. He wished to talk with me on intellectual subjects. I looked at this demoralised young communist hooligan and did not know what to do. Should I accept the offer or should I tell him what I thought about him? Tashkaturka appeared before my eyes and I decided to accept his proposition. He brutally called an orderly, and told him to serve breakfast. The orderly, an old man, soon brought us some potatoes and cutlets made from horse meat. After this substantial meal we drank tea with sugar, and I began to copy some papers for him. However there was very little work to do, and so we sat and talked about different subjects.

As I talked with this young hooligan, I wondered if I could teach him to treat the peasants who worked under him in a more humane way. But the following days persuaded me that he was beyond any possibility of improvement. My talks with him revealed that he would never understand who the real enemy was. He was a perfect product of the so-called "golden communist youth", a victim of the anti-democratic education of the Soviet.

At times I told him of evil practices in prison by guards. He never contradicted me, as he felt flattered that an educated man talked with him as with an equal.

However, he never took any of my advice to heart.

I do not know how long this kind of life would have continued, but one morning the warden of the camp entered our barrack. He was excited and had a guard with him. He shouted my name. When I answered I noticed that he felt relieved. The guard came to me and ordered me to follow

him with my belongings. A few minutes later, I boarded a one-horse sleigh. Two guards sat in it with me. As the sleigh moved away, someone said, "They are taking the old man to the isolation camp". I wondered if I was being taken to Tashkaturka or to some other place.

We drove very slowly. The horse was so exhausted that it refused to do more than plod along the road.

"Get up, devil", shouted the driver. But the horse still continued wearily on its way, paying no attention to anybody. I did not care how fast or slow we went. I just sat and looked at the land around me. We were in Karelia. The country was covered with snow and looked dismal. Here and there, villages dotted the country-side. They appeared small and dirty among the white wastes of snow. I saw huge piles of wood cut by the prisoners, barbed wires, watch towers with machine guns, police dogs, and famished people in rags, all experiencing the horrors of this unearthly existence. Every square yard of this swampy land had witnessed the tragedy and destruction of human dignity. I felt sad. In this desert of brutal force and fear, I felt all alone, and the will to live in me began to weaken.

Finally we arrived. At the gates of the concentration camp the guards stopped us. They took me to a small building at the gate. After ascertaining that I was the person expected, the guards took me into the camp. The warden received me and soon I was climbing onto the second tier of sleeping platforms in a warm cell. I was alone. It is true that there were a great number of bedbugs, and they were not very good company but I had ceased paying attention to them long ago. I realised that they were an unavoidable part of all Russian buildings, and represented the spirit of the GPU. For some reason I was kept in this cell for five days. After that I was taken to a large two-storey barrack.

This concentration camp was of a different type. It had a large number of watch towers, with projectors and great number of strong electric lamps. There were a few rows of barbed wire and about five yards in front of them were signs reading, "Forbidden Zone".

This was the distribution camp for prisoners who were to be sent to Solovky.

In the barrack I was asked about my training and then sent to the second company of the second floor. The majority of the men in this company were Ukrainians. There were also Caucasians, national intelligentsia from the middle east countries under Russia, and White Russians, who are not to be mistaken for a political group.

About one thousand men in this barrack were from among different nationalities under Russia. There were very few Russians in the camp, just a few priests, artists, and professors of the reactionary type. They were the remnants of the old regime who somehow had been able to hide themselves for a while in scientific, religious, or art institutions. The prisoners of other nationalities were mostly those educated in Soviet Russian schools. A large percentage of the members were of the Communist party or other socialist parties which the bolshevicks had disapproved of.

However the largest group was made of professionals who did not belong to any party. They had no choice but to fulfil their tasks under the communist government, expecting to be arrested at any moment. I now met many men whom I had known when free and I felt far better. We talked about our past life, laughed and sang together.

The isolation camp differed from other concentration camps in strictness. No prisoner was taken outside for work even accompanied by guards.

Inside the camp, shops were built, which produced window sashes, musical instruments, guitars, balalaikas, and other things. My friends found suitable work for me. I had to bore holes in the necks of the musical instruments. The work was easy and I mastered it without difficulty. We worked from morning till night. At night we sat together in groups, talking and even singing songs under the leadership of a White Russian, an amateur choir master.

The food ration we received daily was about 21 ounces

of bread. We also had "balanda" which was prison soup cooked from the heads of rusty herrings.

The authorities of the camp treated the prisoners better than at any other place I had yet seen.

All the prisoners were expected to learn a new trade and the warden, and the commandant of the camp were especially pleased with the progress of our barrack. In other barracks the "Christ's followers" were kept, and another barrack was occupied by the camp attendants. These were a small band of criminals who worked in the stores and kitchens. These criminals were considered by the communists as being "socially related" to their group, and were treated with consideration.

Beyond the wires of the camp was the building of the third section with accommodations for men and dogs. The offices were situated nearby, together with the barrack for the camp attendants.

In this isolation camp I received a letter from my wife for the first time, and, sometime later, a food parcel. The parcel contained some real cigarettes. Those were the days when I felt that I would get through all my troubles, and would live and return to my sunny Ukraine.

At night, when we all sat together, Alexander Ivanovitch Navrotsky produced my cigarettes, which he had previously confiscated from me to prevent me from giving them away indiscriminately. He offered them to the members of our group who were all very glad to take one. Everyone told jokes and stories and for a while we forgot that we were in prison.

Those were happy moments.

Later, the shop producing musical instruments was closed, and I was appointed to plane the boards for the window sashes. This was hard work for me. I tried in vain to fulfil the task so as not to burden my comrades with additional work. But all my efforts were of no avail. In three days I accomplished only one day's work. To the camp authorities this would be scandalous. The chief of the group, Navrotsky told me about my failure privately.

"You are neither a musician, a shoe maker, nor a carpenter, so I will make you just a helper to carry boards to the carpenters." The next day I was carrying heavy boards for a brigade made up of "national minorities".

Colonel Yashvili had been fulfilling the duties of a wood carrier for this brigade before me. He was a very disillusioned man. He had returned from abroad hoping that in some way he would be able to serve his people even under the communist rule. However, instead of being sent to Georgia where he had previously lived, he was sent to this northern waste to pay penance for his foolish trust in the Soviet's promises to political emigrants.

When Navrotsky recommended me to the brigade, the men did not show any enthusiasm about it.

"Russian dog!" said someone behind my back. I turned around and saw that it was an Osset from the Caucasus who had expressed his opinion about me. I did not say anything, but I knew that I was among friends.

My brigade was made up of Georgians, Armenians, Turkomen, Tadzhiks, Uzbeks, inhabitants of Kabarda, Karachai, Adyge, Assetia, and Tartars from Crimea and Kazan. Some of them could not speak Russian at all, while those who could, knew very little of it. Only Volga Tartars, Armenians and Georgians could speak Russian and even they had a strong accent.

My first task was to explain to the brigade that I was not a Russian, and that I hated the Russians just as much as they did. I told them that I had been sent there because I was one of the many Ukrainians who had not wanted to have the Russians as overlords. The Georgians, Tartars, and Armenians quickly understood me, but the rest remained suspicious. However, I was able to overcome all mistrust in the end. I did it, not so much with explanations, as with my knowledge of the communist production methods. My duty was to bring the material to the prisoners, receive the finished products from them and report their efficiency. The norm, as a rule, was very high. It was necessary to plane 250 feet during one shift for one person.

The tools were in frightful condition and no one thought about using machines. Everything was done by hand. I decided to better the records of production of my brigade by employing tufta.

I tried my best to cheat the receiver at the store and used all ways and means available to get a greater credit for the work than was actually due. My operation tufta was successful, and every day I had about five extra norms gained in that manner. These norms I would apportion to the members of our brigade who were far behind with their production and were in danger of losing their ration of bread for inefficiency. In this way I was able to help those who needed assistance most of all. After a week every member of the brigade understood that I was their friend. The Osset who had called me a Russian dog also changed his mind about me and they treated me as their brother. These men, who were always exploited and downtrodden by the Russian imperialists now treated me with great friendliness and respect. They began to see the difference between Ukrainians and Russians.

Once I asked Colonel Yashvili, who was now serving as a watchman for the finished window sashes, to visit our brigade. When the colonel and I appeared in the door of our shop, all the men greeted us with applause and salaams. They thanked Yashvili for sending a worthy successor in his place.

A month later the brigade wanted my name to be placed on the red board of workers, who had reached top efficiency. My name was put up in spite of the fact that I was only a helper and objected to this distinction.

A tall old man from Karachai came to me and explained that I should not refuse.

"They all understand that the black and red boards are for fools", he said. "But why should we care? Let the communist idiots think that we are fools. We have no other choice. We are helpless, surrounded by machine guns. Let us help one another to survive. Some day we will even the

score. When that day comes we will know how to deal with these snakes."

He turned around.

"Is that you, Achmet?" he asked.

Near us stood a young handsome-looking man from Kabarda.

"Did you hear what I said?"

"Yes, father, I heard you. What you say is true. I too believe that we will even the score with them. If only I could have my mountains and my faithful horse, Kazbek, then I would lead half of Kabarda against them" enthusiastically cried the youth, his eyes burning with hatred.

We shook hands and parted.

MY DEPARTURE TO THE ISLANDS OF DEATH

The first ship sailed to sea. The navigation had started. We felt anxious. It was bad enough here. What was awaiting us? Before us were the islands of death. The prisoners made fantastic guesses. All were afraid of the Solovky Islands but we all had to go there whether we wished to or not.

"Uncle Ivan" tried to cheer us up.

"Don't be afraid, little brothers! Siberia is also Russian land and the Solovky Islands are the most 'attractive' piece of it," was his sarcastic comment.

One day the order came. Everyone had to be ready at seven a.m. for transport. All the prisoners left their shops. When the authorities ordered the prisoners to clean the shops it was interesting to watch how suddenly all production ceased. The hatred of the men for this slave-driving organization showed itself in the neglect and even the destruction of tools. Everything was left in terrible condition.

About five o'clock that night we noticed a lot of movement outside the camp. The watch was increased, there were more police dogs, and new posts were established on the prohibited zone.

"They are preparing a pleasant departure for us" remarked one of the prisoners.

"We are being sent to a summer resort" added another, with an oath.

The whole night was passed in conversation. Very few slept. At eight o'clock in the morning all the prisoners stood in ranks in the camp yard.

Well-armed guards suddenly appeared. The warden shouted, "If anyone makes a step to the right or the left he will be shot".

"Forward march!"

Swinging our bags, we marched to the port. At the

harbour, from the gates to the ship, lines of well-armed guards stood. One by one we boarded the ship and were directed to the hold. The ship had been used previously to carry coal. When the prisoners entered the hold, a cloud of coal dust rose immediately. In the semi-darkness of the hold we all looked like coal miners. Our faces were covered with the black dust and only our teeth could be seen. In a few minutes the hold was packed with men. Some began to shout, "There is no more space. We cannot breathe."

"Stop talking!" said the guard, turning his machine gun on the prisoners.

"What a friendly reptile he is! He probably came from Solovky."

"One more word and I will shoot."

"Shoot, you —————!" cursed the prisoner.

The guard fired a round into the ceiling of the hold. The commander of the guards appeared.

"I am warning you for the last time. Do not make any more noise." Turning to the guard, he said, "Shoot without warning if they continue to talk."

All became quiet. It was as though we were in a grave.

This was our new Solovky; not that of 1929, but one with different methods, people, and manners.

THE MONASTERY OF SOLOVKY

A sad song was composed by the prisoners on the Solovky Islands. It told of how, every year in the spring, the prisoners at Solovky awaited the arrival of new slaves. These new comrades, whose best hopes had already been blown away by the winds of the White Sea, had come to the accursed islands to increase the number of graves. These graves had no crosses, and no loved ones ever came to grieve over the dead. Brutal guards, represented as fearful dragons, watched over their helpless victims, taking the light of the sun and the hope of life away from them. The song ended, saying that the time would come when lightning would strike in winter, ice-bergs would split open, and new storms and winds would bring new days of freedom to the slaves of Solovky.

The ship stopped moving. It gave a last whistle and the engines were cut.

"The Bay of Felicity" announced the guard, not realising the unsuitability of the name.

"Come out, one by one!" he ordered.

Again there were lines of armed guards from the ship to the square near the harbour.

The roll call began.

"Ivanenko!"

"Present".

"Your name and the name of your father?"

"Petro Trochymovich".

"Get going".

And so it went, on down the line, to the very last one of the thousand slaves.

On our right, stood the Solovky Kremlin, looking grim, suspicious, and threatening. It represented a brutal force, hopeless darkness, and narrow fanaticism.

The Kremlin looked like a giant sarcophagus, built from cyclopic stones and made to stand forever. Its power, firm-

ness, and solidity were emphasized by the sharp contours and squares. The Kremlin glorified a god, not even a Moscow god, but the god of the Death Islands, stern and unmerciful. This was our first impression.

Later on, when I had become used to the life at Solovky and had become a regular Solovkian, I walked around this monstrous erection thousands of times. I studied it, traversing its paths and walks, but my first impression remained unchanged.

Often I climbed onto the roof of the burned Uspensky Cathedral. From there I could see almost all of the island, and often, as I watched, my thoughts turned to the Russian conquistadors who, in the dark years of the Tartar yoke, had begun their quest by slowly moving farther and farther north. These northern slavonic tribes, after intermarrying with the Finnish population, became known later as the Russians.

The free state of Novhorod, known for its bold ventures and its prospering trade, became stronger and stronger. The whole shore of the White Sea was colonised by its people. At the same time, however, another wave of colonists from the east was moving in. These Moscovites, famous for their craftiness, dishonesty, and cruelties, were pressing farther and farther north. They were able to secure the possession of all lands from Dnipro to the Ural Mountains and the White Sea by fawning upon the Tartar rulers.

Solovky Island had been settled by the Finns long before that time, however. Every one of the four hundred lakes scattered on the island, every river, every bay, and every place of distinction still has a Finnish name. At one time those islands had been prized among the Finnish possessions.

But a change took place. Gradually the fisheries and the plots of land became the property of foreigners. At first robbers and adventurers came, then traders arrived, and finally the harsh Russian conquerors took over.

In this way Saint Zosyma came to the shores of the White Sea, followed by his fellow worker, Saint Savaty.

Together they built the foundations of that bulwark of Russian piety and cruelties, the Kremlin.

From my roof, I could see the place where St. Savaty had built an earthen hut for himself so that he could pass his days in prayer and fasting. St. Zosyma lived near Sekirny Mount.

St. Zosyma sent out a call for others to come to the island and he did not have to wait long for them. The Solovky Islands were becoming important both for the great Novhorod and for its competitor, Moscow. Fanatics, visionaries, fugitives from justice and adventurers responded to the urgent call and a brotherhood was soon created around St. Zosyma and St. Savaty. This brotherhood, among other pious achievements, appropriated the Solovky archipelago forever from the Finns.

At that time, Marfa, a woman burgomaster (possadnitsa), the autocratic ruler of Novhorod, had bestowed all the Finnish islands, the main with its fisheries and villages, which were populated by Finns and Greek Orthodox people, upon the Solovky Monastery, with the pious wish that Greek Orthodoxy should bloom there.

The conquest of Novhorod by Moscow did not bring any changes at Solovky, except that the prior of the monastery was replaced.

Ivan the Terrible confirmed all the privileges granted before and demanded that the Kremlin should be rebuilt and turned into a real fortress and bulwark against the Latins (Western Nations).

The monk-priest, Tryfon, who was strict in fasting and prayers, as well as merciless in battles, offered his plan as to how to rebuild the monastery and the walls of the Kremlin. His plans included mighty towers, deep underground cells, and dungeons.

His draft suggested that the structure should be built from natural stones. Where they were hard to fit in, bricks would be used and the crevices would be filled with a cement made from "Egyptian earth".

The prior of the Solovky monastery was given the right

to conscript all Finns, settlers, burghers, and men of other estates on the shores of the White Sea for this work.

All necessary lumber was prepared at Archangel, Cholmogory, and even Ural. The brick was made on the island and there were enough stones at hand.

The plans of Tryfon required a moat and a rampart to be built around the eastern wall. The peat swamp was to become a lake, and there were plenty of rocks for the walls.

It took twelve years, from 1584 to 1596, to build this great, grim, inaccessible wall of the Kremlin. Near the north side, a lake measuring twenty hectares was dug. Near the east wall, a great rampart was built, and in addition, a moat about fifty feet wide was excavated. The lake, finally completed under great difficulties and with much suffering, was called the "Holy Lake" by Tryfon.

The wall was thirty feet high. It was wide enough to allow for the passage of two carts. In every corner a mighty tower was built. These towers had embrasures, vents, shooting posts, and other military accommodations from which molten tar could be poured and stones could be thrown. Along the wall, a large number of embrasures and nests for ambushes were made. Besides the common gates the Kremlin also had secret ones known only to a few. Underground passages and labyrinths were so numerous that only those who had the plans could use them.

When the building was completed the prior asked the king to come and see his "immovable fortress". The king sent out his "table deckers" (stolnik) and also a spy, to find out if the people of Solovky, after building the fortress, were planning treason.

The Czar's man brought gifts from Solovky, and the spy gave a good report. However, in spite of this, the Czar although recognizing the rights and privileges of the monastery, always kept certain monks there, whose duty it was to listen to, and watch the other monks and elders for signs of disloyalty.

Later on, to avoid any surprises, the priors and senior monks were appointed by the Moscow patriarch himself.

In this way there was no treason or disloyalty among the monks until the time of Peter the First.

When Peter the First dared to attack the old customs and prohibited the use of old church books, this bulwark of Orthodoxy objected. The priors and monks declared that they were ready to sacrifice their lives for their ideals, and that they would not obey the devil's Latin heresies which the Czar had learned beyond the seas. They would not obey the patriarch either and his letter of exhortation was burned publicly as being inspired by the devil.

The monks appealed to the people and they all immediately responded. Those suffering from exorbitant taxation, from oppression by the authorities, and from robberies, as well as those remaining faithful to the manner of crossing themselves with only two fingers, rallied to help the monks of Solovky. They took an oath by the holy cross and the Bible, that they would fight the Anti-Christ, Peter.

The war continued for ten years. Every spring the Czar sent an expedition to Solovky but was not able to conquer the fortress. Finally one of the monks betrayed the fortress and opened the secret gates. The Czar's streltzi (old Russian militia) under the command of Meshcheriakov, unexpectedly broke into the monastery and shot or cut down all the monks and their prior. They hunted the defenders of the fortress into the remotest corners and hanged them on the spot.

After despoiling the monastery and leaving some labourers in charge of the building, Meshcheriakov, covered with glory, appeared before the Czar with a report. The Czar promised him many rewards and granted him a higher rank. However, Peter learned later that Meshcheriakov had reported only half of the treasures which he had appropriated at Solovky. The Czar ordered him to be scourged and tortured without mercy until he revealed the whereabouts of the stolen treasures. After these were found, he was hanged and left for three days as a warning to those who might want to deceive the Czar.

After Meshcheriakov was hanged, all the affairs at the

Kremlin were carried out according to the Czar's wishes. The old church books were removed, and new monks and a prior, loyal to Peter, were sent to the island. A garrison was also stationed in the Kremlin. From that time on, everyone made the sign of the cross with three fingers. All those who opposed the Czar were imprisoned and put into the deep cells under the Kremlin and into the stone pockets of the towers.

Holovlenko Tower, Northern Tower, and the Spinning Tower were used for the schismatics who refused to cross themselves with three fingers. For this crime they were imprisoned in solitary cells, chained to their walls and were allowed only bread and water. They had to remain there until they repented. Most died in their chains which bound them by the hands and feet.

In this way a Don Cossack, Gryshka, spent 40 years in a solitary cell. He had been condemned for "blasphemous and offending words" against the Czar and the newly printed church books. He died in his cell, refusing to receive the Holy Communion. The records stated that before his death he "defiled the chaste eyes of the prior by spitting on him with aspic vomit".

When Gryshka died, the monks took his "diabolical carcase" to a rock called Nerpich near the island of Small Rabbits. There his body was thrown, to be devoured by wild beasts.

Mezherych, a burgher from Starodub, who had owned a trading enterprise at Trubchevshe, spent twenty-seven years in the Spinning Tower. He had attempted "to sow evil tares of Aryanism". He had been arrested by the Czar's streltzi and sent to Solovky. After his arrival, he had attempted to write "seducing letters". For that he had been imprisoned in a solitary cell and died there without "repentance".

Filimon, a Ukrainian priest, refused to accept the church books which were sent from Moscow, and insisted on using Ukrainian books at church services. He not only opposed the introduction of Russian books in the Ukrainian

churches but he blasphemed the Czar and the Moscovite books in front of Captain Speshniiov, other Czar's men, and the church members.

For this firm stand in the defence of the Ukrainian books, Filimon was defrocked and sent to Solovky for life imprisonment in a solitary cell.

Many men were sent to these cells. One of them was Teofan, the heir of a count, who had supposedly committed a felony when he acted as a dragoman during negotiations with the Austrian court. He was charged with treason and disloyalty to the Czar and sent to Solovky.

Trubetskoi and Volkonski were implicated in the conspiracy at Petersburg in the December of 1825. They were imprisoned at Solovky and two years later they died.

The last leader of the Ukrainian Cossack Knighthood at Sich Zaporozhska, Petro Kalnyshesky, spent 26 years, from 1775 to 1801, in the casement under the Uspensky Cathedral.

Every Ukrainian sent to the northern concentration camps, is always reminded at Petrozavodsk, from where one is sent to Solovky, that the last Koshevy Ataman of the Ukrainian Cossack Knighthood, died and was buried at the Kremlin.

Every Ukrainian, no matter what his position, whether an educated man or a simple peasant, if fate had sent him to the island, would always seek an opportunity to pay homage to the one who suffered so much for Ukrainian freedom and independence.

When I came to Solovky, my first question was about the location of Kalnyshesky's grave. This grave was known, not only to Ukrainians, but to all the other nationalities as well. A former Russian missionary of the Greek Orthodox Church showed me the place where the remains of our Koshevy Ataman rested.

There is a section of the Kremlin where a great roof unites Uspensky Cathedral with the northern wall. It looks like a huge tunnel and is wide enough for the passage of two cars. Under the walls of this tunnel are the graves of

many outstanding benefactors of the monastery. There lie the faithful servants of the Czar, his secret mistresses, and the nuns and laymen of the monastery.

Near the northern wall Kalnyshevsky lies buried.

For the last two years of his life he had been freed from the cell. But the old Ukrainian Cossack leader, who was then 110 years old, was too weak to return to his beloved Ukraine. In a truly Christian spirit he donated to his jail, the monastery, a large Gospel, encased in gold, and a large silver cross studded with diamonds, for the altar. After the revolution these fine gifts were taken to Leningrad, and in 1927 they were transferred to Ukraine and kept in the Historical Museum at Charkiv. This was done in fulfilment of a treaty between the Russian and Ukrainian Soviet Republic concerning the return of Ukrainian historical treasures. In 1932 the cross was stolen from the museum but there is no trace of the thieves.

The casement under the Uspensky Cathedral, where Kalnyshevsky had spent twenty-six years, was a stone box, six feet wide, nine feet long, and six feet high. The door of the casement was very narrow and had a small iron window. There was no ventilation except through a small opening in the thick wall. It was impossible to see anything through it but the prisoner could hear the liturgy, when it was performed in the cathedral.

When the aged Ukrainian leader was finally released, the Czar, Alexander the First, asked him what he desired most of all. Kalnyshevsky requested a new prison to be built at Solovky, where the poor slaves would not be buried alive in the stone casements, where he himself had spent a quarter of a century.

Alexander the First thought that the request of Kalnyshevsky was too revolutionary and therefore the casements of the monastery remained in use as prison cells for another hundred years. Only after the revolution of 1905, was it prohibited to use them as prison cells.

Peter Kalnyshevsky died at Solovky at the age of 113.

The missionary and I came to the grave. I knelt and

bowed before it. The missionary followed my example. A slab of black marble covered it and on top of the slab was a great cast-iron plate with the inscription: "Here rest the ashes of God's slave, Peter Kalnyshevsky, Koshevy Ataman of the former Sich Zaporozhska. He was sent to this monastery by the order (ukaz) of Her Imperial Highness, Empress Catherine the Second, that he might be subdued. He humbled himself and died in peace on July 26, 1803".

All the edges of the slab were broken off. I asked the missionary why. He told me that before the revolution, the pilgrims from Ukraine, and later the Ukrainian prisoners at Solovky, took a little piece of the slab with them when they left the island.

"I am not going to do it", I said.

"Why?"

"I do not believe that I will ever leave this monastery."

"Young man, God alone directs our lives, and you will die only where He wills. Do not tempt Him. Do not break down. Believe that you will overcome all, and God will help you."

I thanked the missionary and left him.

IN FRONT OF THE KREMLIN

It is easy to get into the Solovky Kremlin and very hard to get out. However, we got involved in a lot of red tape. It took more than three hours for the authorities to receive our group. They called the name of every one, in order, and the prisoner had to answer with his first name and the name of his father.

Those who were called forward were sent to a square surrounded by guards, where we could either sit or lie down. After a whole day in the hold of a coal ship, everyone enjoyed the fresh air. The earth was still wet, but was covered with grass.

Tired and worn-out, the prisoners lay silently on the ground. Only a few carefree "urki", who had come with us, were telling stories about the life at Solovky in the early years of the 20th century.

"This is not the real Solovky! This is nothing compared to what it was then," said one man.

"Solovky was certainly real in the past, little brothers", remarked another.

"Transport of prisoners? This is no transport. It was much different at one time. Take us, for instance. In 1929, our transport of three thousand men was sent to Solovky. Without any warning, we were commanded to get up in the dead of the night. The guards hit us right and left with their cudgels. At four o'clock in the morning, when we were still sleeping, the guards woke us up, telling us to hurry. Some of the prisoners left the barracks still in their underwear. In less than ten minutes the whole camp was out on the square."

"What happened to your belongings and bags?" asked a young man.

"Belongings and bags? You are a green one, brother. No one thought of bags then."

After we were told to stand at attention, in our ranks,

the guards walked between the rows with cudgels. If anyone moved or shifted his feet, the guard immediately hit him with his stick.

"Do you know where you are going now?" they asked. "You must understand discipline if you are to be sent to Solovky."

"We stood at attention from four to ten a.m.", continued our narrator. "Many fainted, and three died before the commandant came.

"Finally Kurilka made his appearance. Everything became so still that a fly could have been heard buzzing. The terror of Popov Island had arrived.

He was of medium height, and broad shouldered because of his military training. His face was pockmarked and swollen from drinking too much. He came carrying a big knotted cudgel in his hands, looked at us, and then bawled at the top of his voice, "Zdra, prisoners!" (Zdra is a shortened military greeting). We answered "Zdra!" with all our strength.

Kurylka's face darkened. He stepped backward and again shouted "Zdra, prisoners!" even louder than before. Our next attempt to him was obviously a failure too.

Kurylka, beside himself with rage, stamped his feet and then hit the guard from the barrack as hard as he could with his cudgel. The guard could scarcely stand from the blow.

"Why did you not teach the prisoners to shout 'Zdra'?"

Then he turned to the rest of the guards.

"Did you serve in the army?"

"Yes" chorused the guards.

"Did you serve the Czar, the throne, and the fatherland?"

"Yes" they shouted again.

"Then why don't you want to serve the proletarian state, the party, and GPU?" Kurylka demanded severely.

"We do", protested the guards.

"Then this is my order. If, after an hour, these enemies of the Soviet government do not know how to shout 'Zdra',

I will order them to hit you with your own cudgels until only a wet spot remains. Do you understand?"

When he shouted this, some of the prisoners laughed. Kurylka stamped his feet, roared curses, and then shouted, "Attention".

He quieted himself, and said, "Take two steps forward, you merry counter-revolutionaries." And you know, brothers, the reptile had notice three of those who had laughed. He took them by the collar and dragged them forward. Then he ordered the commandant of the camp to take them away so that he could speak with them alone. We never saw those three men again. He had them shot.

Kurylka left us, and the guards began to teach us to shout "Zdra" properly.

I will never forget that school. Not less than a hundred men were killed by cudgels, and many died later from the beatings.

Later Kurylka returned. Again there was silence.

Zdra, prisoners!"

We shouted with all our might, "Zdra".

Then Kurylka told us that we must shout so that all Solovky would hear us. He wanted us to be heard 65 miles away.

Near me a sailor from the Black Fleet stood. He wore the usual bell-bottomed pants that denote a sailor. Before he had been imprisoned he had known Lenin and Trotski, and had shaken hands with them.

This sailor stood silently, and would not open his mouth when we shouted "Zdra". His sailor's heart could not stand the shame. Kurylka noticed that he did not join in with the other, and ordered him to step forward.

The sailor stepped forward. Kurylka came nearer and shouted "Zdra". The man only lifted his head higher. The commandant cursed vilely and hit him with all his might on the face with his cudgel. The sailor staggered a little, but regained his balance and stodd like a rock.

Kurylka stepped backward, and again shouted "Zdra".

The sailor did not utter a sound. Kurylka saw that our

spirit was returning because of the example of this hero. Everyone felt like a man again. He realised that he and his helpers were in danger of being torn to pieces by us.

He quickly shouted, "Machine guns, forward!"

As if by magic, machine guns appeared on all sides. Then, taking out his revolver, and directing it at the sailor, he shouted, stressing every syllable, "Prisoner, Zdra!"

"Zdra" groaned the sailor, finally conquered by Kurylka and then began to cry like a child."

Our narrator did not finish his story, for we were ordered to get up and form our ranks.

"The governor of the island, Ivan Ivanovich Ponomariov, will now speak to the newcomers", came the announcement.

IVAN IVANOVICH

“Attention!”

We braced ourselves.

A few moments later, a pair of well-fed full-blooded stallions appeared, magnificently harnessed, drawing a carriage. The driver was dressed in a green coat which was girded with a red belt, and a rather theatrical hat. With his long well-kept beard, he looked as though he had stepped into the present from the days of the old regime.

Ivan Ivanovich sat behind him.

In the first World War, Ivan Ivanovich had fought for the Czar and the Greek Orthodox faith. For his loyalty, he was made a non-commissioned officer. Then the revolution erupted. At that time he had been serving in a Chuhuevsky regiment. The soldiers were ready to kill him for his inhuman treatment of them but he escaped with the other officers.

During his early life, Ivan Ivanovich had joined the white army of General Denikin and served him faithfully in punitive detachments. When he saw that his side was losing the war, he joined the Red Army. Here he became a member of a special detachment of Cheka (later the GPU, MVD). He kept all his past hidden. Now he was dreaming about the red banner star. In this way Ivan Ivanovich accepted the revolution, and fought for its victory.

In 1921 he became a member of the communist party and reached the position of commander of a “food detachment.” Later he became a manager of studs, and finally was appointed manager of the stores, for the horses of the GPU army.

Ivan Ivanovich was very careful not to be entangled in any deviations from the party line. He was faithful in fulfilling the direct orders of his superiors. He was strict with subordinates, and ingratiating with his superiors, but never intruded on them. If he noticed that some authority

was about to fall, he joined the winners, but always in a very tactful way, so that if the authority in question managed to survive, he could pose as one who had been doing his duty with regret.

Ivan Ivanovich had a splendid future before him. However, one of his countrymen who had a past much like his, appeared unexpectedly in his department. This man decided that it would be better to denounce Ivan Ivanovich to the GPU first, before Ivan Ivanovich could do the same to him.

The denunciation was timely. Just at that time there was a periodical purge of the party members. The denunciation referred only to the past. After 1920, his life, from the party point of view, was blameless. The GPU, taking his service into account, excluded him for five years from the party, and sent him as a governor to Solovky Island with the promise that if he was faithful and devoted to his work, the party card would be returned to him.

It was the third year that Ivan Ivanovich had spent on Solovky Island, and all the command of Solovky was in his charge.

Ivan Ivanovich, with the dignity of a Czar, slowly marched along the lines of the prisoners. He was followed by the less important officers. After finishing his inspection he said something to the chief of the third section, and returned to his carriage. He stood up in it, and, holding a whip in one hand, began to speak. In a hoarse voice, he said, “Prisoners, do you realise the blackness of your crimes against the proletarian dictatorship, party and government? Are you aware of our mercifulness which is possible only in conditions of proletarian dictatorship. Only due to it, have you the chance to stand here today and breathe this spring air instead of rotting in the cemeteries for the counter-revolutionaries.

“I want to remind you of the great mercy of the GPU. You should be aware of all the kindness which was shown to you by our leader and teacher, comrade Stalin. It was he who ordered us not to punish but to reform you. He

wants us to make out of you men who will be consecrated to the party and the government.

I want to tell you, once and for all, that all of you should have been destroyed like rags that are caught in the wheels of the great proletarian revolution. Your attempts to stop these wheels are doomed to failure. There is no power which can stop that wheel and all who try to do so will be crushed. And if those who started that wheel became merciful to you and did not allow the wheels to crush you, remember it was done only because comrade Stalin has the highest proletarian morality, goodness, humanity, and mercy towards you.

But you should clearly realise that you are limited here. The Kremlin and the Sekirna Mount will be your world. You must never forget that you should have been shot, and from the slightest provocation on your part, you will be liquidated, and your bandit bodies will be thrown to feed the birds and fish.

This is my promise to you. If you refuse to work, you will be shot. If you try to escape, you will be shot. If you conduct counter-revolutionary propaganda, you will be shot.

Remember! Obedience, hard efficient work, loyalty to the party, and a condemnation of your counter-revolutionary past, is the only way to liberty. There is no other. Do you understand me?" Ivan Ivanovich mechanically waved his whip.

"At ease" came the command.

Ivan Ivanovich was carried away by the thoroughbreds, and we remained, depressed by the prospect so vividly painted for us by the commandant.

WITH AND WITHOUT TUFTA

It was already night, and projectors and lamps were lighting the square. Our transport was still waiting near the bath-house. It was cold and damp out. All who had anything warm to wear took care of the less fortunate ones and tried to warm them up. We asked permission to make a fire, but were not allowed to do so. Late at night we were brought into large barracks. Tired, cold, and hungry, we went to sleep.

In these barracks we spent the whole week without working, receiving 600 grammes of bread and prison soup. This week was needed by the distribution section to assign us to different places and tasks. The assignment was done under the supervision of the third section, a special GPU establishment which took care of the welfare of the prisoners.

The transport of prisoners was divided. Some of us were sent to the secret isolation cells, others to various points of work, and still others to the three divisions of the Solovky Kremlin.

My first acquaintance with the Solovky Kremlin when I visited the grave of Kalnyshevsky, was of a general character. It took some time and study to penetrate into the mind and soul of the builders and creators of this structure. The Kremlin is a great historical monument. Like a mirror, it portrays a perfect picture of the Moscow mind during the last five hundred years.

It represents the development in the outlook on life of the ruling Russian classes.

The Solovky Kremlin lived through the revolution, the reforms, and the changes of the ruling dynasties. All these left their reminders in the form of additions, rebuildings and improvements.

But the one unchangeable thing remaining in this structure was the intolerant spirit.

Five hundred years had gone by. The Kremlin that had served as a place of sincere prayer and as a jail for forgotten prisoners, became an immense concentration camp. But the spirit remained the same. The fact that the cross on Uspensky Cathedral was taken down, and replaced by the red flag, did not change that spirit. The name of God and his saints was rejected. The Communists proclaimed new gods and saints of their own, but still the same spirit of absolute intolerance and fanaticism continued to reign. That is why the communists changed the monk's cells into jails without difficulty. This spirit was easily taken over by Ivan Ivanovich and others, because it was so akin to their own tyrannous and intolerant souls.

The new masters were bigoted fanatics and supporters of dictatorship just like the old ones.

When I listened to Ivan Ivanovich's speech, I thought that the prior of the monastery, long ago, had probably said the very same things to the Don Cossack, Gryshka, only on different terms, because when Gryshka spat in his eyes, he was not shot. Now, in my time, if anyone ever spat in Ivan Ivanovich's eyes, at least every tenth prisoner would be shot.

I did not stay long at the Kremlin. At the time of the Arctic nights, a guard came and told me to follow him. I took my bag and went to the North Gates with him.

"Where will they send me?" I thought. "To an isolation cell or to Savatievo?"

At the gates I met my friend, Genady Sadovsky.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"The authorities know!" was the answer.

I had my bag with the remains of my belongings in it, while Genady carried his precious bandura, a kettle, and a spoon in his boot-leg. His bandura was a great consolation to him, and to other prisoners as well.

"Thirty-two", counted the guard, as the roll was called.

"Prisoners, forward!" We marched on, with only three guards.

It was the first time that I had walked along the Solovky

roads. Genady, who had spent many years on the Solovky Islands already, walked beside me.

"There is the prior's alley", he said. He showed me beautiful birch trees making a wall on each side of the path to the lake, and at the same time forming an arch over it with their branches. The lake which the path led to, was called "Crystal". The water in it was so clear that it was possible to see the bottom which was 90 feet deep.

The guards stopped, and allowed the prisoners to smoke.

"Could I pick that flower over there?" I asked.

"Pick it, but you will find that it has no smell".

I picked the flower and found that indeed it was without perfume. I compared it to our situation at Solovky. We could live, but life would be without joy.

"Forward march!" Our group moved silently onward.

The road was surrounded by tall fir and pine trees. The path grew more narrow, and finally became a bush trail that led to a peat bog, which was covered with smaller pines and firs. Beyond the bog we climbed again.

We did not see any more mighty pines, firs, or birches. Wet moss, stones, blueberry and blackberry bushes, and dwarfed birches took their place. We marched to the north-east side of the island.

This side has strong winds from the direction of Vrangal Island, Novaya Zemlya, and Matochkin Shar. The shore is rocky, and during storms the thunder of the breakers can be heard a long distance away.

Near the sea in a small bay, two earth huts, surrounded by trees, stood on a hill. There was also a small wooden building nearby. This place was called Pichuhy, the destination of our march. Here the prisoners had to gather the sea weed from the sea bottom. They preserved and dried it on the shore. Then the weeds were burned, and the ashes containing iodine were poured into a well. Later on, they were taken to a factory at the Kremlin. We had been brought here for this work.

One of the guards explained that we would have to live in the earth huts and that they would have to be repaired

immediately, as we had to start the process of making iodine the next day. He informed us that we would receive our food ration uncooked every week, according to the norms of our efficiency. We could prepared our food either individually or in groups. There was to be no help in cooking the food or for any other purpose. This arrangement met with our full approval. The guard also told us that one of the prisoners, Armenian Avakiants, would be our supervisor and representative.

Among the thirty-two prisoners we had men of all nationalities and ages. There were Caucasians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Russians, and one Jew.

Sadovsky, the Jew Moses Tversky, and I, decided to form our own little group. Our first task was to make roofs for the earth huts. We took spades and cut the sod which was to cover the huts. By night we had finished repairing our dwellings. We were now ready for work.

We had received our week's rations, which consisted of 600 grams of bread and some dry salted fish, in advance. If we were not able to fulfil our norms, we would receive only 300 grams of bread the next week. Three hundred grams was the minimum food supply which a prisoner could receive no matter how low his production was.

In the wooden building lived the guards, who watched the shores of the island. They had a radio station, telephone, two huge machine guns, and a motor boat. Their number was increased by our guards and Pichuhy became alive again, as it did every spring.

At other times there were two or three hundred prisoners, whose job it was to go out in large boats to gather the weeds from the sea bottom with special long hooked poles. When they returned to the shore the weeds were carried on stretchers about 150 to 200 yards inland, and put into piles. The weeds stayed like that all winter and fermented. In the spring the piles were scattered so that the weeds could dry. The next step was to burn them and finally the ashes were taken to the iodine factory.

When we arrived at Pichuhy the rules had been changed.

Now only Avakiants had the right to use the boat. He was very dutiful in his work, and had been sent to Solovky, not for some political reason, but for "economical counter-revolution". This sentence had been pronounced upon him because he had stolen 16 tons of flour. He received ten years for this, but was still trusted by the GPU, who saw in him the same type of man as themselves.

As long as the authorities were afraid to allow the prisoners to use the boats, no more seaweed was brought in, and our task was to dry and burn the weed already piled up from the year before.

We worked hard to make our earth huts comfortable, but in spite of all efforts, sand still fell from the ceiling when we moved, and the unavoidable bedbugs still attacked us. In spite of this, after a hard day's work, we slept soundly until the guards woke us up, shouting, "Get to work".

On the march to Pichuhy, the guards had treated us like humans, but on our arrival, they became brutal and extremely strict. We realized that they had been afraid of us in the bush, but became braver when they were backed by guns and more men. Even Avakiants shouted at us.

We went to work without protesting. The piles of seaweed was stretched along the shore about half a mile away from our huts. Each pile had a board which showed the number of tons it contained. Avakiants divided us into three groups. My two friends and I remained together as we had agreed. Each person had to dry, burn, and gather the ashes of 10 tons of seaweed a day in order to complete his full norm.

The work was very hard. We had to gather driftwood on the shore, saw it into pieces six feet long, make a special fire with the wood, and slowly burn the damp sea weed on it. It was simply impossible to fulfil the norm even during the working day of 15 hours. Everybody except Sadovsky and Avakiants felt greatly depressed. Avakiants took us to a pile of weeds marked "35 tons". Sadovsky ran around the

pile, hit it in a few spots with a pitchfork, and said "good". Tversky and I looked at the pile and then at Sadovsky. We could not understand how such an experienced prisoner could say "good", when the situation was so hopeless.

"We are check-mated here", said Tversky.

"Our situation can have no solution", I agreed.

"Don't get discouraged", said Sadovsky. "Everything will be all right. I will take all the responsibility upon myself. Today you will see how, under my leadership, you will not only fulfil your idiotic norm with which comrade Stalin has made you so "happy", but you will do far more.

"Let us begin our work. Moses and I will saw logs, and you, my Cossack, take the pitchfork and spread this "manure" so that we can turn it into ashes."

"Very well, but I still do not believe in your optimism, my old sea dog," I said, selecting a pitchfork.

It was hard work scattering the seaweed, but the more I spread it, the more I became convinced that we would fulfil the norm. Working together, we were able to spread the 35 tons before noon, and were waiting only for the wind so that we could start the fire. We were happy and hopeful, and everything was in the best order. Genady was telling us about his methods.

"All the work that you do, has to be done with tufta," he said. "Wherever the production cannot be finished tufta is used. When I had hit the pile a few times with my pitchfork I knew that it contained no more than 12 tons of sea weeds."

He was right. Under the cover of the weeds, were piles of branches, stones, and logs. It was so skilfully done that no one could possibly suspect any deception. Our predecessors had used tufta in making the pile and had so fulfilled their norm, which no human being could otherwise have achieved.

The gong sounded near the huts, and three new guards came to replace their comrades. They did not come near us, and only watched to see that we did not try to escape or stop working.

The wind on the island changed direction a few times

during the day. At one o'clock it became steady for several hours and we began to build the fires.

At night, tired but pleased, we returned to our huts. We had not only been able to produce our norm, but we had done far more. Avakiants and all the prisoners knew how we and other groups had reached the norm. As we passed each other among the piles of weeds, we shouted, "Comrade, did you get the norm?"

"Yes, norm and more", always came the answer.

"Without tufta and amonal we would never have built the canal", related an old man who had been returned to Solovky after working on the White Sea Baltic Canal. "This life here is tolerable. There it was not."

He was sitting near a pot in which "devils" were boiling.

The old man continued. "During my stay at the canal, if anyone had given me the type of work that we have been doing today, I would have been as happy as a child. There we worked for two or three days in the ice cold water, driven by blows and curses. Many men lost their lives there. Misery and dead corpses without end were our daily lot."

"Go to the devil with your canal grandfather. We were there ourselves and we know all about it", rudely cried some of the men. The old man was offended and did not say anything more.

We could not always work with tufta. Often we were not able to achieve the norm for weeks, and our rations were cut down without mercy. During such periods, we survived on the "devils" thrown up on the shore by the storms. We were especially thankful for a young whale. Some whalers had wounded it, and the waves threw its body up on the beach. Its meat had an unpleasant odour, and it was impossible to eat it. However the fat was edible, and although it was not tasty, we melted three pails of it for our meals. Occasionally we had the good luck to find a dead seal. Wild blueberries, blackberries, and red bilberries, were gathered to improve our menu, and sometimes we even had mushrooms.

We ate everything we could get our hands on, but it was to no avail. We were still hungry.

KHVEDKO

Our work at Pichuhy was coming to a close. One day the guards selected twenty of the men and announced that we were to go to Anzer Island for similar work. The rest of the prisoners were sent to the Kremlin.

We marched along the shore, guarded by five men, to a wharf where some large boats were kept. Solovky Island is separated from Anzer Island by a strait which is five miles wide. About two o'clock in the afternoon we raised our sails and headed for Anzer. One old prisoner, who knew Solovky weather, upon entering the boat, swore, and cursed his fate, saying that on account of idiots he would probably perish too.

We soon found out why he had complained so. Suddenly, when we were about two miles from the shore, a strong squall of wind hit us. Heavy black clouds covered the sky and it began to rain and hail. The storm caught our boat and drove it out to sea.

"Let down the sails", commanded the steersman.

While we were doing this, a gust of wind snapped the mast in two. The boat was thrown about on the waves as though it were a shell.

The guards were pale and frightened. One of them cried and mumbled something about his children, another secretly made the sign of the cross, and none of them knew what to do. Our boat, already half full of water, was being driven closer and closer to the rocks on the opposite shore. Suddenly we heard a familiar voice shouting above the howling wind, "Do not fear, boys, just hold on." Then we heard curses and a sardonic laugh.

I noticed that all the rest of the prisoners laughed too and were evidently not scared by the danger, because, after all, death would bring them nothing but relief from suffering. They had nothing to lose.

The one who had shouted the words of encouragement

was a shy young man called Khvedko. Now, in the time of danger he had turned into a leader. He shouted to the commander of the guards.

"Now what, commander? Are you afraid? Are you sorry for your wife and children? Don't you think that I am not sorry for mine too, when you keep me chained here? At least the fish will not see any difference between the guards and the prisoners. They will eat them both." And again his sardonic laughter was heard above the wind.

The commander, who was grasping the sides of the boat with all his might, did not even answer Khvedko's insults. The wind was howling stronger and stronger, and the skies were now dark.

"Bail out the water with whatever you can", commanded Khvedko. "Hold on and do not fear. Commander, do not be discouraged. You will live. After all, we would not want the state to lose such a valuable man."

Suddenly the boat was thrown against a rock, and turned over. We jumped onto the slippery stones, falling time and time again. Luckily the water was not too deep, and no one was drowned.

"Is everyone all right," came the question. "Where is the commander?"

The commander suddenly found his tongue.

"Hryhorenko, you are talking too much. Be careful, or I will make you be quiet."

As we stood on the rock we began to feel the cold. It penetrated to the innermost parts of our bodies and gave us cramps.

"Give us your orders, commander", shouted Khvedko. "Don't you see that we will freeze here?" He plunged into the icy water, struggling against the wind, and finally reached the mainland. The water was up to our breasts, and it was hard going, but we all followed him, and in about ten minutes were with him on the shore, dead tired. Luckily the bank was not steep and was covered with sand. Khvedko continued to give orders.

"Follow me quickly."

We gathered together the last of our strength and ran after him. Behind us came the guards who had now only two guns left. Soon we reached a large earth hut.

"This is Plotnichnaya, boys", said Khvedko, as we entered it. He immediately busied himself with the making of a fire.

"Tear down the sleeping platform and make fire-wood out of it", he ordered. We all helped him as much as we could. Finally the wood caught fire and a bright warm flame soon appeared. We danced before it like wild men to get ourselves warmed up. We rang our clothing out and took account of the belongings that we had lost in the sea.

The waves were becoming calmer, the wind quieted down, and the rain stopped. Finally the sun came out.

"Can you believe it? The storm carried us on the waves for three hours", said Khvedko, looking at the sun, which was setting in the west.

Two of the guards went to the headquarters at Anzer Island. After two hours they returned with three horse-drawn carts. The carts took us to the Anzer camp, where we were met by the commandant of the place, who treated us in a friendly manner.

"Take all of them to a warm cell and feed them well", he ordered the manager of supplies, who stood nearby.

Without delay we were taken to a warm room. We were given two large cauldrons of mashed potatoes mixed with seal fat, and a huge kettle of tea. After our supper, we immediately went to sleep. It was only in the morning that we learned that the guards had taken Khvedko away during the night.

Khvedko was sent to the Kremlin and imprisoned in an isolation camp.

KLIMA AND LEAH

Anzer Island has the same surface features as Solovky Island. The north-western shores of the island are low and covered with sand, while the north-eastern shores are rocky. Solovky Island, on the north-east side is covered with forests, while Anzer is covered with Siberian swamp (tundra), except in the centre where there are a few forested hills and some beautiful lakes.

On one hill, called Golgotha, a church was built. This church was made into a jail for prisoners. The plan of the building was similar to that of the main island only there were no forts or stone buildings, and the monk's chambers were built of wood. These monks had worked as fishermen from time immemorial and also bred reindeer and cultivated the land. The prisoners were employed in the same work. Anzer had well-sized bands of horses and reindeer. It also had large gardens where the prisoners cultivated potatoes, cabbages, carrots, turnips and radishes. Large swamps were turned into fields where Dutch clover, sowens, and tymofievka (phleum palustre) were grown. Rye and barley were also cultivated, but it did not have time to ripen and had to be cut green for sill.

There was no bush work on the island and the prisoners were employed mostly in the fields. Our group was sent to Anzer to finish burning the seaweed which had been drying on the shore for over two years. This colony had a small harbour and a chapel. The chapel had been built by the order of Alexander the Second in memory of Solovky's defence against the English in 1855. The prisoners lived in the chapel, and the guards lived in a small building nearby.

Anzer was a very comfortable place for us. Our predecessors had loaded tufta on a large scale and it was easy for us to fulfil the norm.

Every Saturday we went to headquarters to receive our rations for the week. It was during one of these trips that I

met Clementina Lanina. She was the wife of Karl Maximovych, the secretary of the Ukrainian Communist party in Western Ukraine. I had met her before at the Moscow Butyrki jail, but only for a short time. Clementina Antonovna was very glad to see me, and immediately introduced her Jewish friend, Leah Shmidt, to me.

As we talked we made certain that we were in full view of the guards, so that they would not have any reason to complain. Clementina, accepting it as unavoidable fate, told me that Karl, her husband, had been imprisoned in the Kremlin. However, our conversation did not remain serious for long. Leah, a lively and attractive young woman, joined in with jokes and laughter.

She had been accused of spying for Germany while she had worked for the tourists as an interpreter. She laughed at the accusation and asserted that she had never taken part in any spying. She liked the fine young tourists, and had received many small gifts from them. She spoke openly about her romances with them, and had even written a long letter to Stalin himself, describing all her love adventures and gifts. Leah always gave a copy of this letter to her friends to read. The letter was interesting because of the fact that it represented the point of view of a human being who did not have any traces of social morality. When I read this confession, I decided to have a talk with its author. Two weeks later I found an opportunity to do so. As we talked, Leah revealed herself, not as a light-hearted butterfly, but in an altogether different light.

According to Leah, the world was a creation of blind forces that had neither purpose nor sense. To her, man had become the leading factor in that evil show only by accident. Human beings were beasts of beastly origin, all women were courtesans, and men were the lowest creatures in the whole creation.

"I know men from every nation and country, and can not see any difference between them and animals", she said. "If there is a difference, it is that animals have a feeling of pride and selfrespect which is foreign to us."

This attack took me by surprise.

"Please, my colleague", said Leah, putting her hand on my shoulder, "Do not trouble Clementina Antonovna with your philosophies which are good for nothing and which will destroy you eventually. I heard how you contradicted Clementina when she told you that we should live in the present. Your insane oratory forced me to interrupt the talk."

I then remembered her tactless intrusion into our conversation when she had told us an ambiguous story of love between a rabbit and a horse.

"Tell me", she asked, taking my hand in hers, "do you really believe that the theory of living in the present is so terrible?"

"I do not think you believe what you say yourself", I said. I told her that I firmly believed everything I had stated to Clementina Antonovna, and that I did not share her views, but considered them wild, immoral, anti-social, and even abnormal.

She only laughed, in answer.

"I would like to know if there are many such men like you in the world, and if you speak sincerely. You are either a great scoundrel and liar, or you are a hopeless idiot. If you are a fool, you will perish in this forgotten place. If you were a married man, you would think differently about this matter."

"I am married and have a son", I said.

Leah laughed again.

"Tell me," she asked, "if I told you that what I just said were foolish inventions, that I was just trying to be original, and that in reality I was altogether different, would you like me? If I cried hysterically and fell on your breast begging you not to reject my love or trample my sacred feelings, if I told you that your wife and even God Himself, would forgive a small sin, would you refuse to embrace and kiss me? Would you refuse to caress me as you did your wife? Why do you not answer? If it were not for these idiotic guards, who watch us all the time, I would prove

the truth of my theories to you, and even you would become an earnest follower of them.

"You reject the theory of enjoying to-day, not because the idea is wild, but because you are unable to practice it yourself. You follow life like a beggar, and you cover your own inability to enjoy, with a special philosophy, which has to take the place of attractive women like me. Good-bye, incorrigible husband."

Leah shook my hand, and went to her barrack laughing.

"Hey! Deshovka!" Where are you going in such a hurry?" shouted one of the "authorities of Anzer", who was passing us. Leah stopped and called to me, "And you want me to respect these two-footed beasts?"

Leah continued on her way. The "authority" did not understand her remark, and laughing with satisfaction, sang a dirty verse, so that she could hear him.

In the meantime my comrades had completed their transactions in the storehouse, and had filled the bags with the week's rations, which were so meagre that we could have eaten them in one day. Returning to Kinga, I thought about Clementina Antonovna and Leah, and came to the conclusion that only the inhuman conditions of Soviet life could create such wild theories of life. I felt that I should not be surprised that serious Clementina, the scientific assistant of the Economical Department of the Marxian Institute at Kharkiv, had so easily accepted the views of the prostitute, Leah Shmidt.

Clementina not only accepted these views, but practiced them as well. I met her again about two years later, when the guards brought her the belongings of her husband, an old pair of yellow shoes, and an old suit. He had died a few days before in an isolation camp. She showed no signs of sorrow. Instead, after looking at the worn-out shoes, she pushed them under the bed with her feet, and said, "Sic transit gloria mundi".

THE EMPEROR

We did not stay long at Kinga. After we had finished burning the seaweed, we were returned to the Anzer headquarters. The life at Anzer was almost like that at Kinga and Pichuhy, except that the rules were more strict. We were sent to amelioration works. This labour was very hard. We had to dig trenches in peat-bogs, very often standing in the water with only bast shoes on. The norms were very high, and it was hard to use tufta. After the work with the seaweed this job seemed extremely difficult. We awoke at six and returned late at night. I again began to lose hope that I would ever leave Solovky. If I had to dig ditches in swamps for seven years I never would last that long. No one ever lived longer than two years at this work. Immense amelioration constructions of the Solovky Islands were accomplished at the price of thousands of lives. After two years in the peat-bogs, many were dragging out a miserable existence as cripples, while others died while working.

My pessimism increased, especially under the influence of the stories of the old timers at Anzer. They were men, old in years and spirit, who had been imprisoned in 1922 without hope of release. These men were Russian priests or officials from the time of the Czar government and from the time of Kerensky. They used the old rules of grammar that had been abolished by the communist government. They thought of all Ukrainians as traitors and they asserted that Ukraine had been invented by the Germans and Austrians.

This comparatively small group lived in a separate barrack. Some were suspected of acting as "stukachi" (informers) for the local GPU. No one trusted these men, as they often became agents of the secret police. The Czar's former officers and priests who were ready to serve the GPU for the smallest gain, were trusted least of all.

However, I liked to speak with the men from this group,

as I was attracted by them, and I always listened with interest to their long arguments.

“Well, you are a Little Russian”. . . . one of them would begin.

“The right name is ‘Ukrainian’.”

“My friend, what is the difference. Believe me, ‘Okraianian’ is only a fashionable name, but ‘Little Russian’ is eternal.”

“It is not ‘Okraianian’ but ‘Ukrainian’.”

“My Lord, how the bolsheviks turned the heads of these youngsters!”

This was the general style of our conversations. Every year, these defeated old men secretly had a requiem for Czar Nickolas Second on the day of his death, when he was shot by the communists. I was surprised to find that even those who had helped create the revolution and had been against the Czar, now condemned the revolution and called it a sedition.

The local GPU knew their views very well, but they did not pay any attention to them, as they knew that not only in Soviet Russia but even on Solovky those ideas would not meet with any sympathy. What was almost comical, was that every time a secret patriotic meeting was held, the GPU would immediately receive denunciations of the men who had taken part in the performance.

But in 1936, when the followers of the late Czar had a secret church service for the victory of the Spanish general, Franco, the GPU noticed it and scattered the members to different outposts for work. However, no one was sent to the isolation camp.

Among this group was the brother of the famous Russian minister, Stolypin. He was a wise Russian leader who could have saved Russia if the Czar had given him his support. His measures and reforms would have prolonged the life of the old regime another decade, and probably would have made impossible the communist victory.

It was rumoured that it had been Stolypin’s brother who had organized the “Te Deum” on behalf of General Franco.

When these rumours reached the ears of the authorities, he was taken to the Kremlin without delay.

An interesting character belonged to this group. Loktev had been born in the Province of Riasan in a family of Russian peasants. He was mentally retarded and his parents had placed him in a monastery to do certain chores in return for food and lodging. During the revolution the communists destroyed the monastery and drove the monks from it. Therefore Loktev was left without any shelter. His life became hard and he had to support himself by begging. One day he met Father Vasyli who was the former administrator of the monastery where Loktev had worked.

Father Vasyli, as he talked with Loktev, was struck by his resemblance to the late Czar. Knowing the ignorance of the Russian peasants, he decided to make use of this likeness in appearance. As he loved wine, women, and song, this was an opportunity to greatly improve his lot. He decided to make Nickolas the Second out of Loktev, and spread the news that the king had not died but had escaped from the prison where he was kept. Father Vasyli trained him how to act like a king for a few weeks. He made a gaudy uniform for him, and finally, one day, they started on their travels.

From 1924 to 1929 Loktev travelled in the provinces of Orlov, Penza, and Tambov. Father Vasyli would gather information about the most backward villages and monarchist priests. Then, arriving at a certain place, he announced to the local sympathisers that the Czar was still alive. With great secrecy he would arrange a meeting where the people could see him. When all who were deemed worthy of such a great honour gathered in some house, the Czar, dressed in his shining uniform would enter the room, attended by Father Vasyli. All would fall on their knees and kiss the hands of Loktev. He said only one sentence, “Be brave, Russian people, God is merciful”. Father Vasyli did not allow him to say anything more, but made a speech himself, and after half an hour, the Czar would rise and depart. He would change his uniform in another room.

Then the faithful subjects would bring their gifts to him. Such visits would take place at night. Horses were always ready to take away the "Czar" and Father Vasyli with all their gifts. This plan brought a rich and careless life to Father Vasyli. However, it ended in 1929, in one of the villages of the province of Orlov. A local priest, who had his misgivings about the identity of the Czar informed the local GPU about the meeting. Their agents were present when the people gathered at a house.

Father Vasyli was shot, and some of the outstanding members of the meeting met with the same fate. Loktev, saved because he was feeble-minded, was sent to Solovky with a few other ignorant peasants. He told everything to the GPU, even the places which they had previously visited. When the GPU made arrests, they brought the peasants to him, and he witnessed against them.

ESCAPE

While I was at Anzer, I heard about the comparatively recent escape of the prisoners from a camp in the winter of 1933.

The distance between Solovky Island and Kem is about 60 miles, while the distance between Anzer and the "Summer Shore" is about 26 miles. The narrow strait freezes once in fifty years and then it is possible to reach the shore of the mainland over the ice.

The winter of 1933 was unusually cold. The straits froze and the prisoners at Anzer learned about it. This was also known by the authorities and all the necessary precautions were taken on the island and on the mainland. In spite of this, a group of prisoners decided to try to escape. This group was lead by Commander Hres, a well-known leader of the insurrection detachment which became famous in the time of the Ukrainian president, Petlura. He was assisted by Abdul-Bukreev, a former student of the University of Kazan and a Tartar by origin. The group was made up of 31 Ukrainians, 7 Tartars, 2 Finns, 1 Tchetchenian, 3 Russians, and two men from Kabarda. There were 46 prisoners altogether.

They planned how to enter into the barrack where the guards lived and the commander had his dwelling. They were to seize their arms, and tie and gag them. Two Finns, who knew the surroundings, were given the task to lead the group to the mainland. After reaching the shore, they were to separate into groups of twos and threes and try to reach the Finnish border where they would surrender to the Finns as political refugees from Solovky. The two Finns, as Finnish subjects, would speak for the fugitives. Their friends and relatives in Finland would provide the financial support for the group. No one was accepted into the group who was older than fifty, and who could not ski. The whole group was made up of men who had taken an active part in

insurrections against the communists. Among them were former officers of the Kotovsky division and participants of Voroshylov's march on Warsaw. There were also a few men who had taken part in armed opposition to collectivisation in 1929, some members of the Ukrainian underground organization "Union for Liberation of Ukraine," who had been sent to Solovky instead of being shot, and a sailor who had participated in the sailors' insurrection at Kronstadt. They were all strong, active men. Many of them at first had supported the Communists but had later turned against them. In January, on a dark night, when everyone was sleeping, conspirators armed with well-sharpened knives, removed the watch and took the guards and the commander by surprise. It all took about ten minutes. Commander Seleznev did not have time to make even a sound. His body was left on the bed with a severed head. His wife, tied, gagged, and horror stricken, was left to look at her dead husband. The plotters secured two machine guns, thirty-seven rifles and a few revolvers with the necessary supply of ammunition. They also took sufficient quantities of food, and skis for all.

Without a shot, they disarmed the rest of the military GPU police. The guards were tied and gagged with the very same gags they had used for the prisoners when they tortured them. In about half an hour the group noiselessly left the camp, led by Hres, Abdul-Bukreev, and the two Finns. The silent stars in a cloudless sky seemed to promise a successful escape for the fugitives.

"Keep to the right all the time", commanded one of the Finns, who was looking at the compass which had been confiscated from a GPU officer.

When the group was about ten miles from the island, Hres gave instructions about what to do in case they met the enemy. Such a meeting was not expected, but for any occasion, he ordered them not to surrender alive and to give no quarter to the opposing side.

Everyone enthusiastically agreed with this command. The group continued to glide swiftly and silently over the

snow-covered waste. The Finns told them that they would have to run at least forty miles before the bush could be reached, as the shore opposite Anzel Island was a sandy swamp which was hard to hide in.

Before daybreak, the group began to approach the shore which was covered with coppice. Behind it, stretching on all sides, loomed the snow-covered forest. This was the place they were looking for. A fir forest would be the best hiding place for them. The four leaders stopped. Hres gave the command to check the machine guns and to spread along the shore line. The group spread in a line about 150 yards long, and, facing the shore, approached it cautiously. Every heart was beating rapidly. Freedom was so near. Some of them were ready to break the line, thinking that the danger was over. The group increased their speed, and, desiring to reach the forest as soon as possible, moved faster and faster, forgetting all danger.

Suddenly they heard a tinkling noise. Hres ordered the men to lie down. They heard the tinkling again and a muffled voice give commands. Hres ordered his group to get up and move five hundred steps backwards and to the right. When they got up, machine gun fire was opened up on them from the bush.

"Lie down and dig in", commanded Hres. "Machine guns, fire". Under the protective curtain of their bullets they had time to dig into the snow.

"Treason?" Hres asked the Finn.

"No, I don't think it was treason", shouted the Finn as he pressed the trigger of his machine gun.

About five hundred yards behind them shrapnel exploded, then more and more came. It turned into a regular cannonade at the line where the prisoners were. From the bush and coppice, GPU soldiers, dressed in white coats which blended with the snow, began to advance. They approached under the protection of machine gun and shrapnel fire.

The bombardment was so strong that it was impossible for the fugitives to retreat and they decided to fight to the

last cartridge. Soon Hres noticed that the Finn was slumped over the machine gun, killed by a shot in the head.

"You were right, comrade. This was not treason", he said, and removing the body, started firing the gun.

Resistance was hopeless. The group of fugitives was steadily growing smaller. Attacked with mortar fire and later with hand grenades, their fire was finally silenced. At dawn, all was over, and only the groans of the dying could be heard. Forty-one dead bodies and five badly wounded prisoners were brought back to Anzer. Two died on the way. The remaining three were imprisoned in the isolation cells under the "White House".

Not one of these men was liquidated. After recovering each of them received an additional ten years, which left them without hope of ever leaving Solovky. A Ukrainian, Petro Nesterenko of Mykolaiv, had to have his leg amputated, but he made good use of his hands, and became one of the best shoemakers on Anzer. Two others, a Ukrainian and a Tartar, were left in the Kremlin.

The new commander of the GPU, on his own responsibility took Nesterenko to Anzer so that he could repair shoes. So ended this first and last unusual attempt to escape from Solovky.

The question arose as to whether they had been betrayed, but the group had been destroyed due to their own oversight. They had overlooked the radio station at Anzer. After they had left, a guard returned from a remote outpost. He untied his comrades, and two hours later the GPU detachments were hurrying to the Summer Shore where they met the fugitives.

The attempt of the prisoners to escape was kept in great secrecy, and even the prisoners themselves were prohibited to discuss it. After these events, over 300 men were transferred from Anzer to isolation cells in the Kremlin. The Solovky Islands were visited by dozens of commissions.

Hundreds of the more unruly prisoners received additional prison terms, and stricter rules were introduced. The command of the island, wardens and other authorities, were

changed because of their lack of vigilance. The governor was dismissed, and in his place Ivan Ivanovich Ponamarey was sent. The chief of the third section was changed, and new GPU guard commanders were also sent in. One of the commanders who had been tied up by the prisoners, was condemned, for negligence, to ten years in the slave camps, and was removed from Solovky.

THE WOMEN ON SOLOVKY

I heard and saw many horrible things on Anzer. Solovky Island was visited often by the government representatives from the centre, and this kept camp authorities in check, but Anzer did not see outside commissions very often. The local governors, usually tyrants, had supreme power over the souls and bodies of the prisoners. The fact that they changed often did not make the life of the prisoners easier. When a bad man left Anzer, a worse man, as a rule, would take his place.

Before my arrival, sadists and perverts tortured their victims to death and then wrote reports that the prisoner in question had been killed while attempting to escape.

In my time, the authorities abstained from open brutalities, but the women, who refused to accept the attentions of the commanders were kept in isolation cells, and were used for the most degrading work. They were forced to realise, finally, that their only salvation was in complete surrender to the wishes of the authorities. But at times these officials met with unconquerable characters. These, however, became cripples, while some became sick and died from the hard inhuman work. Some even committed suicide.

Amalia Hartner was a young, well-built, attractive blonde. She was of Finnish origin and had lived at first in Leningrad and later in Moscow. She had belonged to the higher circles of the Comintern, and, suspected of spying, was condemned to ten years hard labour. Well acquainted with the history of the labour movement, she was antagonistic to Stalin's policy, and predicted the ruin of Stalin's communism and the victory of true communism.

When I asked her who was to bring about this victory, she said that it would happen through the purification and revitalisation of the whole movement, which would result in the expulsion of all hypocrites. No argument could change

her. If she was not able to answer the objection, she considered it as a reactionary interrogation.

As she was quite pretty, she was immediately noticed by the authorities. The citizen commander, Yanovich, bestowed his attentions on her right from the beginning. The first day, he took her to clean his office. Without any protests, Amalia went to wash the floors there. But on the third day she was sent to clean the cow-stall, and soon after that, the pigsty. Finally they forced her to carry human excrement to the fields to be used as manure.

Dressed in a sweater, small shoes, and jeans, she carried a scoop on her shoulder, and led a small horse called Meridian, who dragged the barrel filled with refuse. Sometimes I saw her as I was digging ditches in the field. She often took a small piece of bread from her bosom, and fed her only friend and helper, the horse.

It was clear that the authorities were making a game of Amalia. Often, embracing the old wise head of Meridian, she cried, asking him why they tortured her so.

Amalia was naive. When Yanovich found that she remained firm in spite of everything, he sent her to float logs. When this did not help he incarcerated her in the infamous cellar under the main building. She spent a few days there, and Yanovich spread the news that she intended to escape. No one believed him, however. A week later Amalia appeared in the yard. It was the beginning of September on the official day of rest, which was appointed arbitrarily, once a month, by the authorities. On that day, the prisoners took the opportunity to wash their clothing, write letters, and mend their coats. In the afternoon the prisoners were allowed to walk around a nearby lake. This lake had crystal clear water, and seemed to be bottomless. Around the shore, sorb grew, its branches hung with red berries, almost reaching the water. The banks were covered with grass and reed. In the grass, large cages were placed as special traps for muskrats.

The Solovky Islands have over four hundred fresh water lakes. When the slave camps were established on the islands,

Soviet agents brought live muskrats from North America. They were provided with feed, and a number of prisoners were assigned to look after them. In the fall, all the lakes were surrounded by traps baited with fresh carrots. The muskrats that were caught were killed and skinned. The skins were processed on the island and were then taken to the mainland. From there they were sent to the world fur markets as finished produce.

The former president of the Council of People's Commissars of Tartary was in charge of the muskrat industry while I was at Anzer. While a secretary of the Tartar Communist Party, he had promulgated watchwords similar to that of Mykola Khvyliov's "Away from Moscow". He had come to Solovky with Sultan Helev.

The prisoners walked around the lake. We watched the muskrats, looked at the berries of the sorb, and noted the bluish-green tinge which showed the depth of the lake. Exhausted by hard labour and slavery, we did not pay any attention to the towers with machine guns, which surrounded us. Every prisoner, in his thoughts, was far away beyond the accursed White Sea, which cut us off from the world.

The sun and warm weather did not soothe us, but only made our nostalgia more acute. Everyone felt the hopelessness of our situation and the cruelty of it. Neither the God-created beauty of the lake, nor the sunshine were able to drive away the depressing thoughts that reigned in our hearts.

Suddenly we were all startled by a heart-rending scream which came from the main building where the island's commander lived. We all started to run as fast as we could towards the sound.

Out of the building ran Amalia. Her dress had been torn off to the waist. She was crying hysterically, and screaming, "Beasts, bandits, swine!" Covering her breasts with her hands, she ran to the lake, and jumped onto the stone jutting over the water.

"Good-bye, comrades", she cried, and, taking her long

blond tresses in both hands, she jumped into the bottomless depths of the lake.

"May her soul find rest in the kingdom of God. May her soul find rest", said an old priest, who stood nearby. He took his hat off, and, crossing himself, bowed a few times.

"We should try to save her, you old mare, and not mumble about the soul's rest", shouted Ivan Barylo to the priest, as he jumped into the lake from the same stone where Amalia had stood a minute before.

"Everyone to his cell", ordered the commander of the guards. The guards drove the prisoners back with their bayonets.

About ten minutes later, Barylo returned, wet and numbed. He had not found Amalia. At night her body was dragged out with a net and placed in the morgue.

Yanovich was called to the Kremlin, and a new governor was sent to Anzer Island. We learned later that Yanovich was appointed the chief of the third station at the Baltic camp near Medvezha Mount.

The governor of the island was changed but not the life and treatment of the prisoners, except for the fact that we were prohibited to approach the shores of the lake, although the men who looked after the muskrats could. The sunny warm days were over, though, and no one was sorry not to be able to see the lake.

WOMEN CANNIBALS

The prisoners often talked about Golgotha among themselves. This was a place with a hill in the centre, where the monks had built a church and a hermitage. They called it Golgotha in memory of the place where Jesus Christ had been crucified. The monks worked for their salvation, and prayed for the forgiveness of everyone's sins, including their own.

In my time, 275 women and young girls from Ukraine lived at this church. They had all been condemned by the Soviet government for cannibalism.

Cannibalism in Ukraine during the artificial famine of 1932-33 was a frightful thing, but, inured to all kinds of horrors, the prisoners were not impressed by it, because it was a common occurrence on Solovky. The killing and eating of a human being was not considered as something extraordinary above the 65th parallel, as it was a matter of survival and was considered a more or less original way to procure food.

In 1929, in the period of the so-called "vilful arbitrariness", many cases of cannibalism were registered at Solovky. In the period between 1932-33 there were hundreds of cases, and many more remained unregistered and hushed up by the authorities. Beginning with 1934, the authorities used energetic measures to stamp out cannibalism at Solovky as no one could venture out without an armed guard.

Groups of criminal prisoners escaped from the camps into the forests of Solovky. There they formed bands, and as they were not able to secure any food, they tried to catch a man so that they could eat him.

I met some of these men on the continent later, who told me, as a matter of course, how they had killed and cooked other prisoners.

On Solovky, cannibalism did not surprise anyone and if

the prisoners talked about camp Golgotha, it was for a different reason.

Many prisoners were interested in the women themselves, and how they could get to them. The men who looked after cows and pigs, all those who were sent for lighter work, were the most anxious.

As soon as commander Yanovich's driver came to the barracks, he was immediately surrounded by the prisoners.

"Tell us, Aliosha, did he drive there to-day?"

"Yes, he went. I wish a bear would drive him", the phlegmatic Russian would answer. He brought all the news about the women and Yanovich, and told his friends about them. The friends, in turn, told the rest of the men.

From the news, it was clear that Yanovich, the chief of the third section, and the commander of the GPU guards, had a special residence on Golgotha where they repaired from time to time to drink vodka with the girls. They either went together or separately. As soon as one of these officials arrived, all the women and girls under 30 years of age, were brought in ranks. This was done by Pobedonostsev, a prisoner, who was placed in charge of the women. He was a sexual pervert and a former officer of the Czar's gendarmierie.

The communist overlords selected the girls according to their taste from the ranks. Among the women prisoners were fifteen girls between the ages of 10 and 15 years. Some of them were with their mothers or grandmothers. After every visit of the officials, Golgotha was filled with subdued sobbing. They had to cry quietly because if they were heard they would be punished without mercy by Pobedonostsev, who hated women. There was no one to whom the women could complain.

Once I had the opportunity to see Pobedonostsev. The prisoners showed him to me, so that I would know how this eunuch who was in charge of the harem for the representatives of communist authorities on Anzer, looked.

More than one hundred and fifty young women and girls were abused by these three communist leaders, who

were evidently perverts and sadists, but finally one of these women, Nastia Pleskan, exposed these criminal deeds.

As you have seen, soon after the death of Amalia, Yanovich was recalled, and his friends were removed. Only Pobedonostsev was left.

All the women accused of cannibalism were transferred to Muksolm Island a few weeks later, but the talks about Golgotha did not stop in our barrack.

One of these stories is worth recording because it reveals how the women were treated. Sashka, an expert women's shoemaker, said, during a talk about women cannibals, that for no price would he be interested in them in any way.

"Fellows, you should have seen them when they were brought over. I have spent over 15 years in prison camps but I never saw so horrible a sight before."

The prisoners asked Sashka to tell them about it. He made a cigarette and began.

"I suppose you remember when the news came last fall that women would be sent to Solovky. It was well known that everyone always . . ."

"Now, Sashka, please don't give us an introductory oration" interrupted one of the men.

"If you don't like it, cover your head with a coat", retorted Sashka, and continued. "So, as I said, we were not entirely against having women in our midst.

"The news was true, and at that time, I was in charge of the loading brigade at the port. I lived, as you can imagine, rather well, as I had connections with the sailors. Once I was able to steal and hide two crates of vodka under the electro-station.

"It was impossible to find an honest man anywhere. Every swine wanted to become a thief. If a man stole half a ration of bread, he called himself Pachan. I was not in charge of unloading very long, and was not even allowed to come near the port later, but the unloading of these beauties took place while I was still there.

"When the chief of the works section came, and shouted, 'Sashka, take your brigade to the port to unload

the women', my heart began to beat faster. The boys assembled like lightning. In three minutes we were already at the North Gates, and ran, not walked, to the port.

"When we arrived, we saw the ship 'Udarnik' tied up to the wharf. On the deck stood Ivan Ivanovich and the chief of the third section.

"'Come on board' came the command. We jumped onto the deck. Ivan Ivanovich then told us, 'Well boys, you have to unload the hold. Only you must be very careful. They have sent us precious wares.' He began to laugh.

"Then I noticed that a horrible stench was coming from the hold. I now knew what the matter was. I went down into it first, the boys following me. What I saw there was indescribable. I had seen many terrible things, but never anything as bad as the sight that met my eyes. My heart is hard like a stone, but when I looked at that horrible scene, I thought, 'You dirty reptiles! You stinking pigs! How can you laugh at them like that?'

"What I saw were not humans, but corpses. They had been sent from Archangel in the hold of the coal ship, and had spent ten days there. It was hard to tell whether they were human being or lumps of coal with eyes. I tried to lift one woman who was dressed in rags, and saw that she was dead. My boys had the opinion that there were more dead than alive.

"I climbed quickly up to the deck. The authorities had gone to the other end of the boat, because the smell was so strong. I shouted to those reptiles, 'Commanders! Whom should we bring up first, the living or the dead?'

"'Bring up those who are alive', said Ivan Ivanovich. 'Let them take the dead back from where they came.' The boys began to bring up the women. The smell from the ship was so bad that it spread over the whole port. All of them were sick with dysentery, and were covered with excrement. Three boys refused to carry them. It was impossible to remain in the hold longer than five minutes. Many of us were retching. Even I could not stand it. I am a hard man but I felt so sorry for them that when I saw

two of my boys behave like pigs with them, I hit them on the face so hard that their noses began to bleed. Ivan Ivanovich saw what I had done, and came over to me. The boys whom I had hit, turned around and ran into the hold.

"Ivan Ivanovich asked, 'Why did you hit them?'"

"'Let them behave like human beings with human beings,' I answered. He looked at me, blinked his eyes, spat and said, 'Where do you find your human beings?' and then went away.

"We brought up three hundred and fifty people alive. Two hundred and seventy-five were women, and seventy-five were men. It was hard to tell who were old and who were children. One hundred and ten were dead. Among those whom we brought up, about two dozen could scarcely move, and the rest lay about like logs.

"We took them and put them into carts, which took them directly to the bath-house. Ivan Ivanovich thanked us, and ordered an additional ration of bread to be given us and a package of cheap tobacco which was taken from the ship's supply.

"As I was waiting for it, I heard Ivan Ivanovich and the commander of the guards who had brought the prisoners, quarreling violently. The commander demanded that Ivan Ivanovich take the dead with him too. Ivan Ivanovich said that he would take only those who were alive. The argument grew very heated, and finally Ivan Ivanovich, losing his temper, ordered all the prisoners to be loaded back onto the ship, on his responsibility. The commander changed his tune, and in half an hour, the 'Udarnik', with the dead in its hold sailed on to Kem, and I went to the Kremlin with the tobacco.

"Five men and two women died in the bath-house. The remainder were imprisoned in the cells under the hospital. In October, as you know, the women were sent to Golgotha,

"And so, fellows", ended Sashka, "when I think about our cannibals, I do not think about kissing at all. All I can remember is their appearance on that horrible day."

This was the way that the women cannibals from Ukraine began their life on Solovky Island.

WHITE RUSSIANS

Unexpectedly our work at digging ditches in the swamps ended. Our group was increased by about two dozen prisoners, and sent to Pichuhy again. This time we had to pile up the float wood on the shore and prepare it for shipping. It was the middle of October and the time of storms on the White Sea. These storms continued without interruption until the winds piled up mountains of ice, and about twenty miles of the sea near the shores became frozen.

However, what did the authorities care about storms? The plan of lumber production was badly neglected, and it was necessary to catch up with it at any price. The work on all the stations began in earnest. The purpose was to reach, overtake, and leave behind, all former achievements in that branch. Although I had complained bitterly about ditch digging in the swamps, here the certainty of death seemed to be guaranteed.

On the first day of work I managed to fall into the sea, and found out what the water in the White Sea tastes like. However, my comrades did not let me die, and returned me to life after half an hour of resuscitation. The fact that I did not end my life there was due to the methods of my friend, Genady Sadovsky, who used all ways and means to transfer me to the Kremlin.

Alexander Navrotsky, at that time, became the chief of the agricultural department of the islands. He was my friend and protector even when I had been at Moresplav. When he learned about my hopeless situation, he demanded the authorities to appoint me as zoologist to the agricultural section. The personnel officer showed him my file in which it was indicated that I had never had anything to with zoology, but Navorotsky insisted on my transfer, and finally secured it by stating that it was definitely known to him that I was a zoologist.

One morning a guard told me that I was to go with him to the Kremlin. I was very happy. My friends asked me not to forget them, and to do everything possible to get them removed from Pichuhy. Everyone knew about my departure and once an old man with a fine, neat appearance, called me aside. Till then I had not noticed him, as he did not go to work and was considered to be an invalid.

He introduced himself as Zavitnevich, a White Russian who had been in charge of the Planning Department of the White Russian Academy of Science at Mensk. I asked him whether he knew other White Russians on Solovky. He said that he did, and that he would like to meet them at the Kremlin. Would I help him? I promised to do all I possibly could, but warned him not to put too much hope in me, as I myself did not know whether I was to be sent to an isolation cell or not.

The White Russians were a nation with its own history and culture entirely different from the Russians. Unfortunately their country was occupied by the Russians and the people were suppressed. They should not be mistaken for the reactionary Russians who fought against the communists and were also called white Russians to distinguish them from the red Russians.

In the winter of 1933, I was at Moresplav, which is not very far from Kem. This was a camp from which the prisoners were sent over to Solovky. Here I met a group of White Russians who had recently arrived from Mensk.

First I will mention the group which formed the White Russian National Centre. They were also former members of an organisation called Hromada. Hromada was active in the western part of White Russia, which was under Polish domination. The Polish government imprisoned them and later exchanged them for Polish prisoners in Russian jails.

With great triumph the victims of the Polish oppression returned to a "happy, free, and independent socialistic White Russia". They were lionized, sent to summer resorts, and given the best positions. Everything was for the service

of these martyrs of the Polish Fascism. It was not a life but a holiday. Rak Mykhailovsky, Dvorchaninov, Myatla, and Havrylyk were happy beyond measure.

However, this holiday soon ended, and the common Soviet life began. Former members of Hromada and members of the Polish parliament began to notice, with surprise, unusual things. The oppression of the people and the brutalities of the ruling communistic cliques made them change their views about the Soviet paradise. Not very long after, all of them were incarcerated in prisons at Mensk, the capital of White Russia. It was on White Russian land but it was not their now. Later, on Solovky, the White Russians warmly remembered the Polish jails and compared them with the wild and inhuman treatment of prisoners in Russian prisons.

Rak Mykhailovsky, Myatla, and Dvorchaninov were condemned for spying on behalf of Poland, for participation in underground nationalistic organisations and for preparing an armed uprising. To these was added the accusation that they had abused their official positions with counter-revolutionary purposes as well as terroristic actions against the representatives of the Soviet government. All these deeds were supposed to be undertaken by the organisation, the White Russian National Centre".

These White Russians now understood the nature of the Soviet government and the character of the Soviet socialistic White Russia. In Poland they were able to make speeches. In Soviet prisons they met with unlimited brutality. It was not enough that they were thrown into prison. They were forced to confess to all the crimes with which the GPU found it necessary to accuse them, and they were made to beg tearfully for mercy.

The White Russians spent a whole year in prison. The GPU henchmen not only tortured them physically but broke their minds and spirits as well. Unhappy and miserable, they were brought to Solovky. These former rulers now became lowest slaves. Only Rak Mykhailovsky remained firm and unshaken. I do not know his past or his

activities in Soviet White Russia, but I do know that this man said openly and sincerely without any regrets, that "we deserved it".

I had an opportunity to speak with him a few times and he left a good impression. It would seem that the head of any man packed with all kinds of Soviet garbage would not be freed so soon from it and come to its senses. It was different with him. The Soviet daze left him quickly. He condemned without hesitation all that he had so blindly believed and also condemned himself for his past.

While on Solovky he worked at heavy physical jobs, and always stressed his hatred for the communists and Moscow. In 1936 he was imprisoned in an isolation cell and after that, no one heard about him.

Myatla, a gentle, quiet man, was another White Russian. I listened intently to his stories about Poland, his reasons for becoming a White Russian communist, and how he had been sent to the horrible all-destroying Solovky tortures. Although he was tall and well-built, he had tuberculosis and a bad cough. In spite of this he was still forced to do hard work, and one time at Moresplav, while levelling some boards, he threw down the plane and said that he would never be able to reach the norm even if it was made smaller. On Solovky he had to dig ditches in the swamps. Finally he was sent to the hospital, where he died in the spring of 1936. No one knows where he is buried.

Dvorchaninov had a pale face and a small black beard. He reminded me of a college professor, although he never made speeches like Rak Mikhailovsky, and never made statements. He tried to evaluate everything anew, and was searching for a forgotten way to his people. At Solovky he worked on general jobs and the GPU did not persecute him. In 1936 he was put into an isolation camp and after that, nothing was heard about him.

Havrylyk was a typical village teacher. He was tall, and had flaxen hair, and a red beard. He was a White Russian, kind, hard working, and quiet-natured. He spoke with deep conviction as though afraid that his listeners would not

understand him. He loved to be alone and always looked sadly into the distance. The tragedy of Mensk left a far greater impression on him than on anyone else. He could not bear to hear about Mensk, Soviet White Russia, or Socialism, his hatred for them was so great.

The feeling of guilt was so deep in Havrylyk that he did not believe in the possibility of forgiveness. He often said, "I am the most unhappy man alive, for I have not the right even to lift my head and look at the stars with their eternal unchangeable justice". This former communist sincerely and earnestly prayed to God, asking him to forgive a miserable sinner like him.

In 1935, I met Havrylyk for the last time on an island called Mali Zaichiky. He was with a few prisoners who had been sent there for punishment. He was very tired and did not speak to anyone. At night he would go out of his barrack and pray on his knees behind a mossy rock. Finally he was taken to the isolation camp half-insane, and never left it.

Zavitnevich was the only one of the White Russians who earned himself a bad reputation. It was established beyond a doubt that he was denouncing his comrades with whom he had been imprisoned in Poland, to the GPU. However, it did him no good, as someone denounced him, and as a result he was thrown into a solitary cell. Later he was released for a short time, but was again imprisoned.

Adamovych, the people's commissar for education, belonged to this group of Soviet White Russians. I did not meet him at Solovky, but I know that he was kept in a solitary cell at Moresplav. There he was accused of every fascist crime and received an additional ten years of imprisonment.

The White Russian commissar of agriculture was imprisoned on the island at the work station of Filimonovo in 1937. He was a tall young man, strongly built, and filled with Soviet fanaticism. Accused with abusing his official position for counter-revolutionary purposes, he continually

wrote long letters to Stalin explaining that he had nothing to do with the counter-revolution.

There were a good number of White Russian teachers and among them, I recall the two Khomychi brothers, and the two agriculturists called Savych and Lashkevich.

Thus the White Russian "enemies of the Soviet system" were accounted for.

THE GOD OF SOLOVKY AND THE CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS

The food at the Kremlin was, as elsewhere, not very palatable. We had to go to the kitchen to bring "balanda", prisoner's soup, which was made of evil-smelling salted fish. It was also called "Dark Eyes". Besides "balanda", we were given "pies", small pieces of black mouldy bread. At other times we got what the prisoners ironically called "the vegetable soup made in honour of Mary Demchenko," a much advertised collective farm worker. This soup was made of rotten beets, often saltless.

Living in the Kremlin I began to understand its dark character. It seemed to me to be a vampire, sucking blood from human beings. I wanted to understand this creation of fanatical builders. It seemed that every huge grey stone in that great wall proclaimed the god of Solovky, who was merciless, cruel, and unforgiving. This god was a god of power, without love or tenderness, whose greatest function was to punish and punish without end.

I walked in the darkened passages of the burned Uspensky Cathedral. Looking at the icons, I realized that the underlying conception of God had been of a great merciless punishing power.

There was an icon on the wall representing God with an all-punishing sword and the wild face of a ruthless conqueror. This icon had been produced by the Solovky school of painting. On the other wall was a brutal, merciless picture of the Judgment Day. There was an icon representing God as a grim judge, on his right hand, Christ was painted without any expression of will on his face, and on the left the Virgin Mary was seen as a suppressed slave. On the same icon Satan was painted. There were also big boilers filled with brimstone from which grey sulphuric smoke rose.

I continued my examination. I stopped at a picture which showed a strong woman with a severe mannish face.

Underneath was the inscription, "Katherine, the great martyr". This icon had been presented by the trader of the first guild, Amos Nickolas, the son of Epiphany.

Uspensky Cathedral was half-burned and the icons and crosses were covered with cobwebs and dust. The spiders danced like acrobats on their threads. I entered the altar in spite of the taboo. The iconostas had been taken down long ago. In the walls I found three small openings. These were the openings for the privileged prisoners, who had been imprisoned under the cathedral in the solitary cells. Through these holes they could hear the liturgy thrice a day, and so remember that they had to repent and humiliate themselves before freedom could be obtained. Some of them had obeyed.

Suddenly I remembered the grave of Peter Kalnyshevsky. His slab had the words, "Humbled himself and reposed", engraved on it. My heart almost broke with pain and rebellion from these recollections. Without crossing myself, I turned around and went away, walking on the path of grey stones which had been polished by the shoes of monks, or perhaps by the kissing of the worshippers.

Opposite the cathedral was a small refectory chapel. In the chapel, the 6th platoon of the 13th company which was infamous for its torturing of prisoners, had been quartered. But it is curious that the GPU demanded also that these disobedient lovers of freedom subdue themselves and obey. Above the entrance was a large icon with images of two saints. They had a humble appearance, friendly forgiving faces, and a halo above their heads. These old saints were St. Zosyma and St. Savaty. The man who had painted their images evidently did not know their true natures. History contradicted him. He represented them as being human and forgiving, while in reality they had been the terror of the White Sea.

The icons had lied. In truth they were the creators of the solitary cells and the deep underground prisons. It was they who had built the foundations of the present Kremlin.

I looked at their picture and asked, "If you really were

such gracious saints, then why these cruel solitary cells and chains?" I wanted to shout, "St. Zosyma and St. Savaty, where did you lead the people?" Why these grim towers, underground prisons, and machine guns?"

The refectory was now used as a store house. Bushlats, padded trousers, sweaters, felt shoes, and other things lay around. In my imagination I saw a man with bast shoes on his feet, half a ration of bread in his pocket, a saw under one arm, an axe under the other, his head covered with a hat nicknamed "Goodbye, motherland", looking as though he had been taken down from the cross, this man of such a strange appearance was the greatest power of Stalin's socialism.

It was he who had built the White Sea canal, the Moscow-Volga canal, Kuzbas, the Baikal-Amursk railroad, Turksyb, and Moscow-Mensk. And only due to Hitler had he not had time to finish the "Soviet Palace in Moscow". But Hitler is gone and the palace will be finished by this slave army of 15 million men. If there is a lack of cement, their blood will do the job, and if there is not enough lumber, their bone will serve instead. The coming generation will curse this building, just as I stood cursing the Kremlin.

It began to get dark, and the snow was falling heavily. Then, in the direction of the North Gates, I heard cries and hysterical shouts of "Devils! Anti-Christ! Judas!" Near the gates was a great crowd of about a hundred or so people. Most of them were women in white kerchiefs. They were all on their knees in the snow. About twenty armed guards were trying to put them on their feet. They refused to rise and would immediately kneel down again as soon as the guards dragged them to their feet.

Suddenly we heard a deep thundering bass voice singing.

"Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered, and let them also that hate Him, flee before Him."

The commander of the guards, foaming at the mouth with the most blasphemous curses, shouted, "Get up!"

The group did not pay any attention to him but continued to sing, "Thy Christ we worship, O God", and "We praise the Holy Resurrection".

There was so much force and conviction in this singing that even the hardened GPU guards were moved. The prisoners who stood at a distance by the walls began to sob.

"What is the meaning of this? Who are these people? What do they want?" I asked the nearest prisoner.

Don't you know? You are a newcomer, I suppose. These are the Chrystosyky, followers of Christ, my friend. They are heroes."

The Christ's followers continued to sing. The wind drove the snow into their faces with great force, but still they did not stop. They, who were being tortured now, were praising the one who had been crucified long before.

Then a command in French was heard, "End the comedy" and the tall aristocratic figure of the commander of the Kremlin, the former Count Trubetskoy, appeared. His ancestors had been ardent supporters of the throne and the dynasty of the Romanovs. This Russian family was wellknown in the Czar's Russia. They were the bulwark of the Czar's power and full of zeal for the Russian Greek Orthodox Church.

This man was handsome and well-built. He had accepted the god of Solovky, and, without mercy, shot those who had recognized any other god.

"End the comedy", again came the order. Everyone understood this sentence as he had used it very often. It meant that his order must be carried out immediately.

About a hundred guards began to tie up the disobedient followers of Christ and throw them on the sleighs. They did not resist but only crossed themselves and called the guards devils and anti-Christ. In about half an hour, they were all on the sleighs. They were then taken to Mali Zaichiki Island.

Who were this Christosyky? What were their origin and convictions? This group of Christians originated in a monastery in the Kuban Cossack country. The communists

ordered the nuns to disperse, get married and forget about the monastery, but a group of them firmly refused to leave. Then with the assistance of troops they were transported to the northern concentration camps.

The followers of Christ rejected the use of force against an enemy. They proclaimed that the communist government was a government of Anti-Christ. They said that all those who represented it were devils, and that those who obeyed it were miserable sinners and unclean people, for whom a great punishment would be prepared in the other world.

This present life was of very little value to them. It was all decay and suffering. Life had meaning only when Christ's laws ruled on earth. But when the laws in the country became anti-Christian, then, to live, serve, and cooperate with such a government was a mortal sin that would remain without forgiveness. To obey the least orders of the government was to commit a great sin. None of the Christ's followers obeyed any orders of the communist officials. If anyone obeyed any order of any kind, he ceased to be a follower. Not one of them obeyed the GPU. They even did not answer the first question as to where they were born and what their name was.

The Chrystosyky underwent the most brutal beatings and tortures but still refused to tell their names or answer any other questions of the GPU.

Their whole life in the concentration camps was spent under a number. When they were addressed it was always by a number. No one knew their names, neither the prisoners nor the GPU, as they called each other brother and sister.

The communists were not able to break their will and force them to work, by any tortures. The only solution that was left was to have them all shot. The communists tried it, but when they saw with what joy and satisfaction these disobedient women and men stood in front of the machine guns, they were perplexed.

The terror did not work, and the movement gathered

strength in spite of hard opposing blows. The number of Chrystosyky, instead of diminishing in the concentration camps, grew steadily and increased its ranks with new volunteers from among the prisoners. Many of the volunteers were those who had at first laughed at them, calling them a fanatical group with no prospective victory in sight. This was a movement of desperate resistance that could have been born only in conditions of Soviet horrors. Clashing with the indescribable brutality of the government, it developed an attitude of total rejection of everything born of communism. The Christ's followers did not proclaim any special programme for the future, but they, without compromise, rejected the things of the present.

Everything was always clean and orderly where they lived, and all the sisters wore kerchiefs that were as white as snow. Their clothing was always mended and neat. They walked among the prisoners and asked if they could mend or wash their clothing, or help them in any way. What they did was done thoroughly and well. They never asked any reward but if anyone gave them something for their work, they accepted it with thanks. If a prisoner did not give them anything they never showed any sign of dissatisfaction. The Chrystosyky avoided conversation with others and most of the time kept silent. Many of them were young and attractive women but not one of the prisoners, even the demoralised criminals, dared offend these women with a word or look. They remained unapproachable to all, because they were so pure and Christ-like. Their purity and the fact that they could face the machine guns with a smile, subdued the most filthy men and made them admire these heroic women.

As I learned more about these people, I found out about unbelievable sacrifices that they suffered. I am not able to describe the horrors that these people bore with Christian patience and cheerful smiles.

Philemon Podoliak was the leader of this group. He joined the group on Solovky, and his spiritual authority was recognised by the Christ's followers. His frank and sacri-

ficial character appealed to the Chrystosyky, while he accepted their views with all his heart.

He was strong and muscular, and reminded one of a huge bear. His head was covered with long hair reaching to his broad shoulders. It was like a thick mane but he always kept it clean.

From the time Philemon renounced the world he never covered his head with anything. He walked bareheaded and barefooted in all weathers; in the summer heat, during the winter, in snow storms, in rain, and in knee-deep mud.

It was said that at one time he had been a well-to-do farmer and had had a large family. In the year 1921, only his daughters remained of his whole family. All his sons had either died or were lost without trace. One day he took a walking stick, removed his shoes and hat at the gate, and went out into the world. He had left his family and disappeared. The attempts of his relations to find him produced no results and they decided that he had died.

No one knew about the life of Philemon after his disappearance and he himself never revealed anything. Philemon was sent to Solovky in 1926. We can only guess about his activities during the five years before his imprisonment. Those years in Ukraine were the years of great religious manifestations. It is possible that Philemon was one of those who called the people to repent and fight against communism. It was known, on Solovky, that Philemon had been regarded in the district of Zhitomir as a saint and ascetic. Many came to him seeking his prayers and there were reports about the miraculous power of these prayers and intercessions.

He did not speak much. When a man would come to him with some tale of suffering to recount, he would listen to him attentively, and then looking him straight in the eyes, would say, "Go in peace. I will pray for you."

His fame worried the GPU. One day the press announced that the Supreme Court of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic would consider the case of a certain rich peasant,

Philemon Podoliak, accused of murdering a thirteen-year old girl.

This announcement was widely advertised. There was no shadow of truth in the accusation. A girl had been sent to the ascetic by her aunt to ask him to pray for her sick mother. On returning home, she was caught in a snow storm near the village, and, not reaching it in time, died from cold.

Later on, when her body was discovered, the local Soviet attorney decided to exploit the death of the girl so that Philemon would be discredited. Police were sent after him by sleigh. He was found in his hermitage in the forest. It was zero weather and a sharp wind was blowing, but Philemon walked alongside the sleigh without his hat or shoes on. One of the guards asked him whether it was not cold for him and whether it would not be warmer and better for him to sit in the sleigh. Philemon told the driver to stop the sleigh. Then he threw his staff away, crossed his hands on his breast, and, looking straight into the eyes of each guard, said "Don't you feel an undying fire in your soul, that warms you. You talk about cold. Why don't you think about your souls instead. Take away the mask and be men. Try, at least once in your life, to become heroes." He concluded his admonition with the thunderlike command, "I order you in the name of God, who sent me, to get up and follow me barefoot".

The guards, like obedient children, took their shoes off, and, leaving them in the sleigh, followed Philemon. They walked twenty-five miles in that way, and finally appeared before the building of the local police. The whole town gathered to watch the procession. The local chief of police immediately imprisoned the guards, and Philemon was sent in a car to the prison in the city of Zhitomir.

His case was delayed as no one believed the accusations against him. Crowds of peasants from the provinces of Kiev, Volyn, and Podilia, came to the prison to find out whether he was still alive. In the prison Philemon received a large amount of parcels with food and clothing. He gave

it all away to the other prisoners, leaving only a small piece of bread for himself. It seems that such a big man would need a great amount of food, but the small prison ration was more than enough for him. Philemon was not shot only because a new economic policy (NEP) had been announced by the government and they did not want to irritate the peasants.

He was condemned for ten years hard labour at Solovky and was sent there in 1926. When Philemon arrived, he was the only earnest believer of Christ, and had an intense hatred of communism. When he met the Chrystosyky, he found a people of his own heart. His magnetic influence, thundering voice, and Christian teaching, made him a dangerous person on the island for the communists. He never incited anyone to escape and this saved him from liquidation. For all that, he spent all his years on Solovky in solitary confinement.

There were heart-rending happenings. When the guards led him from one cell to another, as soon as the prisoners heard about it, a great crowd of them would gather at the North Gate where he was to enter. They would fall on their knees and shout hysterically, "Philemon, save us!"

On one of these occasions, the guards fired at the crowd for the first time with machine guns. When he was again taken from the cells, the prisoners, from bitter experience, did not rush to him, but stood near the walls, watching him.

The last time I saw him, was on Mali Zaichiki Island in 1935. He stood barefoot on a great stone, leaning on his staff and looking in the direction of Anzer. His hair was ruffled by the wind. He reminded me of the skeleton of a great mammoth which I had once seen in a museum. Only his eyes were burning with a deep fire. Noticing that I was watching him, he turned around and went away.

At the end of January, the news of Kirov's death reached our island. At the prayer meeting one of the sisters said, "Did you hear that someone has killed the best friend and successor of Stalin?"

“Yes, he is killed”, clamoured those present. Then they became silent.

“Yes, he is killed”, said Philemon, “but why are you silent? He is killed, thank God. It is only a pity that they did not kill the anti-Christ, himself”, and banging the door, he left the barrack.

Two days passed. One night, when they were sitting and talking, two sleighs glided up to the doors, and a detachment of armed guards ran into the barrack accompanied by Count Trubetskoy.

Trubetskoy very politely asked those present, “Tell me whether or not Philemon really said, ‘Kirov is killed, thank God. It is only a pity that they did not kill the anti-Christ, Stalin, himself’.”

The Chrystosyky were silent.

“I know”, he continued, “that you will not answer my question, but I asked you, so that you who seek eternal truth, will not shun earthly truth. Now tell me what happened.”

The Christ’s followers did not move.

“Philemon, who had stood silently looking on the ground, crossed himself and followed Trubetskoy. Silence reigned in the barrack, only broken from time to time by suppressed sobbing.

Then one of the older sisters stood up and said, “Whoever is a Judas among us, let him leave us, and we will forgive him like Christ did”.

Philemon was shot that night.

THE BLACK FLAGS OVER THE WHITE HOUSE

“Comrades, don’t sing that song” shouted Myronenko hitting the table with his huge fists. He followed this outburst by falling on the sleeping platform, and covering his head with his coat, his body was shaken by sobs. This scene occurred one day when we were singing a sad Ukrainian song, which he could not bear to hear.

“Nick, we don’t want to cause you any pain. Forgive us” pleaded Zbarazhsky, a grey-haired man, who was a former High School teacher and member of the first Ukrainian Parliament.

Everyone felt embarrassed. They quietly returned to their places on the wooden platform circling the room except Zbarazhsky, who seated himself near Myronenko and spoke to him in a soft low voice with tender, brotherly words.

“My friend, do you think that only you have children? I have them too, as do millions of other men like us”.

Myronenko objected. “Did I fight and suffer wounds only for my children? I carried the banner of the revolution through blood, sweat and tears. Did I suffer all this for them alone? Did I take part in the attack on Warsaw only for them? Was it for them that I shot at you, Maxyme, and at men like you?” Myronenko again covered his head with his coat and sobbed quietly.

Zbarazhsky did not move. The other prisoners sat silently, unable to break the chain of tragic memories. It was the third time during two years that Myronenko had acted like this. It was a bad sign when a man reacted so strongly. It happened first when the prisoners sang a popular song which described how a brother returns from captivity, and his own sister, overcome by sorrow, is unable to recognise him. It happened a second time when they sang the song, “Green Hills”, which Myronenko could not stand. It told about a poor widow, who asked her brother to help

her, and promised to send her children away every time he came home from work, to placate the hatred of her sister-in-law.

Suddenly Myronenko tore the coat from his head, stood up on the wooden platform and, with a voice full of emotion, said, "Eight sons! Eight falcons! How they grew! The eldest completed high school. And now all have perished. All were continually hounded. All became homeless. All were scattered. Their mother they tore away from her year-old baby! Was it for my guilt? I was fighting for the revolution with my sword, but now I am made a 'counter-revolutionary'. Everything has changed. The revolution has become a counter-revolution, reactionaries and slave-owners have become revolutionaries, and the revolutionaries have been transformed into counter-revolutionaries. But their mother! She had eight small children and only thought about them. She fed them, washed them, and spent sleepless nights at their cribs. She was sent to Siberia to work in the slave-camps. Why?"

"Friend, why are you telling us, as if we did not know all about it? Did you know the prisoner, Strikha? Do you know what he did? He killed his three-year-old son in a moment of insane despair. From that time on he was out of his mind. He never recovered. Yes, brother, everyone has experienced these horrors."

"It is so, but Strikha was an insane man", said Myronenko quieting down.

"Who would not become insane?" demanded Ivan Stepanovich, and old grey-haired peasant. "Strikha became prosperous by hard work after the revolution. He had been very poor before, but finally he built himself a new home. He had two good horses, one cow, some pigs and chickens, and he was able also to afford to buy some clothing for his family. One day, without any warning or reason, he was arrested with all his family, and everything that he had earned by hard work was taken away from him. On a cold winter day they took away their warm sheep-skin coats. When a communist saw the little boy's warm shoes he took

them for his own son. After that they were driven into a cattle car to be sent to Siberia. Who would not become insane under such treatment? This is what your revolution brought us". Ivan Stepanovich spat and went to his corner.

"What you are describing is not my revolution! It is not revolution but counter-revolution" defended Myronenko, who had commanded a red banner cavalry division when the Soviet armies had marched on Warsaw.

"Sha, mamasha, sha!" came the warning.

The discussion stopped suddenly. Liberberg entered the room. His brother had been a professor of world history at Kiev University and he himself was a Zionist. Together they had been sent to a slave camp in Siberia. However, his brother was left in a special isolation camp, and Liberberg was transferred to Solovky where he was appointed an instructor of the "educational" section which, except for the third section, was the most despicable institution. He was not considered to be an informer, but at the same time nobody trusted him. Many of the men had known Liberberg in Kiev when he was in charge of a large boarding house for students, located in the former monastery of St. Michael, which had been liquidated by the government in 1934.

Liberberg visited the prison cells often, to tell the men the latest news, as he had access to the newspapers. To-day he had something of interest to say.

"There are black flags over the White House."

"Black flags? Is to-day some mourning day?"

"To-day is the 2nd of December. It could not be a mourning anniversary".

"What is it then? What has happened?"

"I do not know yet. The chief of the cultural and educational section has a black band on his sleeve but has not said anything to me about it." Liberberg made a cigarette, smoked silently for a while, and then left.

"This is interesting", said Hop Skok. He was a carefree young criminal, but a good comrade. Somehow, he was always able to obtain complete information about any matter.

"I will be back in five minutes. I will find out". And he disappeared through the door. He returned in about half an hour. Everyone waited in a tense silence.

Hop-Skok, for the first time in his life had lost his cheerfulness. He looked seriously at us, and said, "Sergey Myronovich Kirov has been killed!" After that, he went without a word to his platform, sat down and began to smoke a cigarette.

"So the black flags were for him, then", said one of the prisoners. Everyone turned to him. The prisoner, as if excusing himself, hastily added, "I meant nothing. What is the matter with you?" and went to his portion of the wooden platform.

The news spread like lightning throughout the camp.

The siren in the Kremlin began to wail, calling all prisoners for the roll call.

Thousands of prisoners stood in the yard and waited. Around them, the usually dark walls of the Kremlin were covered with white snow. All the towers had black flags and under the flags shone the muzzles of machine guns.

The inmates of Solovky stood without a sound. Every second seemed an eternity.

Every prisoner thought, "This may be my last second."

Everyone knew the consequences for all those who were imprisoned in slave camps and prisons, when a party mogul was murdered.

Everyone expected that the procedure would be the same as on other occasions. They expected that the governor of the Kremlin, Count Trubetskoy, would give an order for every tenth prisoner to step forward from the ranks. All these would be imprisoned in subterranean cells and shot in groups at the leisure of the GPU.

At last the command was given to stand at attention. Ivan Ivanovich Ponamarev himself appeared with his retinue. Each of them was wearing a black band on his sleeve. They came to the table that had been placed beforehand in the yard. The chief of the Solovky slave camps

addressed the prisoners with a short speech, stressing every word.

"Prisoners!" he began. "You must know by now that your friends beyond the sea have killed Sergey Myronovich Kirov. I know that many of you laugh at our mourning. But remember, only those who laugh last, laugh best. I warn you who stand here, and who have not been shot yet, due to the mercy of our dear father, teacher and leader, Stalin, that those who dare to laugh will do it to their own sorrow. From now to the first of June I am cancelling all your correspondence. The food ration will be cut 30%. No clothing or shoes will be issued. All previous permits to leave the Kremlin or to enter it will be cancelled. At ten o'clock each night all cells and other rooms with prisoners will be locked. If you conduct counter-revolutionary propaganda, you will be shot. Do you understand?"

From every section of the yard, the prisoners shouted "Yes!"

A long roll-call began after the speech. We had to give our surname, our father's name, the date and place of our birth and the section of the Soviet law by which we had been condemned. At the end, the command to stand at attention was again given. Sirens sounded, and the prisoners were taken back to their cells. Everyone felt relieved after the long tension.

All the Kremlin was flooded with electric lights. Powerful searchlights and projectors were placed everywhere. Machine guns were directed at the windows of cells, and in the yard they seemed to follow the prisoners, whispering a menacing "good night". They seemed to say, "You have not been shot yet, but your turn will come".

A menacing silence spread over the Kremlin. We were all waiting. At ten o'clock all lay down on the wooden platform but none could sleep. About two o'clock we heard heavy footsteps approaching.

"They are coming!" said one.

"Let them come" another answered.

The key turned in the lock. The door opened. In the

lights that burned continually day and night, we were all clearly seen.

"Get up!"

We all got up.

"Take all your clothing off, come to the door, and stand on this side."

We began to take off the rags that served us as clothing. The guards started a thorough search.

"Who is sleeping here? Whose bag is this?"

Everyone looked in that direction.

"It is mine!" Michael Sergeiv, a former student of the Pedagogical Institute at Leningrad stepped forward. The representative of the third section was holding a new book in his hands.

"Does this book belong to you?" he demanded with hatred, waving this evidence of crime before Sergeiv. I never had a book like that in my possession". Sergeiv stated firmly. His strong young body began to tremble.

"No, prisoner," quietly said the guard. "This is not the work of an informer. This is counter-revolution. You are one of those who killed our Kirov!" He opened the title-page of the book and pointed to the large letters which said, "The Lessons of October" by L. D. Trotsky. Fearfully, Sergeiv looked around. Turning to us, he said with a trembling voice, "Comrades, I will be shot tonight. I know that this was the work of an informer. I never had a book like this, I never read it, and I never had anything to with Trotskyism".

"Silence!"

Sergeiv was taken naked from the cell by the guards, with his bag, clothing, and the supposed evidence of his participation in the killing of Kirov.

We were all depressed and silent. The search continued.

"Whose trunk is this? Why is it locked?"

Wasylko, a youngster, who was very popular among the prisoners, and who was famous for his songs and ability to shirk his work, said with a guilty look that he had lost the key.

This aroused the interest of the representative of the third section. He ordered the guard to break the cover of the trunk with a gun butt. He lifted some rags from the trunk with two fingers. Then he got out a pair of old torn bast shoes, rusted pieces of iron, a nail and other rubbish.

"Why did you keep these under lock?" he asked. At the bottom he finally found a piece of newspaper and inside it a piece of white paper with a large drawing of a hand with the fingers formed in a way that expresses extreme derision.

The representative looked at the picture and then at Wasylko.

"What is this?"

"Citizen commander, it is nothing. I only tried to learn how to draw".

"Watch yourself, or I will teach you myself", said the representative throwing the paper on the floor, and spitting on it. He realised that the picture was specially prepared by Wasylko for those who thought they would find treason in his trunk.

The search was finished. Numbed by cold and fear, the prisoners returned to their places. Everyone was very cautious as we all feared that even our closest friend might betray us.

We all knew that the book "The Lessons of October" had been put into Sergeiv's bag while he was outside at roll-call. From then on, everyone, when leaving his cell for any length of time, or when going to sleep, examined his possessions to be sure that some informer had not planted condemned literature among them. They often found some. In most cases it was books, leaflets, pictures or similar materials by Trotsky or others who opposed the communist regime.

This method of planting "seditious" literature did not produce much result. The prisoner immediately knew the purpose of these "traitorous" books placed in their belongings, and every day, the leader of each labour squad took a bundle of books found by the prisoners to the police quarters.

The third section (the department of the communist secret police which ferreted out opposition) found that this did not produce good results, and therefore concentrated on informers.

The denouncers and informers had to work very hard to keep up with the demands of the GPU. The prisoners organized their own secret service called the ATC in order to uncover traitors. During the epidemic of arrests and shooting this organisation found over two hundred secret informers among the prisoners. These informers were recruited, as a rule, from the foreign communists and other adventurers, who had come to the USSR in search of an easy livelihood. Many of them had done the same work while at liberty, but for insufficient results or some other reason were taken off the balance sheet and banished to Solovky.

Jean Reno was one of the most depraved spies. He was a French communist and had hundreds of prisoner's lives on his conscience. Another was Samuel Can who had come to Soviet Russia from Poland.

Reno and the other informers could lead into unguarded confidences only those who had come to Solovky recently and who did not know about the police system. The men who had spent years on the island and who were bound by unseen ties of common national interests, knew the informers and it was hard for men like Reno and Can to get them involved.

Once I chanced to meet Can after Kirov's death. During the usual night roll-call I stood near a young man whom I did not know. I asked, "Are you from the third column too?"

"No, I am from Nova Sosnova and only came to-day".

"That is interesting. Do you have many people there?" I asked.

"No, not very many. Excuse me, but what is your name?"

I told him.

"O, yes, Professor Pidhainy. Are you working in the agricultural branch?"

"First of all, I never was a professor . . ."

"No! No! No! Do not say that. I have heard about you. I know that you are a man of unusual gifts". The young man was speaking rapidly and evidently was intent on flattering me.

The guard called, "Can?"

"Samuel Lvovich" responded my new acquaintance.

"Move along".

The roll-call ended. I was much disturbed by my new acquaintance and those undeserved praises. I went to the ATC (I dare not mention the names of the men in charge of it, as I am not certain whether they are dead yet or not.) I asked them about Can. In about fifteen minutes they gave me this information. "Samuel Lvovich Can, a former member of the Union of Communist Youth in Poland is an informer".

The Kremlin had three ATC centres, all forming one organisation. It originated in 1924 and has never yet been discovered by the GPU. I found out about it from Genady Sadovsky, who had known of its existence since 1929.

At the head of the organization a wise and brave man had been directing the activities of ATC. No one would have thought that he was an expert in undercover work and that he had never before had anything to do with it. But now, thousands of men were able to avoid unexpected denunciations and death because of him.

Ivan Ivanovich kept his word. The very first night, a great number of prisoners were tortured and many were murdered. According to the calculations of the ACT, the GPU took over four hundred men from the cells of the Kremlin. Every night, the guards removed some men from the cells, "with belongings", and imprisoned them under the White House. This continued until the middle of February, 1935.

One night, guards came to our cell and took away

Nickolas Myronenko. Nothing was ever heard of him again.

Everyone tried to discover the true story about Kirov's death. There were two versions secretly circulating, when the wave of terror had abated a little. According to one story, Kirov had been killed by the command of Stalin, who was afraid that he might try to supplant him. Another version came to Solovky from Kolyma. According to this rumour, Kirov had been killed because of a romantic feud.

A young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Nikolaev, lived at Leningrad. Nikolaev was an outstanding member of the communist party and occupied all kinds of responsible positions. His wife was a beautiful woman with aristocratic manners, who knew how to dress well. She too belonged to the Communist Party. Kirov once saw her, and immediately issued instructions that she should be appointed to a higher position, and transferred to the provincial committee of the party at Leningrad. Of course, he was the secretary of that committee. Step by step, he promoted her, and finally made her his personal secretary.

Kirov was very friendly with her husband, and gave him the freedom of the offices of the Provincial Committee. Thus it was that he could enter, without any formalities, into the office of Sergey Myronovich Kirov, the second most influential man in the USSR. Nikolaev considered all these favours to be well-deserved rewards from Kirov for conscientious and prompt execution of all party orders and instructions.

Red-headed Kirov was an ugly old man, his face marked by smallpox scars. He treated his subordinates brutally, and they all detested him. However, Nikolaev considered him a grand old man. So the days, weeks and months passed.

Finally someone called his attention to the unusual courtesies that Kirov paid to his wife, but he did not say anything. Some time later, he received an anonymous letter which contained the same information about his wife and Kirov. Nikolaev began to watch them and found that

the relations between them were more familiar than those that should exist between a boss and his secretary.

Nikolaev took the anonymous letter and spoke with Kirov about the matter. He told him about party ethics and the relations of a friend. Kirov persuaded him that there was nothing true about the story, and that somebody had lied. He promised that he would take all the necessary precautions to forestall any possibility of such gossip in the future.

Nikolaev was satisfied. One day he found his wife in Kirov's embrace. She told him that he could do anything he wanted, but that she would not leave Kirov. Nikolaev argued and reasoned with her all that night. The result of his talk was not known, but after it, he went to the party offices. Greeting everyone pleasantly, as was his custom, he went to Kirov's private room, and knocked at the door. On entering the office, he emptied eight bullets into Kirov.

This was the other version of Kirov's death. Which one of them is true is not important. The important thing is, that his death provided a pretext for the murder of thousands of innocent people. Of course, from Stalin's point of view, they were guilty anyway and so were shot without mercy.

TWENTY-EIGHT

Liberberg, whom I had mentioned before, came in January, 1935 to our cell with the newspaper "Visti" and showed us the list of men shot in Kiev. This was only one of the many lists of the thousands of Ukrainians who were shot by the Russian communists.

It was possible that only by an accident, or most likely by the Providence of God, I was arrested and sent to Solovky by the Moscow tyrants. If I had remained free until then, my name would have been without doubt, listed among the twenty-eight who were shot at Kiev. Many of my friends, colleagues and acquaintances were among them.

Later on when I escaped from Soviet Russia, I searched for that number of "Visti". I was interested in it, because, long before the death of Kirov, I was one day unexpectedly taken to the White House. The guard brought me to a section of the building which had the inscription "Secret Political Department" on the door. In room number thirteen, I was welcomed by a well-shaven young examining judge who was dressed in a brand new uniform. His office was clean, and the whole floor was covered with an expensive carpet, on the top of which was placed a fine runner.

I had on my feet dirty bast shoes, wet from the rain, and seeing all this luxury before me, I stopped between the door and the table. The examining judge thanked the guards, and, noticing my embarrassment, told me in a friendly, weary voice, "Never mind. Please come and sit down".

I sat down and laid my hat on my knees.

"Are you 'Pidhainy' or 'Podhainy'?" he asked. I told him that my name was Pidhainy and always had been, but that the warden of Kharkiv GPU had not liked it and had changed it, so from that time on I had been 'Podhainy'.

"So this is your name of our choice", said he, as if agreeing with the decision of the warden.

"Yes, it is your choice", I agreed.

"Are you a subject of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics?"

"Yes, I am a subject of the USSR."

"Do you mean the Ukrainian Socialist Republic?"

"No. I meant the Union of SSR."

"I thought that you meant Ukrainian, but I am certain you know that we have only subjects of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and no other".

"I know it very well".

"Naturally such an educated man as you, condemned for breaking the laws of the state, should know it."

I was silent.

"Do you smoke?" asked the examining judge offering me some very expensive Soviet cigarettes.

"I do not smoke that kind. Allow me to smoke my own clay pipe".

"Please do", he said, with displeasure, offended that I preferred cheap prison tobacco to his cigarettes. Lighting a match for me, the examining judge casually asked me if, per chance, I had known a man called Lyashenko. I pretended that I did not understand him.

"Lyashenko? Oh yes, I knew him. He was a famous professor of Russian economics. I heard that he died recently. It was a great loss, as he was a first-rate scientist." I was ready to give a complete evaluation of his scientific work.

The examining judge interrupted me, and said that he was not interested in any dead professor, but in a young Ukrainian scientist. The man about whom he was talking was one of my friends with whom I had studied when we were both aspirants to the Scientific Historical Institute. I had also worked with him in the archives and libraries.

I looked straight into the judge's eyes with an expression of great innocence and sincerity, and declared that although I was willing to answer all his questions with complete

frankness, I did not recall any one with such a name among my friends.

"Try to recall him", the examining judge said calmly.

"I have an excellent memory, one of my distinctions, but I do not remember ever meeting such a person."

I noticed that the examining judge was an experienced man, but my sincerity must have shaken his suspicions. He took some papers and looked them over. Then he asked me about twenty questions, every one of which was intended to trap me into an admission that I had known Lyashenko. I decided to deny everything. This was dangerous, as the GPU could very easily prove that I had known him.

When the examining judge was convinced that I would not admit anything about Lyashenko, he gave me a paper with questions about him. As I had stated that I did not know him, I answered "No" to every question, and signed the paper.

Then I had to sign another paper, which stated that for telling anyone about the questioning, I would be punished by an additional five years in jail. After that the examining judge rang the bell. Two guards came into the room.

"Take the prisoner away."

"Where, that way or the other way?"

"That way", answered the judge. I wished him good-night and left with the guards. I knew that I would not be sent to solitary confinement.

For a long time I waited fearing that the GPU would return me to Kharkiv to confront witnesses. In that case my lie would be discovered. I suppose that my examining judge was not greatly interested in the matter, as the reward for the blood of Lyashenko would go, in any case, to the examining judge in Kharkiv or Kiev. He fulfilled the order of the GPU and while he corresponded with Ukraine, Kirov was killed and Lyashenko was added to the group of "terrorists", and shot. The local examining judge in Ukraine evidently had reports from informers about Lyashenko visiting me. The GPU sent inquiries to Solovky to

find out if they could connect me in some way with Lyashenko.

If Lyashenko had been acquainted with a man sent to Solovky, this would have been sufficient reason to punish him severely, and knowing this, I stoutly denied knowing him. My denial saved him from the accusation of participation in "The Union of Kuban and Ukraine" but it did not save him from death. Unable to shoot him for one trumped-up reason, they shot him for another.

In this announcement of the execution of twenty-eight outstanding Ukrainians Lyashenko is the last on the list. On the 18th of December, 1934, all papers in Soviet Russia published this statement:

"From the thirteenth to fifteenth of December, the Session of the Military College of the Highest Court in the USSR, under the chairmanship of comrade Ulrich and members Rychkov and Horyachev, examined the cases of:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Krushelnitsky Ivan | 15. Vlyzko Oleksy |
| 2. Krushelnitsky Taras | 16. Dmytriev Yevhen |
| 3. Skazynsky Roman | 17. Bohdanovych Adam |
| 4. Lebedynets Mychailo | 18. Butusov Porfiry |
| 5. Shevchenko Roman | 19. Butusov Ivan |
| 6. Karabut Anatoly | 20. Pyatnytsya Volodymyr |
| 7. Sydorov Petro | 21. Blachenko Yakiv |
| 8. Skrypy-Kozlovsky Hryhory | 22. Polevy Domyunik |
| 9. Falkivsky Dmytro | 23. Choptyar Ivan |
| 10. Kosynka Strilets Hryhory | 24. Boretsky Petro |
| 11. Oksamyta Mychailo | 25. Lukyanov-Svitozarov Lern |
| 12. Shcherbyna Olexander | 26. Pivnenko Konstantyn |
| 13. Tereshchenko Ivan | 27. Matyash Sergy |
| 14. Burevy Konstantyn | 28. Lyashenko Olexander |

accused of the organization of terrorist actions against the workers of the Soviet government. The court established that the majority came to the USSR from Poland and some from Rumania, in order to commit a number of terrorist actions in the territory of the USSR. Fulfilling the decision of CVK USSR, on the first of December of this year and by articles No. 54-8, 54-11, KK USSR, the Session of the Military College of the Highest Court of USSR, condemned all the above mentioned persons to be shot and their property confiscated. The sentence has been executed." (TARS) "Visti" December 18, 1934.

Who were these twenty-eight men? The statement said that "The court established that the majority of the accused came to the USSR from Poland and some from Rumania". The truth is, that of twenty-eight, only eight had come to the USSR from Western Ukraine, which was then under Polish domination. These men believed the communist propaganda which trumpeted that the USSR was a true paradise and that Ukraine had become an Eldorado, a country of happiness and justice. They believed that Ukraine had become an independent socialist republic.

They thought that the long awaited socialist state was now a reality. This lie was believed by hundreds of others who finally went to the USSR, only to lose their lives.

These eight men were among those who believed in the land of happiness and justice. For that faith they were condemned.

Two brothers, Ivan and Taras Krushelnitsky, and Roman Skazynsky, were declared to be the worst of the criminal terrorists. Krushelnitskys and Skazinsky were well known in Western Ukraine. Their friends tried to persuade them that they were mistaken, misled, and that they were just helpless flies in the web of a cunning spider. But they did not heed the warnings, and they believed the Soviet lies. They believed because their people were oppressed by the foreign Polish Government. They felt the national humiliation deeply, and their hearts longed for liberty and justice. They were bewitched by the communist propaganda which painted attractive pictures and told wonderful stories about their own country and people under the Soviet rule.

When they first came to USSR the Soviet newspapers praised them to the skies. They were greeted as victims of Polish fascism. Their pictures were widely distributed and theatres showed the "happy men", who at last had found their true fatherland.

After the receptions ended, everyday Soviet life began. The "happy men" began to learn that they would have been happier under Polish "tyranny". They expressed their dissatisfaction. Others warned them and advised them to

get used to Soviet life. Finally, one day they spoke out boldly and an informer heard them. Summoned by the GPU they rejected the unjust accusations, and rebelled. The GPU arrested them. Two months later, Kirov was killed in Leningrad and they were classified as terrorists and shot. That is how all eight men perished. In this way the family of Krushelnitsky was wiped out. The two sons, Ivan and Taras, were shot as terrorists, and the grey-haired father and his beautiful young daughter were sent to Solovky to end their lives in the camps of the unexplored bushland of the north.

Who were the remaining twenty? They were Ukrainians from under the Soviet regime; members of the party, members of the Union of Communist Youth, or plain Soviet citizens of Ukrainian birth. Their crime was to want Ukraine to become an independent state.

Falkivsky Dmytro was born in 1898 in a family of poor peasants from Polissya. Before the revolution, he took part in revolutionary underground organizations. He joined the Red Army in 1920 and took part in the war against the Ukrainian National Government. When the Soviet Government was firmly established, he left the army and finally had an opportunity to discover the truth of the "revolutionary achievements". He realised that he had wasted his time and had needlessly shed the blood of his own people for the victory of the oppressor. He understood his mistake and protested. He too, fell victim to his former friends whom he now renounced without regret.

Olexa Vlyzko was the youngest of the twenty-eight. He was born in 1908, the son of a peasant, and as a member of the Union of Communist Youth, and a gifted poet, he was optimistic in his views. Educated in Soviet schools he knew very little about the heroic struggle of his people for liberty. In 1930 he travelled abroad, and what he saw opened his eyes, and made him realize the frightful oppression of his own people. Then he wrote an article entitled, "The Trains go to Berlin". In it he stated, "We never will forgive Moscow for the defeat of our greatest leader, and president (Hetman) Ivan Stepanovych Mazepa".

The Bolsheviks could not forgive such a sentiment, and had him shot without delay.

Among these victims, Kost Burevy stands out. He was a revolutionary who cherished the cause of social liberation above everything else.

I would also like to mention a few writers, and young scientists; Michael Lebedynets, Roman Shevchenko, Ivan Tereshchenko, Konstantyn Pivnenko, Sergy Matyash, Olexander Lyashenko. All these men belonged to the Ukrainian intelligentsia, which, in spite of the fact that it was educated under Soviet influence, always cherished the idea of an independent Ukrainian nation. They fought for this independence and sacrificed their lives for it. A special place is reserved among these men for Hryhory Kosynka, one of the most outstanding Ukrainian writers. He believed that Ukraine would live, and that in spite of tragedies, suffering and defeat, the Ukrainian people would build a free Ukraine. He never compromised with the Bolsheviks and he was one of the very few that would have dared, if an opportunity had offered itself, to throw a bomb under the feet of Stalin. However, the Kremlin dictator was too well guarded and, in the end, Kosynka also fell victim to the GPU.

These men were never terrorists, but were simply fighting for their people's freedom; for the right to live like human beings and not as beasts of burden.

As we read the news about the death of our friends, we grieved for them. Their suffering, our misery, and the sorrow of our people, were matters of indifference to the world. World democracy had given up the freedom-loving nations conquered by the numberless masses of Russian communists and their followers. The hope of democratic nations that the Bolsheviks would be satisfied with the blood and possessions of these unfortunate nations was not justified.

Nowadays the Red Dragon, fattened up on the blood of once free nations, is threatening the whole world again with slavery and death.

EVERYDAY LIFE ON SOLOVKY

With the approach of winter, a pale and warmless sun appeared above the Kremlin for only about two hours each day. The rest of the twenty-four hours was made up of either a continuous grey or, as winter wore on, a grey which darkened towards nightfall.

The sea-gulls, which had been our only consolation, had left the islands long ago.

Thousands of them came here every spring and in the autumn they flew away. They had become used to people, since the monks, for hundreds of years, had allowed them the freedom of the islands without molesting them. From time immemorial, it had been prohibited to kill them. The monks had loved them, and now the prisoners did too, especially since they were the harbingers of spring.

The first seagulls always came about the twenty-fifth of March. They would fly screaming over the Kremlin and sit on Uspensky Cathedral. They looked intently at the Kremlin as if to see if there were any changes, and then flew away.

Two weeks later the Islands would be filled with the peculiar noises of these white-bellied creatures with black wings. They occupied the Kremlin and settled on the window-sills of the prisoner's cells. We shared our food rations with them, and often fed them with fish from the "balanda".

After a while the seagulls began to pair off. When the time came to lay, the female found a suitable spot and produced two greenish-white eggs somewhat larger than those of a hen. The nesting place was never situated very high, but was usually on the ground, a large stone, or a path used by the prisoners. The female then sat on the eggs and the father provided food for her, and guarded the nest. The mother sat proudly on her offspring-to-be and hissed at all the prisoners that passed.

A silver fox called Katka, from a Solovky fox farm, was their enemy. She was almost domesticated and loved tit-bits. When the seagulls began to lay eggs she tried to get into the Kremlin by every means so as to feast on the eggs or young fledglings.

At the North Gates, the only entrance to the Kremlin, the guards were ordered not to allow her to sneak in, but sometimes she was able to fool them. However, her arrival was always announced immediately. From every direction, the seagulls, screaming hysterically, would fly at her and strike the ground with their wings. But they were afraid to attack her, and Katka, on her part, was not interested in the old birds. The prisoners always came to the assistance of the seagulls, driving Katka away. The guards, in such cases, were reprimanded for negligence.

The seagulls were not so noisy with the approach of the dark rainy autumn nights and their cries then sounded somewhat sad. I often shivered at night when I listened to them, reminded of the moans of a mortally sick child. Just before their departure from Solovky, their cries became unbearable, and when they left, the prisoners wished them a safe arrival at their winter quarters, as they did not want them to stay at Solovky where they would increase the sorrowful memories even more.

Doves and cheerful sparrows remained on the islands all year round. The sparrows, however, never enjoyed any privileges and hundreds were caught by the prisoners and boiled.

For killing a seagull, a prisoner was punished with three months in solitary confinement, but it often happened that hungry prisoners killed them in spite of the prohibition and the threat of severe punishment. The killing of muskrats before their maturity was also vetoed, but this rule too was violated.

Prisoners ate everything they could get their hands on. No rules or prejudices were considered so far as food was concerned. The men had returned to the rules of the primitive savage. They started eating rats and seagulls, and

ended with human beings. In some cases the animal instinct took the upper hand and the men became brutal beasts, while in other cases, they used all their spiritual resources to remain decent. In this place where everything, beast and man, holiness and blasphemy, laughter and tears, were mixed, we often witnessed the efforts of men trying to save their power and keep walking on the "straight and narrow path".

After the killing of Kirov, the population on Solovky Islands doubled. The regime became extremely severe. Silence reigned over everything. Hundreds of the older prisoners received additional sentences. I was transferred to the stalls which were built two miles from the Kremlin, near Varyazhske Lake. My task was to feed the calves, wash them, and clean the stalls. About three hundred calves were brought from the mainland in the autumn. They were the spoils of wholesale "collectivization".

Ivan Ivanovich loved to make unexpected visits to the calf stalls. Often in the dead of the night he would arrive, and, without greeting anyone, would investigate the condition of every corner and every calf. He would take a handkerchief as white as snow out of his pocket, and wipe the back of a calf from head to tail three times. After that he would go to the electric light and attentively look at the handkerchief. If it had any traces of dirt, he would curse everyone roundly, the prisoner in charge of the stalls would be sent for at least a week to solitary confinement; all the prisoners working in the stalls would be deprived of rations, and the man who had been looking after that particular calf would be mercilessly whipped on the spot by Ivan Ivanovich himself.

However, if there was no trace of dirt at all, Ivan Ivanovich would smile with satisfaction, and, without saying anything to anyone would drive away in his sleigh.

I again lived outside the Kremlin, while my friends from Pichuhy were inside. Sadovsky had been appointed watchman of the hay storage, and Tverskoy was working with a cart transport.

The silence which reigned in the Kremlin was interrupted occasionally by insane Kharytyna, a powerfully-built woman of Cossack origin. At times she was able to escape from the cells in the hospital, and create a commotion for a while. When she got free, she rushed from the cell, knocked down the guards at the doors of the hospital and, finding a stick or any weapon like that, hit everyone she saw in military uniform. The prisoners enjoyed watching Kharytyna chase the guards around. She had immense strength and was not easily subdued. After chasing all she felt inclined to, she would climb up on a huge pile of rubbish which had remained since the time Uspensky Sobor had been burned. On the top of the pile she would begin to sing as loud as she could:

“I will not wed Trotsky,
I will not wed Lenin,
But Don Cossack Kaledin”.

After she finished singing, Dr. Katayama, a Japanese who had spent many years on Solovky, would come from the hospital, dressed in a white dressing gown, and persuade her to return to her cell.

Kharytyna considered him a friend and, as a rule, agreed to follow him.

This pile of rubbish also attracted Father Klym, an old priest, mentally ill. When he had an attack of insanity he would climb the pile, and, tying a bast shoe to a string, pretended that it was a censor, and conduct a regular Greek Orthodox service. No one paid any attention to him, as he did not annoy anyone. Some prisoners thought that he was only pretending. There were many cases like that, when a prisoner saw no escape from the tortures of the GPU and would feign insanity.

TROTSKYISTS ON SOLOVKY

Some men were brought one night and lodged on the second floor of our building where the calf brigade was kept. One of them was a socialist-revolutionary, another a Zionist, still another a social-democrat and two were Trotskyists. At first we were strictly forbidden to meet them, but later, when the guards got used to it, they pretended not to see us meeting and talking with them. Among the newcomers, was Kharachinski, a man who belonged to the social-democratic party. He was brave, idealistic, and a very likeable person. Jewish by race, he was the nephew of Martov, the famous organiser of the social-democratic party in Russia. He never lost faith in democracy and its final victory

When we saw the hesitating and appeasing attitude of the English and Americans, our faith was shaken but we never lost hope. The Zionist was not much interested in social questions. He was a typical Jewish nationalist. He always said, “Money, wisdom and faith in the Jewish mission — this only will save us, where our sacred places are to be found, and where the blood of our people was shed, is the only solution of the problem”.

The most interesting of the new prisoners were the Trotskyists. The first Trotskyists appeared on the Solovky Islands in 1932. Until that time, the GPU had not dared to send men so closely related to them politically, to the concentration camps.

In Soviet Russia, the name “Solovky” meant an extreme measure of hatred for the communist regime. This was so in the times of the Czars and remained unchanged under the communists. The Solovky Islands were always a safe place for keeping all political opponents of the Russian government.

In the beginning, until the time of Trotsky’s departure from Soviet Russia, his followers were treated as political

prisoners. They were granted the right of meetings, and their cells were unlocked. They were allowed to criticize the government openly in the jails. At least 90 per cent of the Trotskyists were of Jewish origin.

After 1932, a large number of persons of other nationalities were arrested, but most of them had nothing in common with the true Trotskyists. The Trotskyists represented, not only a movement directed against Stalin, but also a kind of national Jewish movement, in their struggle for better conditions of life in the USSR. They thought that if a person of Jewish origin was at the head of the Soviet government then the Jewish people would be certain to have just treatment. They thought that Trotsky, one of the ablest men in Soviet Russia, would be the most suitable man for this purpose. At the beginning of the struggle, Joseph Utkin, a Jewish poet, in his novel, "The Story About Red Motyl", skilfully described the feelings of the Jews in the USSR during the revolution, when differences took place between Trotsky and Lenin. He wrote:

"And the days were babbling like the tradeswoman Maud,
And the Jews were arguing, yes or not.

Hopes were changed to doubts, joys into distress,

No, we said, for Lenin, but for Trotsky —yes".

Neither Lenin nor Trotsky guaranteed the Jews their money and possessions, but the Jewish people hoped that Trotsky, being one of their own race, would be more lenient with them. Stalin, when liquidating Trotsky, offered the Jews, Kahanovitch, with his four brothers instead, but the Jews had never liked Kahanovitch, and had always considered him an adventurer.

When Stalin liquidated his own wife, Alilueva, and married the sister of Kahanovitch, the Jews in Solovky considered it the lowest act he could have done, and a blot on a good Jewish name. The Trotskyists unanimously asserted that Kahanovitch was the instigator of Alilueva's death, and that her murder was manipulated by Stalin. This is one of the reasons why he persecuted the Trotskyists without mercy.

In 1931, before the appearance of Stalin's infamous letter to the editor of the journal "Proletarian Revolution" (nothing else but a direct command to liquidate all Trotskyists as enemies of the people) the communist authorities treated them with tolerance even in the prisons. At the close of 1931 a few hundred Trotskyists were imprisoned in Kholodnohorski Jail, almost all of them of the Jewish race. The prisoners were composed of people of different ages, from young girls, who were members of the communist youth organisations, to old communists, who had taken part in the revolutionary wars. Their cells were unlocked. They were allowed to meet in the prison corridors, but were prohibited to leave "Trotskyist corridor". Every night the prisoners gathered in the corridor to listen to lectures and speeches. They sang songs, and always included the singing of the Internationale.

Every night, they had a representation of news called the "Living Newspaper". "The Living Newspaper" usually criticized the measures of the Stalin clique in a very satirical way. They laughed at Stalin and openly told his blackest deeds, as well as those of his henchmen. They attacked all who followed Stalin without fear and always finished the meetings with a humorous song which they would sing without restraint. I remember some of the verses of this song:

"Greetings to you, Uncle Stalin,

Ai, ya, ya,

Lenin's Will by you was stolen

Ai, ya, ya,

Good-night to you, Lord Bukharin,

Ai, ya, ya,

Half worker and half baron,

Ai, ya, ya,

Good-night to you, Kahanovitch,

Ai, ya, ya,

You traitorous Cainovich,

Ai, ya, ya."

Etc.

Trotskyists were sent to Solovky in 1932, but, at that time, all of them were given privileges, which the other prisoners did not have. They could demand better conditions from any island authority, threatening a hunger strike if they did not get them. The authorities, fearful of trouble, would try to pacify them. The Trotskyists were kept separately in small groups on different Solovky islands. They were prohibited to communicate with one another. In the spring of 1935 they decided to start a hunger strike, with the demand that they be allowed to live together, and move around freely. After getting in touch with one another, they simultaneously started the strike. Ivan Ivanovich Ponamarev, chief warden of the islands, who, up till then, had been very considerate to all their demands, changed his method. He ordered them to be brought to the fortress and put in hospital cells. When the chief of the third department came, they would not even speak to him, but demanded that Ponamarev, himself, should come. Ponamarev did not come, but sent a number of strong guards who tied them up, put them on carts, and brought them to the fortress. All the groups were dealt with in this way.

Andrey Andreivich, a former member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, was appointed to supervise the strikers. He was a Serbian, and an outstanding communist, very active in the Balkans, Greece and Italy. In 1928 he was sent for similar work to Turkey. But the Turkish government did not dilly-dally with communists, and Andreivich was imprisoned in Istanbul and later returned to Soviet Russia. In 1929 there was a heated debate in the Comintern concerning the position of Trotsky, and Andrey Andreivich dared to disagree. Without much ado he was jailed in Butyrky and in 1934 was sent to Solovky. He did not have any privileges and was treated like the rest of the prisoners. It was then that he was ordered to supervise the strikers.

Later on, Popov came to Solovky. He was the chief of NKVD, the secret political department of the infamous

Bilomorsky-Baltisky concentration camp. He tried to persuade the Trotskyists to stop the hunger strike as it was useless, but they refused. After that, Popov called Andrey Andreivich and told him that he would be very pleased if he would spy on the Trotskyists and report to him what they said. Popov suggested that this service might alter Andreivich's fate somewhat. He added that Andreivich, in spite of his imprisonment was considered to be a communist and therefore should be willing to work for the victory of communism. Andreivich answered that there was no doubt about his being a communist, but as long as he was imprisoned, he was, in the first place, a jail inmate. And he would not report any other prisoner, no matter what their convictions were. He said that for himself and all the rest of the prisoners, the real enemy was Popov himself.

"You are the enemy, not the Monarchists, Trotskyists, Nationalists and all the others with whom the prison cells are packed." Popov did not like the answer, but said; "It is your business and I will not order you to do it" and, to the great surprise of Andreivich, earnestly shook his hand. The same night, Stolypin, brother of Arcadi Stolypin, former minister of internal affairs in Imperial Russia, was assigned to the job, although it is not known if he agreed to be a spy. Shortly after, Popov left Solovky and the Trotskyists continued their hunger strike. After a week, two of them died. Those who did not lose consciousness would not give in. On the ninth day, one more died. Then one of them suggested that the hunger strike be ended, that he would not continue on strike, and finally signed a declaration to that effect. The strike was broken and 177 Trotskyists remained alive. For two weeks they were kept in the same hospital cells. Then one night they were transferred to the lowest and most remote cells in the Solovky prison and were never heard of again.

After these real Trotskyists were liquidated, the prisoners were stirred up by another example of the inhuman brutality of Stalin's henchmen. In one of the wings of the third isolation prison, about two hundred young girls,

who had been high school scholars at Leningrad, were kept.

They were also alleged Trotskyists. These children had been brought to Solovky by aeroplane. The men who lived in the fortress occasionally had the chance to see these children, as they were led in groups, heads covered by hoods, to the fortress bath. These baths were built purposely inside the fortress, so that it would not be necessary to take the prisoners outside. These girls were from 14 to 17 years old. The prison guards and the attendants at the bath house were all men. The children were taken to the baths at night, and, as it became known later, this building was a place of unspeakable horrors and suffering for them. They were taken in groups of 40 or 50, as the bath house was small. They were met by intoxicated NKVD men and other representatives of the "revolutionary law". What they did to these children is hard for a normal person to imagine. All kinds of the most horrible rumours were circulated among the prisoners. It was known for certain that every time they were taken to the bath house, two or three dead bodies were brought to the prison morgue. The authorities gave the explanation that they were killed while attempting to escape. These children were treated so brutally, that when they were visited by Popov, they were so frightened that they did not dare tell him how they were used by the NKVD men.

How long this inhumanity and brutality would have continued, it is hard to tell. But in June, when the Arctic "white nights" began, a group of these little girls, led by a strong detachment of guards to the bath house, all at once tore off their hoods when they came to the central path, and, with hysterical cries and calls for help, ran in every direction. The shouting was so loud that all the prisoners were awakened and their faces could be seen at the barred windows. The guards began to shoot at the men in the windows and at the girls.

Then Ponamarev, the chief warden, and Trubetskoy, the commandant of the fortress, appeared. The little girls shouted with all the strength they had, about what had been

done to them in the bathhouse. Trubetskoy, crazy with rage, shouted, ordering them to keep quiet. One of the girls, evidently out of her mind, climbed on a tall ladder, and screamed with all the strength that was left in her. Then some guards ran to the ladder and pulled it down, with the girl still on it. In the meantime, the guards caught the rest of the girls took them back to the isolation wing of the prison. Ponamarev and Trubetskoy knew that all this might end badly for them, as they had enemies among other communist officials. A commission was sent to Solovky. The girls told the truth this time, but they did not say anything against Ponamarev and Trubetskoy. They did not give any evidence that these two had also taken part in the "heroic communist deeds" in the bath house.

Four men, all of them minor officials, were shot as a result of the investigation of the commission. So at least partial justice was meted out, but the root and source of the evil remained.

"DO YOU HEAR, MY BROTHER?"
(From A Ukrainian Song)

After this tragic event with the juvenile Trotskyists everything continued in its usual way. At 5 o'clock in the morning the siren sounded, the guards shouted "Hurry up! Hurry up!" and the prisoners, cursing, went to work.

All those of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, who had not been arrested before the killing of Kirov were gathered in Solovky by the summer of 1935. The most outstanding representatives of Ukrainian science, literature and art were among the prisoners on the islands.

Since 1775, when the Russian army liquidated the Cossack Knighthood of Zaporozhskays Sich (the last bulwark of Ukrainian National Independence) Solovky had always been the safest place to keep the mutinous Ukrainians. The Russian communists did not invent anything new but only developed the practice of the Czar's Government on a larger scale.

Dying in the solitary cells, shot and tortured in the cellars of the GPU, or killed by inhuman labour and starvation, Ukrainians on Solovky always remembered their Motherland and the undying fight for freedom. That is why the best loved song on Solovky was a sad but beautiful tale of the Ukrainian Liberation Army (Sichovy Striltsi) in Western Ukraine. For generations, Western Ukrainians had been separated from the rest of their country, but they did not forget the old national ties and, in the days of the great Ukrainian president, Symon Petlura, they united with Greater Ukraine on January 22nd, 1919.

The song "Do you hear, my brother?" was sung by the Ukrainians on Solovky every time they received news about the death of a Ukrainian prisoner or about executions in Ukraine.

The prisoners of all other nationalities, who were also imprisoned with us, knew that we are sorrowing for those who had sacrificed their lives in the cause of Ukrainian

liberty, when they heard us singing "Do you hear, my brother?"

Every Ukrainian province was represented on Solovky. The sons of our Motherland were sent by the Russian Communists to the remotest parts of the Russian Empire. There was no place in the USSR, no matter how far removed or unsuitable for human life, where Ukrainians did not form the majority of the prisoners.

All these men are our sacrifice in the cause of independence and liberty. I know that these lines, written with blood, will always be like a voice calling in the wilderness.

The images of these countrymen often appear before my mind. Some of them are already dead, while some are dying in the struggle for the right to live like human beings and not as beasts of burden.

I recall particularly a famous Ukrainian professor of geography and a member of the Academy of Sciences, Stepan Rudnitsky, whose works have been translated into English and German. He always sat near the box-stove in the corner of the cell behind some hanging rags.

This old scientist was accused, tortured and condemned as a Ukrainian terrorist and spy, while the truth is, that if any one had given him a thousand experienced spies and millions of dollars, he would not have known what to do with them. However, why should the Russian communists care? It was enough that this scientist had dared to call himself a Ukrainian, and was not loud enough in his praises of Stalin. For those crimes he was dying behind a pile of rags.

In another corner, Mykola Zerov, a scientist, and expert on ancient poetry and literature, spent his time. This man, who was a first-rate literary critic and an outstanding poet completely consecrated to his art, was accused of planning to kill Stalin and of organising an insurrection against the communist regime. These accusations also included charges of selling Ukraine to Hitler, as well as diversions of sabotage and terrorism. These charges were ridiculous, as Zerov would not kill a fly.

When thousands of men began to come to Solovky, accused of spying, terrorism, and so on, and when I met others in concentration camps of the USSR, most of them were completely innocent of all the crimes to which they had confessed. I never condemned them for their "confessions". For a western mind, it is simply impossible to imagine the diabolical mental and physical methods of torture used by the GPU to extract confessions.

The fact that I was able to withstand the "examinations" does not condemn others who confessed.

The Russian communists were not the inventors of forced confessions, but only perfected the practice of the older tyrants. All the tyrants of ancient, medieval and modern times demanded "confessions" from their victims, and if their prisoners refused to "confess" brutal tortures were applied. No one can equal Russian communists in the scientific perfections of their methods of extracting "confessions." Why did the tyrants need confessions, since as a rule they would destroy their victims, no matter whether they confessed or not? This subject should be studied by experts in pathological psychology. It is hard to imagine a greater perversion of authority or a greater abuse of human dignity.

I believe that the majority of the twenty-eight Ukrainian leaders shot by communists really signed the "confessions" stating that they had done everything the GPU accused them of doing. Future historians reading the files of the CH.K.-GPU-NKVD-MVD will never take these confessions seriously.

I mention only two of my countrymen, who were outstanding men, but there were many others. Scientists, painters, artists, statesmen and hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian workers and peasants who refused to bend before foreign oppression. They were all brought to the Russian North or Solovky Islands as prisoners.

There they march with saws and axes, with logs on their shoulders. They cart stones, earth and sand on primitive

wheel-barrow and are forced to build and slave for the enemy. Many of them die there, sending their last farewell to sunny Ukraine, and cursing their torturers.

They die with hope and faith that Ukraine will live; that their sweat, blood and suffering will not be in vain; that the time will come when Justice will measure out the punishment to the murderers for the blood and shame of their crucified wives, mothers and children.

Les Kurbas, a great and original producer and manager of the Ukrainian theatre, boldly proclaimed that the theatrical art should independently seek its own path. He said that this path should lead to Western Europe without the interference or mediation of Moscow. Due to his efforts the Ukrainian theatre ceased to ape Moscow styles and methods. Long before Khvyliovy, (who proclaimed in the face of the enemy, his brave, "Away from Moscow") was killed, he was sent for the same type of ideas to a concentration camp. His work and philosophy became the watchword for all the oppressed nations behind the iron curtain.

Olexa Slisarenko was the man who dared to challenge the personal friend of Stalin, the worst of the tyrants, Maxim Gorky.

He openly wrote: "We are sent on an evil way by evil forces", and added that he did not care whether or not a man with a little soul, and a lackey by nature like Maxim Gorky, recognized the Ukrainian language. He said that he was indifferent to this tyrant's views because he, Slisarenko, had forty million Ukrainian people of a culture a thousand years older than the Russian culture, standing behind him.

"It really does not matter what the Russian imperialist, Maxim Gorky, thinks about the Ukrainian people", he said.

For these statements, Slisarenko was named a fascist, terrorist and a spy. He was sent to Solovky for torture and death.

A famous Ukrainian playwright, Mykola Kulish, was slowly dying in solitary confinement on Solovky. He had developed T.B. as a result of starvation, hard labour and

torture. Maxim Gorky and the GPU could gloat that this important dramatist, whom even the antagonistic Russian press could not ignore, was near death.

There also, we find an outstanding Ukrainian historian, Joseph Hermaidze, a former professor of Kiev University. Dressed in old bast shoes and rags, with a shovel over his shoulder, he marched in the ranks of prisoners. Matvy Yavorsky, a member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and famous Ukrainian historian, renounced his communism and his former illusions. He was sent to Solovky for eight years. When his term ended he wrote a letter to Stalin saying that as long as Ukraine was ruled by the Russians, he would refuse to leave the prison. He underwent terrible tortures, but told the GPU to their faces that he was their mortal enemy, and would never compromise with them. Because all Ukraine was in jail, he as a son of his people did not want any other fate but the one shared by them.

Canadian communists should see the well-known Ukrainian communist and writer, Myroslav Irchan. He always wore a leather coat and hat, the only privilege he was allowed on Solovky. Others had to wear prisoner's coat and bast shoes. He is repentant now, but it is too late. Irchan had worked faithfully and fanatically to spread communism in Canada and the USA. Thousands of Ukrainians in Canada, USA and Poland listened to him and went to the USSR only to perish there without a trace.

Irchan walked in deep sorrow. He cursed his fate, his faith and those who had misled him. He knew that thousands of people whom he had enticed to go to Soviet Russia were cursing him now, and it is possible that this was the main reason for his sadness.

On certain occasions, one could see at Ambarna, a remote work point of Solovky, Poloz, the former minister of finances of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. There he fished for "devils", a small slimy fish, unfit to be eaten, but considered edible by the prisoners. At one time Poloz opposed the government of the Ukrainian People's Republic, feeling that it was too conservative. He felt that

the time was ripe for a world revolution and the coming of the kingdom of God on earth. On Solovky he learned about the true aspect of communism. He died in solitary confinement.

His friend and leader, Olexander Shumsky, was sent at first to Moresplav, the entrance camp of Solovky. From there he was taken, with a special detachment of guards, to Moscow for examination. He was either imprisoned there in the secret solitary cells of NKVD jail or shot. He was never heard of again.

Shumsky was accused by the GPU of spying, fascism and underground work against the Russian Soviets. Shumsky, with Poloz had organized a Ukrainian Communist Party in opposition to the Russian controlled Communist Party of Bolsheviks in Ukraine. He demanded that the latter should be liquidated. He called it an organisation of occupants. Shumsky called those Ukrainians who supported that party "traitors, contemptible little Russians, and renegades". He organised and led the movement for the separation of Ukraine from Russia, calling the Russian communists "representatives of Russian chauvinism and imperialism."

Shumsky, together with all Ukrainians of left-Marxian conviction, was sent to slave camps for these "traitorous" ideas. Many were executed without mercy because they dared to be, not only communists, but also Ukrainian patriots. No communist has a right to love his country. He must be a lackey of Moscow. Stalin tolerated only those communists who were ready to betray their own country. The communists of the world must know that they will share the fate of Shumsky, Khvyliovy, Poloz and thousands of other patriots, who, when faced with demands of betrayal of their own country, either committed suicide, like Skrypnyk and Khvyliovy, or were liquidated by Stalin.

The communist parties in different countries nowadays, whose leaders are chosen by Moscow are nothing but organizations of spies and traitors who work for Russia. They are the betrayers of their own countries no matter how they

excuse themselves. Their black deeds will become manifest in the end, but they should not be allowed to practice their criminal activities openly.

Although Stalin exterminated Ukrainian leaders, he was never able to exterminate the eternal longing for freedom. In Ukraine there were mighty uprisings, sabotage of bridges and powerhouses, and battles between the Ukrainian underground armies and the occupans.

During the thirty years of Soviet Russian occupation of Ukraine all the older generation has been destroyed. The new generation is educated and trained in Stalin's schools. But this does not help the Kremlin dictators. The new Ukrainian generation is just as full of the longing for freedom as their fathers were. The Russian Politburo has to repeat the frightful persecutions and send unruly Ukrainians to slave camps or have them shot. This struggle will always be permanent and unavoidable. In the name of justice, humanity and a respect for human right, all civilised nations should help Ukrainians to free their Motherland from Russian occupation. Wars and misery will not end until those dominated by Russia are freed.

FATHER NIKODIM

One day we were all startled by the report of Father Nikodim's death. Father Nikodim had been born in the family of a rich Archangel burgher. He was the only child in the family and one day became dangerously ill. When near death his devout parents, on their knees, begged St. Zosyma and St. Savaty, the founders of Solovky monastery, to save his life.

If he lived they promised to consecrate him to be a monk in the Solovky monastery for life. The boy did recover and when he was thirteen years old he was led, bitterly crying, into the Kremlin, and the gates closed behind him. From that day on he was cared for by an old monk, a man known for his knowledge of prayers, liturgy and the Holy Scriptures. It so happened that the old monk had become a monk in the same manner as the young boy. He knew what was taking place in the boy's heart, and decided to destroy his love for the sinful world which was now lost to him forever. He wanted to fill him, instead, with a love of the monastery and the Holy Virgin.

An experienced teacher, he began to introduce the child, step by step, to the new mode of life and thought. Soon the dark long Solovky winter came and the young novice, praying with the old monk before the austere ikon of the Virgin Mary (painted according to the Solovky style) began to forget the other world beyond the sea.

Solovky had many interesting tales, curious relics, and well-known places that had gathered fame during the past centuries. All these things together with the fatherly attitude of the old monk took the place of his home and native shores.

But one day seagulls appeared above the Kremlin. Their arrival made the young boy sad and restless, and when the first ship entered the Solovky harbour of Blagopoluchie, and was met by a sacred procession with holy

banners and images, the young novice could not stand it any longer. The old memories and desires of the happy days at home awakened with the new power in him. His heart was filled with the desire to see his relatives and his home. He wished, at least, to be able to go to the harbour and see the ship, but he was not allowed to leave the Kremlin. When he did ask his guardian's permission to go, the old man only looked coldly at him and told him to go and pray.

With a sorrowing and painful heart, the novice secretly climbed under the roof of Uspensky Sobor in the Kremlin and looked with longing eyes towards the forbidden shores and liberty. Soon his eyes were blinded by tears and he began to sob as bitterly as he had done on his first day at Solovky.

He stood on a high tower, crying and praying for delivery. Then he looked at the ikons of St. Zosyma and St. Savaty painted on the wall of the refectory. He shivered with fear, but straightened, and shook his fists at them.

"It is you who keep me here behind these grim walls, you cursed ones", shouted the youngster, in his rage pulling the iron ring fastened around the tower.

Frightened by his blasphemy, the unhappy boy became numbed with fear. He felt that the wrath of God was ready to fall on him at any moment. He recalled the secret wells, deep holes, underground passages and dark solitary cells, filled with skeletons still chained with rusty fetters by their necks to the walls. They had died as heretics and unclean blasphemers in those cells and had not even been buried. The more he thought about it the more his soul became filled with fear.

"No! No! St. Zosyma and St. Savaty, forgive me! I did not think. The devil tempted me. Yes, it was the devil", thought the youngster, and stumbling and falling, he ran down the stairs. In the cathedral, falling on his knees he prayed to the Virgin Mary, asking her to forgive him his grave sin. Late at night, he came to the cell of his guardian, and, falling to his feet, confessed his sin. The old man lifted

the youngster, sighed and told him to add oil in the lamp before the ikons. Then together they prayed for hours to the Holy Virgin.

Many times he was tempted to rebel but prayer, fasting and work subdued his unruly young nature and yearning.

Years later, the novice took the habit and his name was changed to Nikodim. His guardian could now die peacefully. His charge had become the type of man he wanted him to be. Nikodim was silent, devout, loved his work, and had an outstanding executive ability. After some years, he was appointed the administrator of all the enterprises and properties of the monastery. It included the electrical powerhouses, ships, stores and foreign trade.

Nikodim was now tall, with broad shoulders, and was unusually strong. His head was covered with greying hair and he had a large red beard.

Father Nikodim was sixty-five years old when the revolution exploded in Russia. The news about the revolution was altogether unexpected. The monks had lived a secluded life, and most of them were illiterate. They were far away from the world and the places which were in turmoil.

The prior conducted a long service with supplications for the victory of the Russian State and Czar. In a long sermon, he recalled the past struggles and successes of the Solovky monastery, and stressed the independence of this place founded by Zosyma and Savaty. After the service he summoned Father Nikodim to plan for the future.

The abilities of Father Nikodim underwent a severe trial. He was successful and the first waves of revolution recoiled from the wall-like will of the two men. But in the end the communists occupied the islands. However, fortune did not favour them yet, and the Reds had to give way to the English navy. It was clear that Solovky had to accept protection of one of the great powers. The English government evacuated Solovky to England, where a Solovky hostel had already existed in London for some time. The immense work of the evacuation was the responsibility of Father

Nikodim. When everything was ready, he declared that he would remain on Solovky. All the threats and persuasions of the prior, as well as the requests of the monks were to no avail. The prior had no choice but to bless him and a few monks, who had also asked to be allowed to remain on the islands.

"I do not believe," said Nikodim, "that the Holy Virgin will allow these devils to rule over our cloister. I am certain that soon the time will come when I will welcome you back to the monastery just like the father received the prodigal son in the Bible."

A handful of monks remained with Nikodim to defend the glory, honour and possessions of the monastery. However the strength of the contending sides was unequal and communists overran the islands. They searched for the treasures and tortured the monks to make them tell where they were hidden. Nikodim, himself, was imprisoned and tortured in the very cells which had frightened his imagination when he was a young boy. The monastery was turned into a jail later on and its first prisoner was Father Nikodim. The number of monks slowly diminished and at the end, only he remained. Pale from torture and suffering, he found satisfaction in praying before the ikon of the Virgin Mary. He gave the impresson of a saint to all the prisoners. Every day he made the round of the Kremlin as if he were its rightful owner. He always entered Uspenksy Cathedral (burned in 1941) and prayed before the ikons, after which he would visit the refectory and cross himself before the ikon of Zosyma and Savaty. Then he would go to the monastery mill, shake his head, and complete his round at the northern wall of the Cathedral, where the outstanding benefactors of the monastery were buried. He would kiss the images on the cold gravestones and stand there a while, thinking about past glories of the monastery, and gathering strength to bear more torture.

Father Nikodim completely ignored all orders of the authorities. He would never agree to any changes of the Kremlin buildings. He always strongly objected to all

changes and excommunicated those who ordered them. When he was told that now he had nothing to do with the monastery and that the real authority was the governor of the island, he said that the real authorities were St. Zosyma and St. Savaty and that, by the mercy of the Holy Mother of God, he was in charge of the monastery. To him there could be no other authorities.

All this made an impression on the prisoners, and the officials had no choice but to imprison him. For eleven years, Father Nikodim lived in the prison. One day a guard came, and told him that he would have to leave the island the next day and that he should pack up his belongings. Even a declaration that he would be shot could not have made such an impression as the announcement of his departure. Here he had spent all his life, tears and labours. Here was his joy, the ikon of the Virgin Mary. Those things were precious and holy to him.

Father Nikodim, leaning heavily on his staff, went for the first time through the North Gates to the "White House" the residence of the new authority. When he entered the building, Nikodim pushed open the door leading into the office of the governor of the island. He made the sign of the cross turning towards the corner of the room, where in times past the ikons had usually hung. Now a picture of the GPU commissar, Dzerzhinsky, hung in thier place. Falling on his knees before the governor he cried, "Why are you driving me from my house?"

"Take away this scarecrow", shouted the new authority, Ivan Ivanovich. The guards threw Nikodim out of the building. Then the poor old man fainted. At night, the prisoners, returning from work helped him to his cell. He did not say a word, but crossing the threshold, fell on his kness before the ikon and began to pray.

Early in the morning when the guards came to take him to the ship, they found his dead body lying before the ikon of the Virgin Mary.

HUMOUR ON SOLOVKY

Life on Solovky continued without colour or meaning. But the prisoners had to live, and that meant not only tears but laughter too. And we did laugh on occasion, though it was bitter, and at times, wild.

Maxim Gorky attached great importance to the criminals in Soviet Russia.

He became the creator of a GPU ideology of "remaking", and not less than half the communal institutions for juveniles were named in honour of this "humanitarian". The proclamations of Gorky hung side by side with the GPU orders in concentration camps, jails, and prisons for juvenile criminals. The authorities treated juvenile criminals with consideration and organized all kinds of lectures for them. Once in 1935, these so called "socially related" prisoners were gathered to discuss Maxim Gorky's letter to all prisoners of Soviet Russia. The contents of this letter did not differ much from the similar proclamations of the NKVD. However, the authorities were trying to interest the criminal element in these letters with the purpose of enlisting them as informers. In most cases the criminals did not justify the hopes of Gorky or the NKVD.

Vaska Bilov, an incorrigible criminal, never worked, but stayed at Solovky cheerfully, as if he were at home. His favourite saying was, "All we need is luck, and we spit at the weather".

During one of these discussions Vaska got up, and said, "Fellows, there is nothing to talk about. Don't you see that this Gorky is an old fool; that he has lost his mind from old age and thinks that he can fool us. Let him come here and try to live on "Zaichiki" or "Valdaichiki". Then he will start singing another song".

"You are right, Vaska", shouted the juveniles. The local chief of the NKVD tried to persuade Vaska that he did not understand the letter, but Vaska asserted that he

did. The whole affair ended with Vaska being imprisoned for three days in a cell, and the criminals were never called together again.

The case of Kost Mamonov put Gorky in a different light. Kost Mamonov had received his training according to the instructions of Gorky and NKVD in a communal institution near Moscow. He learned there to dance "chichotka", to tattoo and to steal watches and necklaces from people.

When the radio brought the news to Solovky about the death of Gorky and all the USSR was mourning, Kost Mamonov sat in the Solovky "barber shop" and told his friends why he had been sent to Solovky.

It happened this way. When Stalin and Gorky were able to beguile the French writer, Romain Rolen, to visit Moscow, a great reception was organized in his honour. He came with his wife, who was wearing an expensive necklace. Gorky also invited Kost Mamonov and his friend to this dinner to demonstrate to Romain Rolen and his wife, the educational achievements of the Soviet Reform Institutions. Kost Mamonov and his friend danced excellently and were treated with wine and a good meal. Romain Rolen shook their hands and everybody looked happy. However, Kost Mamonov, in spite of the fact that the place was filled with secret agents, succeeded in stealing the necklace of Madame Rolen.

Gorky and the other high authorities were embarrassed beyond measure. These young men, educated in the Soviet reform institutions and represented as an example of the achievements of their system of education, had succeeded not only in stealing the necklace, but in escaping and disposing of it. All Moscow NKVD was alerted. After a week Kost was caught drunk, but minus the necklace. This was a typical example of the love of the juveniles for their "great educator" and "humanitarian". Indeed the scholars were worthy of their educator.

Another humorous incident happened in 1927 in a Special Corps of the Kholodnohorsky Jail at Kharkiv. The

population of this jail was made up of Ukrainian socialist-revolutionaries, Ukrainians who had supported the president, Simon Petlura, Georgian socialist-democrats, Ukrainian and Russian priests, and other political prisoners. The warden of the jail was a good-natured but illiterate self-made man. Once he came into the cell and told the prisoners that he had laid in store a large quantity of millet.

"Boys, I have stored plenty of millet", he said. "Now sit in the jail and eat it". After that, the prisoners nicknamed him "Millet".

The date of the celebration of ten years of revolution was nearing. The news spread that the jail would be visited by a foreign delegation of workers. The jail underwent a transformation. It was whitewashed, painted and cleaned. It began to look almost like a sanatorium. The political prisoners asked "Millet" to give them paper, pencils, and paint. They said that they wanted to decorate their cells with watchwords and pictures for the occasion. The warden was immensely pleased. Now, he thought, his reform methods were bringing results and even the political prisoners, a continual source of trouble, had begun to show signs of improvement by coming to him with such sound requests.

He brought them a good supply of materials and the political prisoners began to work. They painted placards and wrote watchwords. The watchwords were written in Ukrainian, Georgian, German and Russian languages. The warden would come daily and seeing the prisoners at such a patriotic work was extremely pleased. At last the day of the celebrations came. As had been rumoured, the delegation of foreign workers came to visit our jail. NKVD agents, dressed as plain-clothes men, acted as their guides. The warden "Millet" first took the delegation to the cell of the political prisoners. He opened the door wide and stood with an expression of triumph. He was very happy when he noticed that the guests had begun to write down in their note-books the watchwords prepared by the prisoners. Suddenly one of the guides approached the warden and

began to whisper to him with a severe expression on his face. The eyes of the warden opened wide with fear and he became deadly pale. Trembling, he could not support himself, and sat down right where he had been standing. All the watchwords, instead of being patriotic were anti-communist. The mildest of them proclaimed that "The victors do not revenge". The warden, for his "educational achievements", was demoted and the prisoners were mercilessly "examined". When the examining judge asked the author of the watchword "The victors do not revenge" how he dared to write such an insinuation, the prisoner asked him if it would have been better if he had written: "The victors revenge themselves". The examining judge had nothing to say, as this was no better than the first.

The criminal element always tried to escape from work. As a rule they refused to do any and received only 300 grams of bread a day. As this was very little, they stole the food of other prisoners, concentrating especially on the political ones. The authorities had a lot of trouble with them when they tried to send them to work

Once when the prisoners were assigned to their respective tasks the guards could not find two of the criminal prisoners. Finally the foreman looked into the morgue. There lay two corpses. He closed the door and was ready to go away when suddenly he heard a voice saying, "The reptile has gone". The foreman took a stick and entered the morgue again. There lay the two immovable "corpses". It was cold and quiet. Without saying a word he hit them with the stick. This immediately brought them to life. Getting up, the prisoners began to shout that the foreman had no right to hit dead people. Then they followed him to work. If the authorities did succeed in sending the criminals to work, they did not do anything, but just whiled the time away. As a privileged class, they could get away with anything, but it was altogether different with the political prisoners.

When a new party of prisoners came to the camp some of them were able to have a little of their clothing. To

such prisoners a youngster would come and ask politely, "Uncle, would you like to buy some bread?" The prisoner, always hungry, was glad of the chance to get some. The youngster showed him a barrack, and offered to take him there. A few minutes later the man would be thrown out in his underwear. The leaders of the criminal gangs in the camps extorted all the rations of bread they wanted from the prisoners in charge of the rations who then had to divide the remainder among the rest. The women prisoners who became "wives" of a pachan (leader of a criminal gang) were able to dress just as they had dressed when free.

GRANDFATHER PUSHKAR

"Do not stoop like that, grandfather!" said Neshchadimenko to Pushkar, an old grey-haired blacksmith.

"I wish I didn't have to, but hard labour and years have curved me to the ground. People often told me that I should not work too hard with a hammer, as, in any case, I could not forge here a better fate for Ukraine than chains."

"Always strive ahead and not backward" said Neshchadimenko.

"Think these thoughts, son, but what of it? I hammered for ten years and seventeen days at slave labour. Ten years, son. You know yourself what that means. We produced enough logs and lumber for all Europe. I worked in the brigades which cut down trees. There were so many prisoners, but of them all, only two remain. Each of the nineteen brigades had forty men. How many prisoners would that be, in all?"

"Seven hundred and sixty", answered Neshchadimenko.

"Of these seven hundred and sixty, only I and legless Zbarazhsky are left. All the rest have perished, and you say, 'do not bend'. There was no one to defend us. Most of the prisoners were strong men, but when they were driven into the bush and tortured, no matter how strong a man was, he could not last. We even tried to send messages with our own blood; on the logs that were sent to Europe, we wrote, 'Save us from communist tortures'.

"When the authorities found these prayers on the logs they tried to find the brigade which had been loading the wood and after identifying the group, would shoot at least five men for propaganda against the Soviet Government.

"A large number of prisoners tried to hide themselves on the ships which took lumber to England, but most of them were found and shot".

"Not everyone, father. I heard that two prisoners

escaped in this way to England and have written a book about Solovky, about its tortures and death.”

“It is possible, although I did not hear about it. I see, my son, that if we write our sorrows with blood, nothing will come out of it. It is necessary to build up our own strength. I received a letter from home, when the terror after Kirov’s death had abated. The letter had been kept for half a year until Ivan Ivanovich and Trubetskoy had become tired of torturing and killing the prisoners.

“They wrote that my granddaughter, Oryshka, had already parachuted twice from an aeroplane. Our younger generation is our future strength. It is growing. It is not tears or pleading that will liberate Ukraine. It will be done by our parachutists, our tank regiments, our air force and army. It does not matter that they are trained by the Russians. When the time comes nothing will remain of Russian influence.

“I think that you have heard that the Russian Emperor Peter the First had a cat. It was so well-trained that when the Czar was writing the cat held the inkstand for him. One day, the Czar’s jester, Balakirev, showed the cat a mouse. The cat forgot his training, dropped the inkstand on the Czar’s papers, and ran after the mouse. The same will happen with Ukraine, my son. I am certain that Ukraine will be free, no matter what Moscow will do to us and our youth. All their efforts to turn the Ukrainian youth into traitors will fail. It is like the Czar’s training of the cat, our real nature will show itself in the end.”

I listened to these two prisoners, the old Solovky veteran, Pushkar, and the recently-arrived young engineer and ship-builder Neshchadimenko. I came to the Solovky smithy and waited for the shovels, spades and picks made by the smiths for the calf stall where I was working. Pushkar was awaiting his release from Solovky and the young smith who knew the work well was getting ready to take it over.

“Liberty”, continued Pushkar, “to me means walking on the motherland again, praying to God, kissing the Ukrainian earth, and dying at last where my ancestors died.

My granddaughter has sent me new shoes. She sent them secretly, so that no one would know that she has a counter-revolutionary grandfather at Solovky. If the authorities at the school ever learned that, she would be expelled and sent to Siberia”. The eyes of the grandfather burned with a new fire, as he impatiently waited for the time when he would be called forward by the GPU and given a release paper.

A week later, grandfather Pushkar put on the new shoes, the suit provided for him by his son, and the fur hat he had treasured for ten years. He looked as if he were going to church at Easter. Then he went to the GPU offices. Before leaving the cell, according to the prisoners’ custom, he broke his spoon, signifying that he would not eat prison fare any longer. He divided all his meagre belongings among the other prisoners, and only took a wooden trunk, which had pictures of the Solovky Kremlin, the Holy Lake, Sekirna Mount and Uspensky Cathedral carved on the lid, made by himself and reinforced with iron.

“God help you, grandfather Pushkar”.

“Good-bye until we meet again in Ukraine”.

“Greet everyone from us”.

All the prisoners kissed him farewell. When the Northern Gates closed behind him everyone waved to him, and wished, “May God help you, my grey-haired friend”.

Pushkar went to the GPU. From the GPU he had to go to the harbour where the ship was ready to leave in two hours. The time was passing. He was taken from one office to another. He knew that if he missed the ship he would have to spend one or two weeks in a distribution camp. However, he was ordered to give receipts for bast shoes, prisoner’s coat and other things. Pushkar asked the officials if they could not complete the formalities faster. They told him, “Never mind, grandfather, your ship is not going. It will wait for you”.

Pushkar said, “You say it will wait, but your laughing because you think you can fool me, an old man”.

“No, I am not laughing” said the GPU clerk. “Now let us go”. Pushkar saw that he was being taken by two guards.

He looked at them and asked, "If I am a free man, why do you need to guard me?"

"When you are free", said Onyshchenko, the chief of the GPU, "then you will go without the guards. Please sign this paper". And he read aloud to Pushkar, "The Central Commission of the Chief Administration of the State Security resolved to extend the time of imprisonment of Peter Nikolaevich Pushkar for five years, from the date of the proclamation of this decision. The decision was reached after the file of Peter Nikolaevich Pushkar, who was born September 15th, 1866, in the province of Poltava and was condemned according to articles 54-LO, 54-11 U.K. USSR for ten years at the Solovky prison camps, was considered".

Peter Pushkar sat down and began to cry. After a while he took the pen and signed his name to the paper.

"Thank you, thank you very much. I worked very hard these ten years and have received only five years of additional imprisonment. It is very generous of you".

"Come on, let us go, old man. It is your fate", urged the guard in a friendly manner. Onyshchenko turned away from Pushkar and looked at the corner where the yellow picture of Felix Dzerzhinsky, one of the creators of the GPU, was hanging.

Two weeks later I came to the smithy again. Neshchadyenko was hammering away instead of Pushkar.

"So now you are hammering".

"Yes, I am hammering. As our great writer, Franko, said, 'The smith hammers and sings, and calls us all to the smithy. Everyone must come from their homes and fields so that we can hammer ourselves a better fate'. Right now I am not hammering a better fate".

"Why"

"I have just received an order to make 1200 bars for the windows and there will be additional brigade of smiths. As it seems to me, there will be a new reform at Solovky".

"Did you say, master, they will make reforms?" laughed a young helper, as he sent sparks flying around him.

"They will reform us indeed. If it was easy for them to

'reform' the people's commissar Yagoda, it will not be hard for them to reform us also. Yesterday the guards brought a Czech from Medvezha Hora under a special guard, as if he had been a dangerous enemy. This Czech designed the monument to Yagoda for his building of the White Sea Baltic Canal. It was done on an order from Stalin. After the arrest of Yagoda it was necessary to take down the monument in one night. Because it was impossible to punish Stalin, the GPU took the Czech sculptor and sent him to Solovky".

"How did he take it?"

"He is too frightened to say anything. He keeps silent most of the time. In Czechoslovakia he belonged to a communist party and was a sculptor by profession. He came to Moscow tempted by prospects of a good salary and an opportunity to build a true socialism. However, things turned out differently, and the poor man is being 'educated over again' on Solovky".

"Well, it is not necessary to either sow or reap fools, since they grow so well themselves" concluded Maxym Ivanovich, the watchman at the smithy.

"A German was thrown into our cell yesterday", he continued. "He cannot speak either Ukrainian, Russian or Polish. He knows only German and French. He says that he was a secretary of the German communist party in the district of Hamburg. He came to Russia to the meeting of the Executive Committee to make a report. He told them that the majority of the members of the communist party in his district had joined the National Socialist Party of Hitler.

"Everything looked all right. He made his report, had supper and went to sleep at the hotel "Metropol".

"In the morning he was at the Solovky airport. When he was taken to the Kremlin at the Northern Gates he was informed that he had been condemned to ten years of hard labour for spying on behalf of Hitler's Germany.

"He behaves like a helpless calf stares around and cannot understand why he was taken to Solovky."

"Never mind, he will soon understand. The GPU will

not let him be ignorant for long. Ivan Ivanovich will give him such lectures about Karl Marx that he will never again even think about the dictatorship of proletarians. He will show him the dictatorship of a proletariat not in theory but in practice”.

“Let us go! Don’t you hear the whistle? Let us get our balanda”. The blacksmiths left everything and went to the Northern Gates while I went to the calf stalls.

On my way I met an old man whose head was covered with white hair, also going to the Kremlin for balanda. His face was beaming with joy and forgiveness. I bowed to him. He answered me with great friendliness and kindness. His old eyes shone with great joy.

“Why are you so glad, Mytrofan Ivanovich? I suppose you have received a letter”. The grandfather looked at me, as if wishing to say “Young man, you will never understand me.”

He only answered, “What is written in the Scriptures? ‘Again, I say, rejoice!’” and turning, continued to walk leaning on his stick. I stood and wondered about Konshyn, this former millionaire and owner of many factories in Moscow. I thought, what a happy man! He is standing on the border. No, it is I who stand on the border. He has already crossed the line. He is not impressed any more by the Kremlin, the solitary cells, or Trubetskoy. He is above them.

It was told that once he received a letter on which the only address was, “To the watchman of the White Sea”. It had been written to him by some labourer from one of his factories, who had learned that he had been made a watchman somewhere near the White Sea.

M. I. Konshyn was a watchman at a boat building shop. He had done his duties faithfully over twenty years. It was during these years that he accepted the view of an all forgiving evangelical joy.

One day startling news came. The whole island was being thoroughly searched by guards, and by all free

employers. They looked into all the caves, bushes, buildings and unused earth huts.

What had happened? Whom were they trying to find? They did not answer our questions but continued to search. We sent to the Kremlin for information. The ATC answered that Boreysha, a Ukrainian teacher from Moldavia had escaped from an isolation cell in the Kremlin.

They searched for a whole week and did not say anything. We knew too and did not say anything either. They searched our stall also during the day time, or unexpectedly in the middle of the night. It was impossible. Never in the history of the Solovky jail had anyone ever escaped from a solitary cell. The third section studied the personal files of the watch of the second isolation cell. They gathered all the information about the guards during whose watch Boreysha had escaped. In the meantime, everyone who had been on guard during the escape was imprisoned in the isolation cells. The GPU continued to search, and to examine everyone. Two more weeks passed. The search spread to all the islands and shores of the White Sea. Finally a radio-telegram came to Ponamarev at the Kremlin. A dead body had been found tied with towels to two logs. There were no documents on the body, but an aluminum cigarette holder bearing the name “Ivan Boreysha” was found. The body had been discovered on the Summer Shore, 120 miles from Solovky.

Ponamarev, after conferring with his assistants, arrested the warden of the second isolation camp and the guards. Boreysha evidently could not stand the slave regime any longer. When he escaped from the prison, he had to risk everything. He had no hope of winning, but he found some logs near the shore and fastened them together. He tied himself to the logs, and let this improvised raft follow the will of the wind and the waves. It was a deed of great bravery, born of despair, when he tried to navigate the White Sea in October, the month of storms. But then the will is stronger than the thought of death.

The jail regime, which was very strict, became even more severe after Boreysha’s death.

VERA SLYVA

"Have you heard the news, fellows?" Asked Zograf, a former engineer of a Moscow factory which made watches. "Slyva has drowned!"

"Vera drowned! How?"

"The whole brigade which was floating logs drowned in the Iron Gates. Only three women were saved, one of them, Nastia Pleskan. She is now in the hospital with pneumonia".

I noticed how Vasylo Otchenash, who till then had been cooking outmeal in a large boiler with great care, left it and went outside. He walked to Variazhske Lake. Drizzling rain, which for short periods changed to sleet, was falling. The wind ruffled his long dark hair. He sat on a log near the shore and looked straight out over the water. He did not even ask how this tragic death had happened. "Vasylo", said Volodymyr Ivanovich, the man in charge of the calf stalls, "you should not do this", and in a fatherly manner, covered Vasylo's head with a prisoner's hat and his shoulders with a coat.

Vasylo still stared blankly in front of him. Volodymyr Ivanovich reasoned with him like a pastor and father. Finally Vasylo turned his head and said, "Leave me alone. Forgive me for being young and foolish, but leave me alone".

Volodymyr Ivanovich slowly returned to the barrack.

"How is he?"

"He just sits like a rock. Vera made a great impression on him. I am sorry for them both.

"Would he do some foolish thing now? No, he is too strong-minded for that. All he needs is a little time and a good cry".

"He will not cry. He just sits and stares at the lake. The trouble is that he does not know how to cry?"

"He loved Vera very much. He only saw her twice on

Solovky, when he was pasturing calves on Burnt Peninsula.

"Vera was a beautiful girl. Let God rest her soul in His kingdom".

"Tell us how it happened". Volodymyr Ivanovich asked Zograf.

"You all know that the so-called 'Iron Gates' is a narrow strait with rapids, between the islands of Muksolma and Solovky, and it can only be navigated under the direction of experienced local fishermen. However, these orders were disregarded by the governor of Muksolma Island. He told Nastia Pleskan's brigade to go through the Iron Gates with their logs. He said that it would be quicker than going around them. The girls had already gone through the Iron Gates a few times before. It was dangerous and they had had several narrow escapes. This strait was especially dangerous in October, when the autumn storms begin.

"Thirty-eight girls, condemned for cannibalism, perished in the straits. Nastia Pleskan and two others were able to save themselves on the logs and were thrown by the waves on to the shore near Nerpich. Now they are in the hospital, and very near death".

Vera Slyva was the object of Vasylo's platonic love. He used to write simple, but melodic songs in her honour, which he sang himself. Also he wrote the long letters of a naive young peasant to her.

He saw her on the sea-shore, as she dragged heavy logs, working in seawater up to the shoulders with the other girls. He also saw her when she was drying herself near the fire. Vasylo had known Vera from childhood. They had played together and had gone to school together.

The GPU first took Vera's father, for sympathizing with some Ukrainian underground organisation. Later they took Vasylo's father, and, confiscating all his possessions, drove him out on the street. Then Vera's mother met with the same fate. Both of them went to live with relations in a nearby village. Vasylo took a gun and joined the insurgents in the forest. They met again at Solovky.

It was almost time for the roll call.

Vasyloko returned, tired and depressed, and lay down.

"Listen, Cossack, do not worry. Do you think that Vera's soul will feel better if you grieve? You had better get up, and we will eat some porridge," said the old watchman at the brickyard, a man who had not wanted to leave the steppes of greater Ukraine during the revolution, and return to the Province of Galicia. Now he was finishing his life at Solovky.

"What you say is true. There is nothing to grieve about", said Vasyloko. "But if I do not have the strength, if my heart aches, what can I do? I never thought that I would ever meet Vera again. I loved her when she was a little girl. She had such lovely eyes. O! how I suffered during the twenty years of my life. Before I met her again I had a dream. And now this cursed dream has come true."

Vasyloko sat up on the sleeping platform.

"I dreamed that I was walking up a mountain all covered with beautiful trees and flowers. It was warm and the sun was shining. I was dressed, not in the prisoner's garb, but in a white shirt and pants, with a straw hat on my head. It was the same hat in which I had pastured the cattle at home. As I stood, the mountain turned into a valley and I saw endless steppes all around me. I saw our fields, and our village. I began to walk faster. And then I saw Vera, the same Vera I had known when small, running to meet me and clasping her hands. Then I dreamed about a whirlwind on the road to the village. It caught up the village and drove everything into the air, roofs, doors, trees. Suddenly, from nowhere, a black cloud appeared. It became dark, and only the roar of the wind, overturning rocks and stones, could be heard. Then I heard a loud clap of thunder. Frightened, I began shouting. Then opened my eyes and looked around. A guard's face was near mine. The guard was shaking my leg and demanding: 'Did you imagine that it does not concern you? Get up!' It all happened in the same night when the guards made a search at Horily. The same day I met Vera".

"What of it, Vasyloko. Many thousands lost their lives here. We ourselves do not know what will happen to us on the morrow".

"Who cares! Let fate come! I am tired of this life".

"Do not be in such a hurry to die. There is no reason for it".

"I will never forget my first meeting with Vera," said Vasyloko.

"It was raining, and a strong wind drove big waves up on the shore. Zograf and I prepared feed for the calves under the trees.

"The girls, up to their shoulders in the water, were tying the logs together. As soon as they did this, the waves and wind would break them apart again.

"Zograf and I saw that the girls would never be able to complete the work. We came to their help and in three hours we had tied and anchored the logs. We worked as fast as we could, but the wind and the sea water were so cold that it seemed to cut us like knives.

"We shouted to Nastia, 'Stop this work or we will all freeze'. Zograf and I began to collect branches. We made a pile of about five cubic metres and had a huge bonfire. The girls seeing the fire, got out of the water and gathered around. They took off their wet shirts. Some of them had a dry shirt to change into in their bags, while some warmed themselves without anything on. The cold rain and wind continued in the meantime. Some of the girls cried, and some cursed. Only Nastia Pleskan took it all stoically. Drying her only shirt in front of the fire, she asked me to give her a smoke. Although I only had tobacco and a clay pipe, I offered it to her and she was willing to take it. She told me that I should not be afraid to give it to her, as she did not have any sickness yet.

"She looked at Zograf and said, 'I see that you are an educated man. Many of you are pasturing calves, cutting wood, or gathering sea-weeds, while still many more are imprisoned in the cells. I think it is hard for you. But get

used to it. Let everyone experience it. Let them learn to hate, and some day good will grow out of it'.

"'Nastia, what are you saying?' asked a pale young woman.

"'What good can come out of suffering and wrong?'

"'Our tears and blood will not pass unnoticed. Our engineers did not study so hard to end up pasturing calves and cutting wood. Wait and see, some day they will be using their knowledge for other things.

"'Now, friend, take your pipe back, and I thank you. I feel a little dizzy. You may smoke the pipe without fear. I am not sick, for we do not see men except a foreman and the governor of the island. When we were at Golgotha we suffered much from the guards. But after I broke the head of Savitsky, Ivan Ivanovich sent three chiefs away from the island, and now no guards come to Muksolma, except when they have to make a search.'"

Zograf took up the story. "I don't have to remind you", he told his listeners, "of all that took place at Golgotha, and how Nastia exposed everything when authorities at Anzer took her for their entertainment."

"When the girls had dressed again, Nastia asked them to sing a song. The song described a girl's longing to return to her parents and family. After they sang the song, Nastia said, 'No, I will never return to my own. I will end my life here. Some time the wild sea will receive my body, I might die in the bush among the logs or they might dig a hole and throw my body in it, if ever I became ill. Could it happen?' she asked the other girls. 'Could it happen?'

"'Nastia' said the girls, surrounding her, 'forget about it. We will not be here forever.'

"Nastia laughed.

"'You say it will not be forever, but can we live much longer? The years pass. I am twenty-four and but for this hard labour I would have become insane. Don't you dream about gardens and fields, our forests, our little children that go hand in hand to church. Why do we suffer? Why did

they shoot my father and brothers? Why have they starved my mother, and made me a cannibal?'

"Nastia sat on a log and put her bare feet into the warm ashes. After a while, she said: 'Is it not time to return to our barrack?' Then turning to Vasylo, "I see you have found your country girl. Is Vera from the same village as you?'

Vasylo, after he had recognised Vera, had treated her like a priceless treasure and had covered her with his coat. Now he answered Nastia joyfully, "She is not only from my village, but we played together when we were small".

"Does it not bother you that she is a cannibal? Are you not afraid that she will some time eat you up?'

Vera turned red. The hard words of Nastia were very painful to her.

"Dear, why do you blush? We are all the same here. Are we cannibals? No! It is not we who are the cannibals, but those who made us insane from starving. Our hearts are pure. It is we, Vera, who should be in heaven near the holy saints. Do not be afraid of the word cannibal. Tell everyone that you ate human flesh, you were forced to by the communist beasts".

"Vera, Nastia, and Vasylo went to the boat, and I returned to the calves."

As we listened, we noticed that Vasylo had often wanted to interrupt the story but had changed his mind, and listened with a sad face.

"It is time to sleep, comrades. I am afraid that it will be noticed if we stay up too late", said Volodymyr Ivanovich, beginning to untie his bast shoes. "You know, only Russian genius could have invented these shoes. They are light, cheap, and, what is most important, they are very handy to overtake and outrun American and other capitalists".

"Volodymyr Ivanovich, it is prohibited to speak sedition at night time".

"What is allowed then? What can I say?'

"Before going to bed you should say, 'Our great leader

and father, Joseph Visarionovich Stalin, life has become better, and happier. Your six precepts, O teacher, are our guides. I believe and confess that the work in the slave camp is indeed honour, glory, valour and heroism'. You should conclude the speech in this manner, 'Let your enemies the Trotskyists and nationalists be scattered right and left. Let your infallible direction triumph'".

"Silence! A guard is coming." In a moment we lay quietly under our coats.

SASHA SIBIRIAKOV

Autumn was running its course. Navigation had ended and with it went the rumour that all prisoners would be removed from Solovky.

However, the prisoners speculated more about new changes that would come now that Yagoda, the head of the GPU had been shot.

Some argued that his liquidation did not signify any changes for the better. It was the first time in the history of the GPU that its head had been shot. Some of the men thought that Stalin might be beginning to change his policy. All kinds of opinions were circulating about Yezhov, the new head. Some said that he was a young and wise member of the Politburo, and that, as the person nearest to Stalin, he would correct the abuses. Some said that now was the time to hand in petitions for the reconsideration of prison terms, and that the cases of all who had been condemned by the Colleges of the GPU should be reviewed. They said that Menzhinsky had been poisoned by Yagoda. Some thought that it was due to Menzhinsky's sickness that Yagoda had had the opportunity (with counter-revolutionary purposes) to fill the jails with millions of innocent people.

Some of the prisoners were ready to forget all their suffering, just wanting to return home, to their families, children, wives and mothers. However, the majority thought, "Let us hope that the calf devours the wolf". When the discussion became heated, Maxim Ivanovich the watchman from the smithy would come and say quietly, "Why do you think they are making the bars? Do you know that 1200 are all ready and that they say it is necessary to make two thousand more?"

"Bars? The smiths have to be employed in some kind of work. It is possible that the bars will be taken to the mainland".

"Do you really think they will go to the mainland? Maybe you would also like to suggest that they were made for export to England or the U.S.A. It is possible that over there they do not know how to make them as well as they are made here!"

Neshchadymenko looked at us and smiled. "The bars are made, comrades to last for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. We have produced them with the same idea that the priest Tryfon had in mind when he was building the Kremlin".

"Do you think that the bars will also be used when communism is fully realized?"

"I made them for all social and economic formations" he said, using the words of Karl Marx. "My helper smiths make the only group that is above all classes. We manufacture bars for everyone, and even for the classless society. Everything may change and perish, but the state will remain and a self-respecting Russian will not approve of a state without prisons and bars. In view of that, my estimate for the service of the bars is for one thousand years. It corresponds no doubt with the party and government planning".

"I praise you for your bravery. Your explanation, no doubt, is 'Marxian', but what will you do if you yourself have to sit behind these bars?"

"I will only be grateful for it. Now I have to hammer. Then I will sit doing nothing. And in any case they will not give me less than three hundred grammes of bread".

"It is so, but most men become insane behind bars".

"What is the use of arguing? What is the difference, after all, if a person is shot insane or with his mind intact. I look on events realistically and do not share the feeble-minded hopes that Yezhov will bring liberty". Continuing to smoke his pipe, he went away.

An additional brigade was sent to the calf stalls to dig canalisation ditches. Most of the prisoners were new, young men brought from Leningrad and Moscow by plane. Among them was a blond young man who was dressed in

rags and was so emaciated that he could scarcely move his feet.

Lamvorokakis, as we had nick-named Zograf, approached him and asked him to tell us his story. His name was Olexander Sibiriakov and he had come from Moscow. He had worked as a reporter for the newspaper "Pravda" in Warsaw and had been accused of terrorism.

To help him, we stole potatoes and gave them to him and the others. We also invited him to share the porridge with us. He gave us the impression of a well-educated man, with a fine sense of humour. Sibiriakov condemned the communist government openly and vehemently notwithstanding the fact that he had only met us recently. Every day we had the opportunity to speak with him at work about Warsaw and the scandals in the press. Sibiriakov overawed us. After two or three months he suggested that we should start a hunger strike and demand the same treatment that the criminal prisoners got.

"We are not beasts of burden but political prisoners who are fighting for the victory of our ideals", he said. We discussed it among ourselves. The majority of us were doubtful about the results. It is true that Trotskyists were able to gain in the beginning a better treatment, but it did not mean that we would succeed. Others said that since Yagoda had gone, we might be successful.

Volodymyr Ivanovich finally decided against it. "No, Sasha", he said, "we will let things be as they are. The time is not favourable".

Later Sasha Sibiriakov was caught by guards with potatoes and oatmeal that had been issued for the calves. He was imprisoned for that, but after serving a light punishment, was sent to other work.

Lamvorokakis continued to be friendly with Sasha whom we all considered to be a very fine man. Occasionally we met him in the Kremlin. He was living in the cell near the refectory together with about twenty young Russian students and professional men. The cell was filled with singing, discussions and recitals of poetry. The most popular

writers were Blok, Esenin and Humilov. These Russians were considered to be above any criticism. When I once remarked that Humilov was a typical representative of Russian imperialism, I was almost lynched for offending their saint.

Sasha worshipped Humilov. He loved to recite his poetry, and was always applauded. Among other things, Sasha loved to recite Esenin's answer to Demian Bedny, and they all liked to sing Esenin's song, "Letter to Mother". Sergy Esenin was the idol of the Russian youth in their fight against communism. Thousands of young men were sent to slave camps only because they had been influenced by his rebellious poetry.

No one was as popular as Sasha in his cell. He read to them a lecture about state conceptions of Aristotle on which he based ideas of fascism. The people in Soviet Russia knew very little about fascism and nazism. Huge cartoons everywhere, pictured fascism as a devil-ape with a swastika in one hand and stick in the other. His belt was filled with many knives. Underneath the cartoon was a sign, "Fascism is war".

All the prisoners at Solovky were for war, as they thought that only fighting would destroy communism. They said, "You try to frighten us by war, but we are not afraid".

Sasha had many listeners. He knew about this matter more than anyone else as he had lived a few years in Warsaw. However Sasha was not alone in his activities.

In a solitary cell under the "White House", engineer Pesotsky, who openly called himself the leader of the Russian Social-Nationalist party was imprisoned. For a long time he had demanded that he be treated as a political prisoner as he had been a leader of the underground anti-communist party.

I met Pesotsky first at the Butyrky station in Moscow. Even then he had introduced himself as a member of the social-nationalist party. I had had no time to speak with him then as I was called to the car, but I remembered his

name, for I had never heard about such a party and I was surprised by such frankness.

At Solovky, Pesotsky was imprisoned in solitary confinement and from there he sent his letters, which were written on toilet paper, to the prisoners. The ATC advised us not to have any thing to do with him, but no one said that he was an informer. There was another prisoner, who posed as a fascist and tried to organize a Ukrainian fascist party on Solovky. The ATC informed him, in a round-about way, that if he did not cease his activities he would be denounced as an informer. After that warning the man stopped. This, no doubt, saved quite a few Ukrainian lives. It was different among the Russian youth. Among them very few belonged to the social democratic or social revolutionary parties. Those who were most active and able relied on Pesotsky, whom they had not seen before.

Sasha Sibiriakov became a star of the first magnitude to them. Everyone wanted to meet him and he was considered an unofficial leader of the Russian youth on Solovky.

Once when I was in the Kremlin, I went to his cell and asked if he were there. They told me that he had been transferred to the hospital and given the work of an attendant. I went to the hospital to ask about some of our men who had gone there. Sasha gave me detailed information about them all, and told me what every one of them needed. I thanked him, and went on my way.

After four months, Sasha Sibiriakov was promoted from the work of wood carrier to that of the editor of the wall newspaper in the sanitary department. When he met Zograf he told him that he had written a letter to Stalin and was convinced that he would be freed. Zograf wished him success. He told me the news, and I passed it to those who were entitled to have the information. The ATC warned the Russians and Sasha lost all his influence.

Another two months passed. A special visiting session of the Highest Court of the USSR came to Solovky. The court heard the accusation that seventy-eight Russians had conspired to form a National Socialist Party. The whole cell

where Sasha Sibriakov lived was represented as the accused. Sasha was the witness against them. Thirty-seven were shot and the rest received an additional sentence of ten years imprisonment. Sasha was removed from the position of editor and sent to dig ditches at Anzer.

THE DAUGHTER OF GENERAL BRUSILOV

The visiting session of the Highest Court had been sent to Solovky not only to judge the case of the Russian national-socialists, but also to try other cases. Some of the prisoners had been waiting for months for their "just and merciful" judgment in solitary cells.

The next case considered by the Court Sessions was the sabotage by some prisoners on the dairy farm of Anzer Island.

A number of milch cows were kept on Anzer, near the Kremlin, on Isakovo and Muksolm. The cows had been brought from the famous Kholmogory to be bred on Solovky. They were giving a large amount of milk. The average quantity from each cow during the milking period was 800 litres and it contained 4.2% fat. Some cows were giving up to 1,200 litres of milk. The feeding and care of these cows was so perfect that no citizen in the USSR could ever have dreamed of such attention. Every cow had a specially selected ration of food each week. The cows that gave exceptional amounts of milk had their menu prepared daily. The farms on Solovky were sowing oats in the hot-houses, as every cow had to have two or three pounds of grain a day. The foreman, a zoologist and veterinarian, continually watched these Solovky ladies.

They were proud, and demanded respect and consideration. The cow stalls were quiet, spotlessly clean and the walls of the stalls were always snow-white. The floor was covered with a thick layer of sawdust, on top of which a special bed of hay was laid. Not one of these noble cows would lie down unless some attendant prepared her bed.

An attendant with a pail and a hand shovel walked continually among these ladies. If one of them needed to perform a natural function, the man had to immediately change the sawdust and hay, wash the floor, and make the hay bed again.

No one even dared to think of hitting a cow. He would get far milder punishment if he killed some other prisoner than if he hit one of these favourites of Ivan Ivanovich.

The attendants watched the cows and their needs every hour of the day and night. The manager of the farm and his assistants slept very little as a rule. It was a special type of hard labour to work on the dairy farm.

As a rule, all the cows on Solovky lost calves during the milking period. Very often it was necessary to artificially inseminate the cows as they were indifferent to the pure-blooded bulls kept for breeding. A cow with an unborn calf was a great burden to everyone. If a cow became sick, a council of veterinary surgeons would gather. There was never a shortage of them at Solovky, where the best specialists in Soviet Russia could be found as prisoners. When there was no other solution but to kill the dying cow, Ivan Ivanovich himself would come. Angry, and with his face almost grey, he would threaten the surgeons that he would let them rot in the deepest solitary cells if they would not save the cow. When the threats did not help, he would begin to ask them in a mild manner to do their best.

The surgeons would try to persuade him that they had used all the most modern methods in trying to save the cow. Sometimes during these discussions, the cow would be gripped in her death agonies. Then Ivan Ivanovich would shout, "Kill her! Don't you see, you bandits, that the poor creature is dying" and after cursing everyone with the filthiest Russian curses, he would leave the farm.

But there were happy days also. One of the cows would be ready to calve. Then Synytsky, the chief zoologist of Solovky Islands, and formerly an outstanding professor of Temiriasev Agricultural College, would come to the farm. Synytsky would be followed by kindly old Strugalsky, who was formerly a veterinary surgeon of the Veterinary Department of the USSR. With him would come a few more veterinary surgeons and zoologists. They were all dressed in snowwhite gowns and carried all kinds of instruments, drugs and bandages. After they gathered in the nursery, Ivan

Ivanovich would come, as stern as ever. The labour would begin, the cow helped by the veterinary surgeons. They would bring a big bathtub with warm water and white sheets, and when the calf was born, it would be put in the bathtub. Strugalsky would attend to the cow, while Ivan Ivanovich would smile pleasantly, and tickle the cow under the chin. Then the surgeons would wash her, and clean everything. The calf would be wrapped in the sheets and taken to another room where small calves were kept. It would be received by Ivan Mykhailovich, a former teacher, who had had forty years of teaching experience. Now, instead of children, he was taking care of calves. He would take it in his arms and put it in a specially prepared stall.

After that the whole birthday group would go to the office of the dairy farm. The farm manager would get the book records. Ivan Ivanovich would take the book, and solemnly, like a priest, would give a name to the calf, and, with his own hand, would enter its name into the book. It was his exclusive privilege to name them, and names given without his approval were immediately cancelled. Thanks to Ivan Ivanovich such names as Felix Dzerzhinsky and Vladimir Lenin were immortalized. There were young bulls called Felix and Deputat, a cow named Lena, and many others.

After registering the calf, Ivan Ivanovich would order the farm manager to give each prisoner working at the farm a litre of milk. The surgeons and zoologists received two litres. After that, happy and satisfied, Ivan Ivanovich would leave the farm.

The above proceedings show how much attention was given to the cows and their offspring. It so happened that due to the carelessness of one of the prisoners, twenty cows of the Kholmogory breed died. An Anzer case of cow-poisoning seemed more important than the case of the national-socialist party, which could not achieve anything on Solovky except discussions and lectures.

According to Ivan Ivanovich, the crime of poisoning twenty cows equalled treason. He ordered all the prisoners

who worked on the farm, including the farm manager, to be imprisoned in solitary confinement. A number of other men who, in the opinion of Ivan Ivanovich, could have had some relation to the crime, were also arrested.

Examinations were conducted day and night. The third section worked to the limit. Ivan Ivanovich would not be satisfied with anything less than a signed confession from the prisoners, stating that they had poisoned the cows with evil counter-revolutionary purposes. He wrote a report to that effect, to the Administration of the Baltic White Sea Camps to which Solovky belonged as a special 8th division.

Ikonnikov, the manager of the farm, had been born in Siberia. He had a fine appearance and was considered an expert zoologist. He had taken part in an insurrection against the communists, which the GPU incorrectly connected with the case of the Siberian general Boldyrev. Among the farm labourers was also the daughter of the famous Russian general Brusilov, one of the ablest Russian generals of the first World War, who had joined the communists and served them.

His daughter had already been working for some years on the cow farm in the capacity of a cleaner. She loved these capricious mute ladies, and looked after them almost in the same manner as she herself had been treated in the old days by her personal nurses and governesses. The daughter of Brusilov was not attractive, either in face or figure, and looked an unhappy woman. She never tried to please anyone and was indifferent to everything. However, Brusilova was very much attached to her charges. At that time she was about thirty-five years old and looked much older. Brusilova lived in the women's barrack on Anzer, where Leah Shmidt and other women also lived. Every day she earnestly prayed on her knees before a little ikon which had been given to her by the wife of the late Czar, when she was a small child.

Brusilova prayed long and with passion, but otherwise was quiet. At night, during her sleep, she would suddenly shout, "Cursed Lenin, Cursed Lenin!" Awakening at the

sound of her own voice, and, crossing herself, she would go back to sleep. A tangle of highly-strung nerves she could not stand those who tried to please the authorities. Intolerant, stubborn and unfriendly towards others, she looked on the prisoners as dull, traitorous, cowardly, supine people and carried her cross alone. While she was living on Anzer, there were a number of former pillars of the Russian Empire and the Kerensky government. She despised them all and called them, "Brainless sheep, slaves, and grave-diggers of great Russia". Brusilova never spoke about her father, but worshipped the late minister Stolypin.

All that was connected with communism in any way was hateful to her. She rejected communism completely and without hesitation. The fact that when her cows died she cried attracted the attention of Ivan Ivanovich, who decided that it was under her influence that the night attendant had given arsenic flour to the cows instead of the flour made from bones. In the room where the food for cows (wheat flour, oat flour, bone flour, fish flour, and all kinds and combinations of flours for improving the cows' feed) stood, arsenic flour used for medication was kept. In the same room, for lack of space, a number of veterinarian preparations also stood.

A phlegmatic white Russian — who had always had the night watch — by mistake in the darkness, took arsenic flour instead of bone flour, and spread it over the feed for the cows. The next time he went to the storage room to give the bone flour to the cows in the second and third divisions of the stall, he took it from the right box. As a result only twenty of the sixty cows died. Ivan Ivanovich was convinced that it was not the White Russian or the farm manager but Brusilova who was the main instigator of the poisoning.

Brusilova was imprisoned in the old Solovky dungeon where three hundred years ago the men who had refused to cross themselves with three fingers had been kept. Brusilova's dungeon was deep, dark and damp. Most of the time she sat on a straw mattress laid on a stone bed, or else

prayed on her knees before her ikon. Sometimes she was taken away for examinations. At other times Tsarapkin the examining judge came to her dungeon. He was the terror of Solovky prisoners as he was the most cruel and vile of all the examining judges. Tsarapkin sometimes came during the day and other times at night. Ivan Ivanovich promised him many things if he would procure a "sincere confession" from Brusilova that it was she who had persuaded the White Russian peasant to poison the cows.

Tsarapkin used all the methods of torture known to him to make her confess. He called guards, ordered them to strip her naked, and then had them whip her with rubber truncheons. He tied her to the stone pillar in the cell by her hands and kept her in that position for hours, demanding a "sincere confession", but Brusilova only sobbed silently and whispered prayers. Finally, when he had her untied she collapsed to the ground. Tsarapkin went away, only to return again at night with the same demands. One night when he came in and sat near the door of the cell on a stone seat on which guards left the food, Brusilova jumped from her bed, and, with all her strength, threw a heavy stone at his head. The stone knocked his hat off, but did not harm him much. Brusilova stood trembling on her bed with another heavy stone in her hand. Tsarapkin whipped out his gun and pointed it at her. With the other hand, he reached for the cap and put it on again, then he stood up, and, holding the stone in one hand and revolver in the other, said, "Please put your stone down. Throwing it will not save you". Brusilova did not heed him, but took aim again. Suddenly Tsarapkin threw the revolver and stone on the ground, went to the door, and sat down on the seat.

"Throw it, Brusilova! Hit me!" he shouted, and took off his cap. Brusilova threw the stone on the ground, and falling on the bed began to cry hysterically. Tsarapkin took up his revolver and put both stones on the seat. Then he put his hand on her head in a friendly way, and said, "You should not act like that". Brusilova weakly removed his hand and continued to cry. "I wonder" said Tsarapkin,

"How it is that you, Brusilova, an educated woman, who met kings on a friendly footing do not understand the simple truth, which is clear to me, a simple person. Don't you understand that you and I are only small wheels in a huge machine which is terrible, and subdues all? Neither I nor you should dare to act in this way. You wanted to kill me, a very small cog in a huge mechanism, which bears the name of the world communist revolution. You must understand that in destroying me you would not stop that engine. Immediately I was dead another man would be put in my place, and the mechanism would continue to work.

In an aeroplane, if the heart of it—the motor—works, then the destruction of small insignificant parts would not force the pilot to land. He would fly until his fuel tanks became empty, and until the motor ceased to work. Prisoner Brusilova, your situation is tragic. The motor of the plane which was Imperial Russia has been destroyed for good. Yes, Brusilova, the new Russia is a different Russia. It is the glorious Soviet Russia, and you must serve her instead of standing in her way".

Brusilova stood opposite Tsarapkin.

"Tsarapkin! You are my torturer, my executioner, but do not blaspheme in my presence. Do not make me break my head against the stone walls, it would be against the teaching of my faith. I beg of you, do not offend the name of my motherland, do not mock and say that you are for Russia. You are not for Russia. You are crucifying her, a great and holy country. You, Tsarapkin are only a dirty little traitor, who betrays the great honour of the Russian people, you will fail. You will never extract a confession that I poisoned the cows from me, and the communists will never be able to crush my Russian people".

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Will you sign all that you told me now?"

"Yes, I will sign it".

"Tsarapkin began to write. Brusilova lay on the bed

and covered herself with the coat. He finished and gave it to her.

"I will sign it tomorrow. Leave me alone today".

"You are tired. Very well, rest. I will come in the morning, only do not forget our talk".

Tsarapkin took away the stones which Brusilova had somehow procured, and went to the "White House".

It was about two o'clock in the morning, and he went to the chief of the third section. The chief was not sleeping, as all GPU officials slept usually during the daytime and worked at night. Tsarapkin showed him his trophies. The chief laughed and said that he would have to examine the guards because she could not have obtained the stones without their help.

"Good morning, prisoner Brusilova. Did you prepare a stone for me for breakfast this morning?" These were Tsarapkin's first words as he entered the cell next day.

"I had prepared two for you, only I am sorry they could not have taken effect for the good of Russian people".

"Thank you for thinking about me".

Then he read to her what he had written anew at home.

"What I said was less strong, but it appeals to me. You call yourself a peasant, Tsarapkin, but I see that you belong to those wise peasants, who became either counts like Menshikov and Stroganov, or depraved scoundrels like Raspustin", said Brusilova, and firmly signed her name.

Tsarapkin politely bowed to her and left the dungeon. Two hours later guards came and transferred Brusilova to a clean, dry solitary cell in the third camp. She spent eighteen months there until the arrival of the visiting session of the High Court.

The fate of the other thirty-three prisoners connected with this affair had been no better. Everyone had been treated just like Brusilova. However, they had all gone through this examining school before and they knew the meaning of "sincere confessions".

The prisoners, bathed in their own blood, always told

the truth and refused to admit the things they had never committed.

The examinations continued almost a whole year. During that time, five of the accused died.

The visiting session investigated the case, and every prisoner was given an opportunity to make his plea. All spoke briefly, denied their guilt and asked the court not to extend their punishment. Brusilova also used this opportunity, and, before the defendants and a full hall of the GPU agents and judges, she said the things she had thought about during the ten years of Solovky imprisonment. All her anger and hatred against the communist regime was expressed in her speech. But she was not allowed to finish, as the guards forced her to sit down.

The court left the hall to discuss the cases. After half an hour, they returned and announced that, having in mind the year and a half imprisonment of all those who had worked on the farm, and for lack of proof of any evil intention, all the prisoners would be freed from solitary confinement.

Brusilova, for an attempt to use the court for counter-revolutionary purposes, according to the 58th paragraph of the Criminal Code, was condemned to ten additional years of hard labour.

With the new additional term of imprisonment, Brusilova worked as a laundress in the Solovky bath-house laundry. In July of the same year, she was taken to the mainland to Medvezha Mount, the third camp of Belbaltabor where she was soon shot for counter-revolutionary propaganda.

CAPTAIN STERELHOVSKY

An altogether new and sensational case was that of the escape of the former naval officer, Captain Sterelhovsky, a Pole born in Crakow, but who had grown up, studied and worked in California in the U.S.A.

In 1934, Captain Sterelhovsky, while in the Leningrad harbour, had received permission to visit the city of Leningrad with other officers of his ship. He went to the museum and spent the day looking over interesting collections, and, together with an obliging guide, decided to rest in the apartment of a certain beautiful girl, whom he had met in the museum. The guide, who knew the girl, said that she was a gifted film artist and had a great future as an actress, although she was really only an art student. The young captain had nothing against spending a few hours in the apartment of a future star, and the guide advised him not to hesitate.

Together they went to the girl's apartment and had a drink. Then the guide wished them good night and went away. However, instead of having a pleasant evening, the captain was interviewed by an examining judge in a Leningrad jail on Shpalerna street, where he was taken by the GPU agents who had come immediately after the guide had left. After the examination he was told that they would take him in a plane to the consulate of his own country in Moscow, and from there he could return to his ship. The captain did not object. However, instead of the Moscow airport, the plane came down at Solovky. Here Sterelhovsky was informed that he was condemned to ten years hard labour for spying on behalf of Spain. He had no choice, and, putting on the bast shoes and prisoner's coat, he began to study the Soviet socialism in everyday life.

He had belonged in Poland to the Polish National Democratic party, and, on his arrival, he became a natural leader of the small group of Poles. He was a handsome well-

built man, and as a Polish patriot, hated the communists. Living on the sea taught him to love freedom. He always spoke frankly and enthusiastically, but never risked the lives of others or his own, without need, as Pesotsky used to do.

He knew what to say and to whom to say it, and was popular not only among the Poles, but among other prisoners as well. Sterelhovsky was well acquainted with Polish, French and English literature. It was very interesting to listen to that man, who enjoyed literature as much as women, wine and song. When all these things were taken away from him, he had to get used to the new life of a prisoner in the cloister of St. Zosyma and St. Savaty.

No one else suffered the loss of liberty and the evils of the Soviet jail as much as Sterelhovsky did. When he could not stand it any longer he began to plan his escape from the island.

An attempt to escape, after all the tragedies that had taken place on previous occasions, was foolhary. But the captain was set on getting away. He worked on his plan by night. Sterelhovsky had an original and fantastic idea — he decided to steal the motor boat belonging to the GPU guards.

Captain Sterelhovsky had a rich imagination, but at the same time was a very brave and practical man. In 1936, during a white Arctic June night, Sterelhovsky, Vaska Belov, and Toma Mykhai left the Solovky bay of "Blahopoluchia" (Good luck) and sailed into the wide world.

Sterelhovsky had prepared his escape for a whole year, but when the alarm sounded early in the morning no one believed it. It was interesting to note that he did not take any of his Polish friends with him. Instead he took the carefree criminal, Vaska Belov and a brave liberty-loving gipsy name Toma Mykhai.

Sterelhovsky's escape stunned the authorities. The prisoners had stolen the boat from those who had had to watch them. Nineteen boats, two steam ships and planes, were sent to search for the fugitives.

The escape threatened to become an international

scandal. The GPU officially proclaimed that Sterelhovskiy and his guide had disappeared without trace, and that all efforts to find them had produced no results.

They were afraid Sterelhovskiy would appear abroad, and tell the whole world about the "revolutionary guardians of the law".

In order to find the fugitives all means were used. They were hunted from the air, on water and on the mainland. However, Sterelhovskiy had expected this. He knew that he would not be able to escape to the ocean from the White Sea. He decided, after two weeks of futile attempts to get through by sea, to reach the shore in an unknown place near Kola (not very far from Murmansk). They disembarked by night. Sterelhovskiy, Vaska and Toma shook hands, and, dividing their food stores, separated. Sterelhovskiy went to the west, Toma travelled south, and Vaska went north to Kola.

Vaska Belov was arrested by the GPU while he was enjoying his freedom with some girl at Kola. He would not tell them anything about Sterelhovskiy, but it was enough for the GPU to know that he was on the mainland. A week later Sterelhovskiy was brought by aeroplane to Solovki, and imprisoned under the "White House".

Only Toma Mykhail escaped, and a most intensive search by the GPU produced no results. Not only Sterelhovskiy and Vaska appeared as defendants before the visiting session of the Highest Court of USSR, but a manager of the supply stores, an agent of the operative section and three guards were also present.

The GPU had found on Vaska and Sterelhovskiy food and articles which could not have been obtained except through GPU agents. As soon as the manager of the Solovki warehouses was arrested, he implicated others who had taken part in helping the escape.

Sterelhovskiy had promised them that if he escaped, he would help them to go abroad where free life and good earnings would await them. The visiting session, after considering the case, freed Sterelhovskiy and Vaska from addi-

tional punishment. However Sterelhovskiy had to serve all his term in solitary confinement.

All the agents of the GPU, with the exception of one guard who received ten years hard labour, were condemned to be shot, and the sentence was executed on Solovki. This was a warning to all those who would not serve the GPU faithfully.

THE GIPSIES

A complete tribe of Gipsies had been condemned to Solovky for general reasons. Sixteen men of the group had the same surname, Mikhai. They differed only by their first names, belonging to a rich Gipsy clan, which had moved from Besarabia to Ukraine trading horses and cattle.

Their profit on these deals reached millions. The GPU sent them to Solovky, so that they could confiscate their property. The charge was that they had spied on behalf of Rumania. Also they had demanded the creation of an autonomous Gipsy state in the USSR with a Gipsy king at the head.

Gogu Parfientevich Mikhai, a tall, attractive, middle-aged man, was named as a candidate for the throne.

It is hard to tell if any of the accusations of the GPU were true, but it is impossible that all the Gipsies were spies. However, forcible collective farming introduced by the Soviet government created a desire in them to build their own state. This would have saved them from scattering. Of course such thoughts were considered seditious, and the Gipsies were sent to slave camps.

Toma Mikhai was the best singer and dancer among the gipsies. During the Christmas season I always planned to visit the cell of the Mikhais for at least an hour.

I had met the Gipsies for the first time during the summer. I was ordered to store green crop in a silo and was given thirty carts with drivers, and thirty men to work in the silo. Fifteen of them had to operate the machine that cut the crop, and fifteen had to ram it into the silo. The chapel, built by the Russian Czar, Alexander Second, in memory of the defence of Solovky against the English in 1885, had been rebuilt for this purpose. There were a few chapels like it on Solovky.

I sent all the Gipsies to the silo to do ramming work. Everything worked out very well for a while. All the Gipsies

worked in the tower except their chief, Gogu Parfientevich, who stayed with me in the capacity of a foreman. A general custom in all brigades in which Gipsies were working was never to refuse to work. However, they would not start unless Gogu told them to, then they would work honestly.

One day, I noticed that the hole through which the green crop was supplied had become blocked, and after a while the machine stopped. I climbed quickly into the tower and found that all the Gypsies were sitting around, not doing anything.

"What happened? Why aren't you working, comrades?"

"Let this work be cursed! We have had enough of it."

"This is not enough! They will shoot me if the work is not done. Thirty carts are bringing the green crop and about seventy people are working at it today".

"Do not lie! You won't be shot right away. We have lost a pipe and until we find it, we will not work".

Evidently one of the Gipsies had lost his pipe. It was impossible to find it in the green mass. I called Gogu, and a long discussion began. The Gipsies were in a difficult mood, and I saw that even old Gogu would not be able to help me. Then someone shouted, "The pipe is lost for good. The cows will eat the feed and then it will be found".

"Are you a fool?" I shouted. "Only an idiot would stay here until spring, for this fall we will all be taken to the mainland". I had guessed right. The Gipsies met the news with great enthusiasm and forgot the trouble.

"You are right, friend. It is true. We will not have to wait long. In the fall we will be taken to the mainland".

"Certainly, we will go".

"That is right. May God give you health. We see that you are a Christian man".

"How could it be otherwise, since he is from Kharkiv", said one of the Mihais, embracing me.

"You know", he said, "when I recall the Horse Market in Kharkiv and how, in those days, we traded horses with your people, how our wives told fortunes to your wives, how we drank and danced so happily, I begin to cry. Now this

devil's Soviet government has taken everything and all is lost".

"The devils will take them in the same way they came", I said to the Gipsy.

"That is true".

"Yes, that was the life" said the Gipsy. "Do you remember this song? It describes it well". He sang a humorous song. Everyone laughed, and the man began to smoke his pipe. The one who had lost his, made a huge cigarette from thick paper. In the meantime I started another funny song with a tenor. Everyone who stood near the machine, climbed into the silo and joined us. Our singing was loud and hearty, and relieved the tension.

"We will be free again, fellows. I believe that we will be free. Neither bars nor the sea will be able to hold us" said Toma, in a mysterious manner, knowing that he would escape the next spring in the motor-boat with two other men. We spent more than half an hour in conversation, songs and discussions. In the meantime, the carts brought more of the green crop, and I could not forget that I was to answer for it, if the work was not done.

"Now comrades, will you start to work?"

"Very well," said Gogu, "but let my people work with the machine, and let your people work in the silo."

"But Gogu Parfientevich, will your people be able to operate the machine?" someone doubtfully asked.

"My good man, the Gipsies will give any odds that they can operate this machine". In no time, the Gipsies were out of the silo and the Ukrainians unwillingly climbed into it.

Here, for the first time in my life, I had the opportunity to watch how the Gipsies, whom all the world considered as a lazy race, work.

They worked so energetically, that not only was the excessive Solovky norm fulfilled, but also their norm of production was far above it.

At the end of the day, I had to reduce, in my report, the amount of green crop stored in the silo, so that the norm, already unusually high, would not be made still higher.

From that time on I became a friend of the Gipsies. During Christian holidays I often visited their cell to spend some time with them. They were good people, who loved their wives and families. Among the prisoners, none were so faithful to their wives as the Gipsies. There was no known case of a Gipsy woman being unfaithful to her husband, if he were sent to Solovky for a long time. The Gipsies worshipped their women and no one was allowed to talk about them lightly.

A Gipsy woman, according to their convictions, was an example of faithfulness and sincerity. She was permitted much. She could dance, embrace, flirt, and extract money, but could never be unfaithful to her husband. Their great love for their wives and children was the main reason for their escapes from jails and concentration camps. Gipsies were always kept under special surveillance in the camps, because it was they who tried to escape first.

YAROCKIN AND HIS FRIENDS

The last case that was considered by the visiting session of the Highest Court of the USSR was a very sordid affair prepared by Ponamarev and Trubetskoy against the chief of the third section. The chief of the third section had become a mortal enemy of Ivan Ivanovich. From the time of the investigation of the affair with the juvenile Trotskyists, he had tried to find grounds for the liquidation of Ivan Ivanovich, who was the uncrowned emperor of Solovky. Under his heavy hand not only the prisoners, but all the free employees of the GPU, including the chief of the third section, were groaning.

This chief was an important person, but Ivan Ivanovich had everyone under his thumb. Now, when the visiting session of the court was completing its "fruitful" work, it received accusations, which had been prepared without the knowledge of the chief of the third section, about his own criminal activities. A number of agents from among the armed guards of the secret division and a few privileged prisoners (informers) were also denounced in the report.

The visiting court session, after a closed hearing of the case, ordered the arrest of the chief of the third section and all other persons mentioned in the report. They also called the chief of the third section of the White Sea-Baltic camps to Solovky.

The investigation was a hurried one, and within a week the court had completed its inquiries into the affair of Vitaly Yarochkin, a criminal about twenty years old. He was a former inmate of the Reform Commune for juvenile criminals at Yaroslavl. His behaviour and appearance were rather strange, and more suited to a woman than a man. He enjoyed freedom and privileges that no other prisoner had. The majority of the prisoners considered him an informer and avoided him. However the court revealed the true state of affairs. Sixty-seven people were condemned for

homosexuality. Most of them were members of the GPU, including the chief of the third section.

The affair was scandalous. The case of the chief was so serious that it was sent to the warden of the Lubyanka Jail in Moscow on the demand of the chief of the third section of the White Sea-Baltic Canal Camps. The rest of the accused were condemned to eight years hard labour for sexual perversion.

Ivan Ivanovich sighed with relief. He had broken the chief of the third section and was now supreme. Among the prisoners a rumour was circulating that Ivan Ivanovich would be appointed as the warden of the White Sea-Baltic Concentration Camps, or else as the chief of one of the state departments.

When the visiting session left the island, the short Solovky summer had ended. With the autumn, navigation ceased. The talks about the transfer of prisoners to the mainland also quietened down.

I was not able to visit my friends, the Gipsies. Following the brave escape of Toma, they were imprisoned in one of the large dungeons. All the prisoners expected changes for the better, but every day conditions became worse.

ROSTOV THE TARTAR

"We should kill them with tractors", said Rostov, a Tartar who looked after the bulls of the Kremlin Dairy Farm.

"Whom do you want killed with the tractors, Alexis?"

"Don't you know? Those who deserve it".

Rostov explained to me that he did not want anything in the world so much as the time when I would become the warden of the jail, and he would be my chief of guards. Then he would crush all those who had crushed us, the peoples of Soviet Russia.

"They read the papers. They become excited. They listen to the radio. My God! My God! How foolish are those professors. The fools read and do not understand! They do not know that all that is written in those communist papers is just propaganda, written for fools."

"I think", said a quiet man from Karachai, "That the people should at least understand the purpose of those lies".

"They see, but do not understand, or else are not able to do anything about it. For instance, I see that innocent men have been sent to Solovky. You see it too. But Sultan Galaev saw it only when he came here".

"There is no need to talk about Sultan Galaev. Did you hear how they treated Demian Byedny, the chief of the Soviet boot-lickers. He will become an 'enemy of the people' at any moment now".

Demian Byedny, had written with scorn about the "Valiant Russian Knights". He mixed everything in life with mud. Then Stalin announced a new course of policy he played up the "Valiant Russian Heroes" and Byedny, slow to change his tune, was disgraced.

"There is an attack under way against all people in Soviet Russia who are not Russians. Not only were individuals like Sultan Galaev, Balbekov and others liquidated, but we all followed them, if not to death, then to imprisonment.

That is the important thing for educated leaders of other nations to understand."

"They understand", said Duha Crymovich.

"If they understand, then why do they agree with all the orders from the centre?"

"Why are they afraid to tell the truth? Why, at the congress of all writers, did only one dare to tell the truth to Maxim Gorky?"

Then Rostov told us about the Soviet Union congress of proletarian writers in Moscow under the leadership of Gorky.

"Maxim Gorky made a long speech at the congress, saying that now life had become easier and happier, he was wondering why the writers in the Soviet Union did not reflect this joyful life in their writings. He demanded with emphasis that they rebuild their work according to Stalin's directive that "life had become better".

Then after long speeches of agreement by many writers, an individual, whose name Rostov could not recall at the moment, stood up.

Turning to Maxim Gorky, he said "You demand that we write about our joyful, easy and happy life. How can we write about a happy life, when millions of people have not even finished burying those who died from famine. Other millions are jailed in prisons and concentration camps, still others perish from cold, starvation and torture and, in the face of all this, you demand that we write about a joyful and happy life. Do you think we are insane?"

The congress, in grave silence, listened to this truthful speech. But they did not have to wait long to see how that brave writer was transformed into a prisoner.

I listened to Rostov and was not surprised at all that he was so well informed. The national group of Tartars at Solovky was one of the best organized groups. They rallied around Galey-Halaev, Belbekov and Sultan Galaev. The leaders of the Tartar national group were all graduates of Kasan University, which the Tartars had made their national university. However, with the arrest of Sultan

Galaev, who was the leader of the patriotic Tartar communists in Soviet Tartary, the Russians slowly transformed it into a Russian institution.

Rostov himself belonged to the Tartars, who never compromised with Russian communists and were active in armed insurrections against the bolsheviks. His attitude towards Sultan Galaev was rather of reserve than of enmity. He could not forgive him for surrendering to the communists and believing their promises about "self determination with the right of separation". From Rostov's point of view, Sultan Galaev was a member of a class of "rotten intelligentsia", a "repenting communist". Rostov rather listened to Balbekov and Galey-Halaev, who were great patriots of their people and democrats, appreciating the European way of life.

"Repenting communists", said Rostov, "can only help, but should not be allowed to lead. Only those who know the nature and value of communism, socialism, revolution and counter-revolution and who have remained faithful to the principles of liberty, have the right to lead."

Rostov was direct and uncompromising in his actions as well as in his thoughts. He looked after five ill-tempered bulls from the dairy farm. They had the reputation of being evil beasts, and had already maimed a few prisoners, but they found a real master in Rostov. Rostov was a big man with bushy eyebrows, and reminded one of a bison. He had a deep bass voice, which was strong and commanding. He was not afraid of the bulls at all. Once, when the worst-tempered bull, called "Adam", selecting a suitable moment, attacked him, he quickly jumped aside, and roared at the bull with such a bellow that the animal was startled, and stopped short. He did not try to attack Rostov again. Everyone wondered how he could master the bulls so well. The secret of his success became known much later when all the cattle had been taken to the mainland.

This was his method. He yoked the bulls into a cart to bring hay, silos, manure and other things. This provided the necessary exercise for them. When some would not obey

him, he would take them into the dark bush near Sviate Lake tie them to a tree and whip them without mercy. Every bull finally understood why he was whipped, and so learned obedience.

Rostov was a man inclined to act on the spur of the moment. He spent all his life as a "basmach", an insurgent, and refused to recognise the Soviet authorities. When the chief of the local GPU arrested his wife, Rostov was in the forest leading a group of insurgents. He in turn, kidnapped the GPU chief's wife and ordered her to write to her husband saying that she was in Rostov's hands. The chief of GPU had no choice but to free Rostov's wife. When he did so, Rostov then freed *his* wife. This happened in 1931. He was an uncompromising enemy of the communists and thought that everything belonging to them should be destroyed.

He considered industrialism to be a form of slavery built on the modern achievement of machinery. According to his views, a tractor, as a symbol of peasant slavery, would be most suitably used, after communism had been defeated, to destroy the communists.

However, he did not want the return of the conditions existing before the revolution, when there were privileged classes. He always stood for liberty and free enterprise for every human being. He thought that everyone should be equal under the law, and that everyone should have the opportunity to chose work which he himself felt inclined to do. He was indifferent to religion. All religious feelings in him had been destroyed when, as a boy, he had been forcibly made to give up Mohammedanism and become a Greek Orthodox. In spite of that, when an agent of the third section came to him with the census, he registered himself as a believer, saying that he would always be one. Later Rostov bitterly rebuked an old man from Karachai named Duha Krymovich, for registering himself as an atheist, when in truth he was a deeply religious man. Duha had done this because he was afraid of the GPU census taker. He said that he was an unbeliever, but he was really

a sincere Mohammedan. He did not know what to say when Rostov accused him of hypocrisy.

"You know that I do not believe in God," said Rostov, "but I know that the communists want everyone to register himself as an atheist. Because of this, for spite, I say that I am a believer. They do not need to think that we believed in their Demian Byedny, or "The Alphabet of Communism" that Bucharin wrote".

Kikodze, a level-headed Georgian, always disagreed with Rostov.

Like all Georgian intelligentsia, he could never forget the four years of Georgian independence during the revolution. Lenin, who had proclaimed the watchword about "national self-determination with the right of separation" later crushed the independence of the Georgian people himself, and destroyed the social-democratic party which had built it up.

Kikodze never anathematized "repenting communists". He believed that they might become leaders of the people in the struggle for freedom. He reminded Rostov that, for instance, Napoleon and his minister Fushe had been extreme leftwing Jacobins and that the power that grew had not originated from the people, or from the followers of the Bourbons, but that it had been the former leftwingers who had liquidated the Jacobin dictatorship and decapitated Robespierre on the very same guillotine on which Robespierre, Napoleon and Fushe had beheaded Louis XVI.

He also condemned Rostov's arguments against industrialisation of the country. He saw a great future for the peoples of the USSR in building a strong industry. However, he thought that the new industry would have to serve the people instead of catering to the ruling clique. He did not share Rostov's idea that it would be possible, with the existing conditions in the USSR, to overthrow the government from the inside by insurrection. He put all his hopes on an unavoidable conflict between Stalin and Hitler. Kikodze loved to repeat "The Sun is rising in the west".

We all looked pessimistically on the future. Stalin was

the enemy but then we did not believe in Hitler either. Rostov could not agree with such thinking. "It does not matter who will lead us against Stalin. Let it be the devil himself. As long as he has a declaration on his banners that he will bring about a liquidation of communism, I will follow him". The majority agreed with Rostov.

"It is necessary to win today. When the masses are aroused and when they possess arms, then they will be able to check Hitler, too, if he is of the same kind as Stalin" said Rostov, and began to talk of his fantastic plans and how he would organise a division exclusively among former prisoners, and visit justice on all the GPU informers and denouncers.

At such moments, Rostov would become so worked up, in his wrath, that no one wished to argue with him, and the discussion would end. Then Rostov would call his favourite cat and go to his bulls. Rostov was a man of contrasts. He was severe with men, strict with the bulls and very tender with his old cat that he called "Vera Mikhailovna". He had picked it up when it was a little kitten, thrown out by some GPU family near the Kremlin walls.

He hid the kitten in his bosom and brought it back to his cell. It was sick and in pain. Rostov secured the advice of all the veterinarians, and the kitten became well. He called it "Vera Mikhailovna" in honour of a singer from the Moscow Opera who was now on Solovky. The woman was pleasant to everybody, but favoured the authorities most. The prisoners did not blame her for that. She was always very sympathetic and popular with every one.

It was worth watching how tenderly he treated his cat. When she gave birth to half a dozen little kittens, he did not kill them, but stole milk from the dairy for them. He gave every kitten its name and he trained them to respond to them. "Bandit", who always followed him around like a dog was one of his favourites. It seemed that there would be no more tragic events on Solovky for Rostov, but one day the third section searched all the Kremlin and other camps. They gathered all the cats on the island in a dun-

geon and shot them. The third section had learned that the prisoners had begun to use the cats as mail carriers between solitary dungeons.

"Our life has become better and happier", shouted Rostov to the group of children of the free hired agents of the GPU, who were playing under an arch near the Kremlin, on which a huge sign said "Life has become better. Life has become happier. J. Stalin."

"No, uncle" the children answered.

These children were allowed, on the first of May, to leave the district for hired collaborators of the GPU and go near the Kremlin. As a rule, the prisoners were confined to the isolation cells in the Kremlin every First of May, after Kirov had been killed. The only prisoners left outside the Kremlin were those who were considered absolutely indispensable. As there was no one to take Rostov's place with the bulls, the authorities had to allow him to stay outside.

"So you say it is not very happy," shouted Rostov. "Never mind, if it is not happy, it is safe, for they have shot every kitten. Now there is nothing to fear. Live happily". And he ended his speech with a Russian curse addressed to the "State Security". Then he returned to Sviat Lake where the dairy was situated.

This speech did not pass without consequences for Rostov. The very same night, he was arrested and imprisoned in an isolation camp.

THE NATIONAL MINORITY

"The guards are beating some prisoners near the North Gate" shouted a young boy, running by our buildings. Everyone whose cells were not locked tried to see what was happening.

A group of Tadzhiks and Uzbeks had been sent in the morning to the vegetable store to sort potatoes, radishes, turnips and other vegetables. The Uzbeks and Tadzhiks had always put long gowns on top of their prison coats. The gowns were always mended and in good repair, as they were, to them, a kind of sacred remembrance from the free life, in the same way as the Persian fur hats, called Kabanka, were with the Kuban Cossacks.

While sorting the vegetables the starving prisoners could not abstain from stealing at least a few potatoes or radishes. When they returned to the Kremlin, the guards searched the whole brigade and found vegetables on everyone. When the stolen vegetables were confiscated, the guards decided to punish the "blacks", as they called the Uzbeks and Tadzhiks and at the same time have some fun. Because the stolen things were under 500 grammes, the rules did not allow the prisoners to be sent to solitary confinement, but they could be punished by hard labour without food. The guards had no right to punish these prisoners, but then who thought about "rights" on Solovky? The guards selected an unusual way to punish them. They lined the prisoners against the wall, and ordered them to stand at attention with uncovered heads, and every guard tried to hit the prisoner in the face with the confiscated vegetables. This method was so novel for the Solovky population that soon a great crowd of the free hired GPU workers had gathered near the gate. They were joined by the wives, children and relatives of the GPU officials. Everyone laughed happily when a guard missed but they applauded louder when the guard scored a hit, and the faces of the prisoners became

covered with blood. Just when a big red-headed guard threw a turnip in the face of an old Uzbek, Beklemanov, a stone whistled from the opposite side of the Kremlin block and hit the guard. The man staggered, swung his hands wildly in the air, and then stretched out on the ground. All the hired men raised a great shout, and ran to the red-headed guard. The first stone was followed by a storm of rocks thrown by a crowd of "natsmen" (members of the national minorities in the USSR) who had gathered at the North Gate of the Kremlin.

"Run to the Kremlin!" Chodzhaev, a former chairman of the council of people's commissars in Uzbekistan, shouted to the tortured prisoners. In 1935, for nationalistic deviations he had been sent to Solovky. Now he stood up in the defence of his countrymen against this humiliation.

"Beat the Russian rabble! shouted Usmanov, a Tadzhik, while he threw stones as hard as he could at the retreating group of onlookers and guards, who did not show much bravery.

Suddenly, machine guns began to spatter from the towers, showering the North Gate area with bullets.

"Follow me" shouted Chodzhaev, "Break this door". They broke down a light door which led directly into the wall of the Kremlin. He led his people to Uspensky Cathedral and to the place where the outstanding benefactors of the Solovky Monastery were buried. There he tried to break another door and scatter the men in their cells. He did not have time to complete his plan. The guards were ready, and all the Uzbeks and Tadzhiks were tied up and taken to a deep dungeon under the former refectory. However, not one was shot or punished by additional imprisonment. Ivan Ivanovich himself investigated their case and decided in their favour, but from that time on they were all kept inside the isolation block.

MITROSHA

Mitroscha was a professional safecracker. He had given up his real name and surname for the name of Mitroscha by which he was known to the GPU and the prisoners. He was on Solovky from Medvezha Mount where the main office of White Sea-Baltic Camps was located. Mitroscha was successful enough there to acquire the position of a cleaner in the building adjoining the room where the safes were kept. Through bad luck, instead of emptying the safes, he was caught and received an additional term of imprisonment.

"The Natsmen had no reason for the offence" he once remarked. "The guards threw potatoes in their faces, but what did they expect for stealing? A reward? The real hero is the one who steals and is never caught" he continued, spitting from time to time.

"Do you think, Mitroscha, that the guards were right?"

"Why do you ask? Naturally they were right. Everything is right here. When Chodzhaev broke the head of the red-headed guard, it was right, and when the guards beat the Natsmen, it was right too. Only I do not know why they had to do all that, and now sit in isolation cells. I would not see any offence if someone hit me on the face with a potato which I had stolen. They knew what they would get if they were caught. After all, they had very little reason to get mad at the guards. Of course the guards hit them which is against the law, but what idiot comes to Solovky to look for law? Ivan Ivanovich is not so bad. If the same thing had happened when Nogtev, the governor in 1929, was here, he would have shot not only the whole brigade, but all the Tadzhiks and Uzbeks on Solovky.

"Were you here in the time of Nogtev?"

"Yes, and I also remember Uspenskoho, Gleb Boki and Kurilka. And I will tell you that all these Solovky governors were promoted. Gleb Boki, who shot a great number of

prisoners, became a member of the GPU College of the USSR. During his lifetime a great ship navigating between Solovky and Archangel was named in his honour. After he died, his name was written on the memorial tablet of revolutionary heroes in Moscow in the Red Square. The last time I saw him was on Popov Island in 1930, the time when the guards burned a barrack, and he was sent as chairman of the committee of inquiry”.

“Did you say he came from Moscow for the sake of one barrack, Mitrosha? It seems rather unusual”.

“Do you want them to burn ten barracks at once? After Gleb Boki visited Popov Island they began to burn barracks with prisoners, as the easiest way to get rid of them. I know five places where, each time, more than two barracks were burned.

“The same happened on Popov Island. The temperature was forty degrees below zero. The prisoners were dressed in rags, their bast shoes were torn, their coats were full of holes, but the guards and foremen ordered them to go to work.

“The men began to beg the guards to let them stay in that day, or at least issue them new bast shoes. The prisoners knew that in such cold, most of them would be crippled for life. The guards would not listen, but tried to drive them out. At first the prisoners pleaded but finally refused to go out until new bast shoes were given them.

“The guards surrounded the barrack with machine guns, poured benzine on it and fired it from all sides. The prisoners rushed to the doors and windows but were met with machinegun fire. In this way more than seven hundred men perished. Someone wrote a complaint to Moscow that innocent people had been burned. Then Gleb Boki came with a committee of inquiry from Moscow. He came, talked with the guards, and went to see the place where the barrack had stood. We were all happy, for we thought that he might take Koshkin, the chief of the local GPU, and have him shot. But, after inquiring into everything, he said, “These counter-revolutionary dogs did not want to work

and they got what they deserved”. He praised Koshkin for his action. He gathered all the prisoners and told them that whoever refused to work would be shot. This was different treatment from hitting them on the face with a potato.

“No one can say that the present Solovky doesn't appear to be a summer resort in comparison with what we saw, or what takes place even now in other concentration camps. When we were driven to cut bush at Novo-Sosnova, Valdai, or at the Filipivska railroad branch, we started when it was still dark and returned at night. Many never came back. It often happened that the prisoner would become so exhausted at work that he would not be able to move. The guard would take all his clothing off, and seat him on a tree stump. “Stay naked in the frost if you do not want to work.” The man would have to stay like that until he fell down, frozen. If he tried to say something, they beat him, and poured water over him. On Solovky they either put a man in a solitary cell or else shot him. In other places they torture the prisoners until he begs to be shot. There is no reason to complain about the treatment of the Natsmen. The guards simply wanted to have some fun”, concluded Mitrosha.

“Since you started the story, tell us everything, Mitrosha” said an old man with a grey beard.

“What shall I tell you, grandfather? I know! Take your beard for example. The guards, in other places, took all the priests and monks, and cut their beards without mercy. Some monks were ready to die for them, but all to no avail.

“Now I will tell you about Nogtev. He was arrested by Solts and sent to Moscow. We were told that he and Kurilka had been shot. But when I was at Medvezha Mount, I found that Nogtev had been made the chief of all lumber camps in the north of the USSR. So for shooting us, they have become governors. I am certain that Kurilka is alive, too, and continues to shoot prisoners in other places.

“Fellows, I do not want to say anything more. I am sick of it. One thing is clear. You can be sure that it is check-

mate for all of us." He covered his head with his coat and fell asleep.

"He is right. It is time to sleep" said someone, and one by one the prisoners slept.

NEWS

The Kremlin was buzzing with the news. It passed from one person to another in whispers, but many prisoners doubted it. Finally the ATC gave us the exact information. On June 25th, 1937, at 10 a.m. a plane landed at the Solovky airport with important members of the GPU. At 12 a.m. Ivan Ivanovich was led from his office without his arms or belt. His insignia had been torn off. He was imprisoned in one of the cells under the White House, and plans were prepared to make radical changes on Solovky.

The prisoners were brought from all the outlying working points to the Kremlin. It was the agricultural season, but no one was let out of the Kremlin. Only those who looked after the cattle were allowed to leave for the day. At night they had to return. At 10 p.m., all the cells were locked. All the pictures of party moguls, propaganda placards and loudspeakers were taken down immediately.

The cultural-educational section was liquidated. The men were divided between the third section and the works section. All the prisoners who had been appointed as managers of certain branches, such as agriculture and the production of iodine, were sent to the isolation cells. Free men were appointed in their stead. The same happened with all the bookkeepers, and the managers of the stores and farms.

On the 27th of June, at 1 p.m. new authorities arrived at the Kremlin. All the prisoners stood in lines, except those who were left in solitary confinement. It was announced that from now on, the "Eighth Special Solovky Division of the White Sea-Baltic Camp would be called the "Solovky Jail of the Special Designation of the Chief Administration for the USSR State Security". The prisoners would be called "men deprived of liberty" (lishennye svobody). There would be two roll calls instead of one. The prisoners who, for some reason, could not be used for work, would receive 400 grams of bread. All activity of the cultural and edu-

cational sections would cease. The activity of newspapers or radio news among the prisoners would be prohibited with death as a punishment for the violation of this rule.

The siren wailed and we were taken back to our cells.

"We thank you, captain of the ship" a prisoner said to Neshchadimenko. "You did well to prepare the bars beforehand!"

"Give thanks to the GPU, my man" answered the smith, who, along with his helpers, were the only ones who had not been sent to the cells. He laughed and said, "My smiths will not be among the 'unemployed' for some time yet. We will work until we have made enough bars for philosophers like you. When we have finished the bars and shutters for all the windows we will make good bars for ourselves, and will join you".

"You may joke about it, but we do not think you will be glad when that day comes".

"What is bad about it? It is fine for us. We will just sit behind the bars and sing the song 'We wave to you from the prison with a handkerchief'".

"The song will not suit you, master. Your bars would not allow you to wave anything, and singing would be prohibited." To change the subject, someone began the song, "The spring came, but not for me". Far, far away the sounds of the song floated, over the wall of the Kremlin, over the red flag waving above Uspensky Cathedral. The prisoners next sang a well known Ukrainian song, called "Before My Eyes an Endless Road Opens", which speaks about death in exile. The man who started it cried as he sang. All of us joined in, knowing the meaning of the song.

"Stop this sorrow! It is time to gather courage," said Zbarazhsky who used crutches for walking. "Tears will not help us. It just won't do any good."

"That is true, father, but when we sing, we feel better and our hearts feel lighter" said a young man, looking over the wall towards the sea.

"It is hot" he said, opening the window. Standing on the windowsill, he shouted, "I will direct the singing, com-

rades." He began, "A Falcon Became an Eagle's Brother." We all joined in. Then with a shout, we ran to the window. Down on the ground, the broken body of the young prisoner lay.

"Return to your cells", shouted the guard from the tower, directing the machine gun on the window. Everyone went to his cell. The body of Yurko Vysochansky was put on a blanket and carried to the morgue.

The next day, five hundred prisoners, as a special task, barred all the windows. Above the bars and over the windows was hung a kind of small protruding roof, which cut off the view of the sea. Now the sea would not tempt the prisoners with liberty, and they would be expected to die quietly without trouble. The new period of the "Solovky Jail of Special Designation" had begun. Silence reigned now. All talk about a transfer to the continent, which usually circulated every spring, ceased.

It appeared that the prospect of spending many years in the closed jail was a certainty.

Large freight ships arrived at the Solovky bay, carefully picking their way through the mine fields, which surrounded the Solovky islands for twenty miles. These ships were filled with thousands of tons of construction materials.

The building engineers planned a huge modern jail about two miles away from the Kremlin on the spot where the former brickyards had been. This jail would serve as an addition to the Kremlin and jails at Savatievo, Anzer and Isaakovo at Muksolma. All together, they would be called the Solovky prison.

The efforts of thousands of human lives and the millions of roubles that had been used for the development of the Solovky agriculture project according to the directives of Michurin, were eliminated in no time. The sows, calves, horses and pigs were taken back to the mainland.

Everything was removed from the island except the men and all loading was done by prisoners under strong guard. A large transport of labourers from collective farms and of factory workers arrived at Solovky. The GPU had taken

them directly from the streets, accusing them of all kinds of trifles. Some were arrested and jailed because they had boarded the street car from the wrong side, against the rules. Some were sent to Solovky for stealing a bag of straw from a collective farm. The old Solovky prisoners were replaced by representatives of the classless socialistic society in the USSR, such as farm labourers on state farms and proletarians. Their garb did not differ much from our prison outfits in spite of the fact that they still wore their own clothing. Speaking about the newcomers, one old prisoner said, "It is true that Solovky is a USSR in miniature. The free people have the same prison coats, the same make of shoes and practically the same regime".

"No, it is not so. All party members, GPU staff, informers and others like them are not dressed so badly. It is only those who do not belong to the party, such as farm labourers and factory workers, who live in the same way as we do. Since the common people live like ourselves, it means that we are the true people and not the enemies of the people", said the former manager of the collective farm, "The Star of Illich (Lenin)". He still did not know why he had been condemned for fifteen years hard labour. He had joined us on Solovky only a month before.

"And you, pest, did not know it till now?" asked Sashka. "Such idiots as you should be sent here to be taught to understand", he continued, shaking the last crumbs of some cheap tobacco from his pockets.

"Give me some more tobacco", he told the former head of the state farm. "Do it like a representative of socialism would to an old Solovky inmate." He stretched his half-empty paper to the man.

"I do not have tobacco, my friend. Really, I have none" said the manager.

"You never have anything. You have it only for Stalin. For him you have everything".

"Comrade, we do not stand up for him. It is he who hunts us and it is he who takes not only what we have in our collective huts, but us as well".

"Do not lie. He does not search your huts. It is you who write denunciations. You do it until the time when you yourself are taken to be killed in concentration camps".

"Keep quiet!" Along the carpeted corridor, a guard trod with silent shoes. He came to the door, stood a while listening, then opened the eye-hole, looked in, and continued his rounds.

"Fellows! A Transport! They are taking away the women" said Sashka in a subdued voice. He tried to bend his head so that he could see the procession. We ran to the windows. Near the wall of the Kremlin marched a column of women.

"Nastia Pleskan! Marusia Semenko! Vechora! Krushelnitska! Vera Mykhailovna! Musa Vasylivna! Klementina Lanina! Leah Shmidt! Odynets-Rabinovich!" called the prisoners as they recognised the marching women.

"So, Sasha, your wards are being sent to the mainland".

"God bless them all! They are all, according to the Soviet law, of the same class origin (socially related) with the ruling party, and it is not proper for them to remain on Solovky".

"How is it that the cannibals have become 'socially related'?"

"It is very simple. Is it possible that in the criminal code of any civilized country there would be a law dealing with cannibalism?"

"Naturally not".

"That is why they are registered as 'socially related'. It was impossible to insert in the criminal code a special law against cannibalism. Instead the government condemned all who, during the famine, had eaten human flesh and had not been liquidated for 'murder for enrichment'. For such murder, the law imposed a punishment for ten years of hard labour. It sounds ridiculous, but it means that those people who ate the flesh of their own children, already dead, did it for their 'personal enrichment'".

"There are many things that are strange in this world, my friend", said Sadovsky and suddenly pointed to the door.

The guard, who had returned again, looked through the eye-hole and said, "You are not allowed to watch through the windows. Get away from them". We returned to our places.

"Our Solovky women have left us," said Slisarenko, a writer.

"You know what?" said Sashka, "Our women on Solovky were heroines. They suffered much, and did not break down. God bless them."

"Vasileva was such a beautiful woman" said someone else.

"Which one? The daughter of the secretary of the Leningrad Provincial Party Committee who was shot in connection with the case of Kirov?"

"Yes," came the answer.

"She was attractive, proud and independent, and how they tortured her".

"Remember Vechora? She came to Solovky when she was seventeen years old, a heroic, clean, fine-looking girl. The GPU rabble tried to break her. Now she looks as if she had been crucified."

"Odinets-Rabinovich was sent here for Ukrainian Nationalism. She suffered only because she married a Ukrainian patriot".

The door opened suddenly and the guard pushed Kan, one of the informers, into the cell.

"O! you spy! You have been finally sent here to stay with us, too. I see that the new authorities do not need informers now", whispered Sashka, and hit Kan on the chin. Blood began to flow from his mouth.

"Citizen guard! Citizen guard!" shouted Kan, his tongue cut by his own teeth. "They will kill me! They will kill me!"

The little window opened and the guard put his head in.

"Who is beating you?"

"Semionov", said Kan, shaking. He pointed to Sashka.

"Semionov, you are not allowed to fight", said the

guard. "He will not do it again, Kan!" Banging the little door of the opening, he went away.

"Are you trying to report us again, you pest?"

"Leave him alone, Sashka. Let the devil take him".

Sashka took Kan by the collar, dragged him into the corner, and sat him on the pail for natural necessities, which was called "parasha".

"Here is your corner, you bitch. On this parasha, you pest, you will perish". The sobbing Kan tried to stop the flow of blood. He leaned against the wall, and streams of tears ran from his eyes.

"You knew what you were doing when you betrayed hundreds of our comrades to torture and death." Sashka looked for a while at Kan as he cried, and then, without a word, spat in his face.

"Genady Leonidovich (Sadovsky) please read to us" asked Sashka and we all joined with our pleas. Sadovsky took the book "Strong as Death" which had been written by Guy de Maupassant, and read it to us, translating it from French. The book had been somehow saved by a prisoner, and was the only one we had.

"That is a wonderful story", said Sashka. When Genady had finished reading, Sashka paced the cell for a long time. Then he came to Kan, who sat without moving on parasha, and said:

"Did you hear what kind of people there are and what love they have in their hearts? And what are you? Who will write a song or tell a story about such a good-for-nothing, despicable informer as you. I, Sashka, who am a thief among thieves, tell you to leave the idiotic habit of selling human lives, for in the end you will sit, not on parasha, but under it".

Kan, covering his face with his hands and bending his head, silently cried.

"Sashka, leave him alone."

"All right, I will not bother him any more. Let him perish here like a dog," said Sashka, going to his corner.

Genady Leonidovich Sadovsky with thirteen years of

slave camps behind him, was still unbent. He always tried to help others to be strong and manly, as he used to do twelve years ago in Kiev, when the Ukrainian nation was fighting for its freedom. He was four years at Moresplav and ten years at Solovky. Now he was always in the centre of everything, teaching the people to love their far-away Ukraine.

Genady was nervous that day. He listened attentively to the conversation. There was a possibility that we would be moved to a transport, or that some might be freed, and so, to calm himself, he took his bandura and began to play an old Ukrainian ballad which told of the suffering of a Cossack, Morosenko, in foreign captivity. As he played, he sang in a pleasant velvety baritone voice. We all listened with rapture.

The singing suddenly stopped. The head of the guard appeared through the small window in the door. We could see tears in his eyes. He whispered, "You can play, boys, only do it quietly. Take care that you are not heard by the chiefs. I will go away. What a life!" and saying this he softly closed the opening.

"Did you see that?" whispered Sashka to Kan. "Now keep quiet about it, you snake". Kan jumped up from his pail, fell on his knees before everyone in the cell and lifted his hands up. His big eyes were filled with tears and he was shaking all over.

"I swear to you by the dust of my parents that I will never betray anyone again", he cried. Then he got up and sat on the parasha again. No one dared to let him leave the pail. He would have to bear the punishment if he wanted to remain alive. Such was the unwritten law among the prisoners.

Genady put his bandura aside. "Comrades," he said, "There was a time when I was sold by my own people through their foolishness and pride. I was saved from death by a Jewish woman. Should we not free Kan from the parasha?"

"We have no right, Genady Leonidovich" said Sashka. "We cannot break the laws of the prison."

"Sashka is right! The prison laws should be kept".

"It is up to you" said Sadovsky, taking up his bandura again. He softly sang the songs, composed by the prisoners of concentration camps, that described their suffering, and the comradeship of all nationalities against the common foe.

When he came to an end we were all thoughtful. Not only the melody but also the words had made a deep impression on us. The siren sounded the end of the roll call in the Kremlin. It was time to go to bed and slowly we fell asleep.

About two o'clock in the morning two guards entered the cell.

"Sadovsky!"

"Present!"

"Your name and the name of your father!"

"Genady Leonidovich!"

"Come!"

They took his bandura and the bag with the things his wife had sent.

"Good-bye, comrades. Think well of me", and he followed the guards.

In the morning we heard knocking at the wall.

"Hurry up, Kolia. It is the ATC". Kolia received the message and read it.

"The ATC is speaking. Ivan Ivanovich has been accused of participating in the conspiracy of Trotsky and Bukharin, and has been charged with mismanagement of the prisons. He will be shot. All Ukrainians will be transported either today or tomorrow. The women were sent to Vegeraksha-Kem. The chief of the ATC will be put in solitary today. The future password is three-seven. Another item. Sadovsky has received three additional years of imprisonment".

The Solovky hospital had special cells for the insane. The windows in the cells were barred but they did not have the small protruding roofs above the windows. From the

third floor of Uspensky Cathedral some prisoners were able to see Genady Sadovsky, who was now insane, as he paced his cell, methodically turning his head from side to side.

Slisarenko said that some of the information from the ATC was not correct. There was no prospect that the prisoners would be taken elsewhere. The whole cell agreed with him.

On the fourth night, all Ukrainians were called for transport! Only Peter Hrebinyk, a professor of Ukrainian literature, and I were left behind. Fate had something different in store for us.

The transport left Solovky. The Ukrainians were transferred to some other concentration camp about which we knew nothing. Now only God and the Moscow tyrants know if these great Ukrainian heroes and martyrs are dead or alive.

In 1937, on the 25th of December, the icebreaker took prisoners born in Siberia to Moresplav. Among them, in the hold of the ship, were Hrebinyk and I.

Under a strong guard, we were taken to the same two-storey barrack where I had been put four years ago. We were placed on the second floor. The barrack was surrounded by two rows of barbed wire, with police dogs in between, and a great number of machine gun towers behind.

Every night we were visited by Uncle Vania, our old acquaintance. He was always happy and drunk. He was the same Uncle Vania who had advised us not to be afraid of Solovky because it was also Russian land.

We inquired about our friends who had gone before us. Uncle Vania spread out his hands, and said, "I do not know. They were dressed in new prisoner's coats. The buttons on their trousers were cut off and the belts were taken away. After that, they were loaded in freight cars under a very strong guard and were taken in the direction of Petrozavodsk. No one knows the destination of the transport".

"What will happen to you, Uncle Vania? What will happen to us?"

Uncle Vania looked at us, shrugged his shoulders and said that he did not know. He really did not have the information. The GPU did not trust him. Besides how could anyone in Moresplav know the secret orders referring to the Solovky prisoners of a special division?

The night before the New Year, Uncle Vania came to the cell, very drunk. When he entered, he commanded, "Stand up! Uncle Vania has arrived".

We all got up. Uncle Vania laughed, and said to us, "Brothers, I have come to greet you with the New Year. "Happy New Year, comrade revolutionaries! Down with Czars! We will level churches and prisons to the ground!"

We stood before that drunk dreamer, one of the last representatives of the old revolutionary guard of 1917, and could not understand him.

"Drink, comrades! said Uncle Vania, and began to pull bottles of vodka from his pockets. One by one we went to him. Of course there were no unwilling persons among the prisoners in the barrack. Everyone had enough, as Uncle Vania had brought five litres of vodka in his bottomless pockets.

Prisoners immediately organised a concert. A Siberian, Leonidiv, a former member of the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra appeared with a violin on the platform.

The sounds of beautiful music filled the badly lighted barrack. Then another artist sang two songs. My comrade, Hrebinyk, could not hold himself back any longer and took his turn next. He was a tall man and had a black beard and a pale face. He reminded us of a martyr in the old painting. Hrebinyk looked at us kindly.

"Happy New Year, my friends," and not waiting for the answer, sang the famous Ukrainian prayer from a well-known opera.

The beautiful melody and the solemn words of prayer touched our hardened hearts. We wanted desperately to

pray and to live but at the same time we realized that the future promised us, not good things, but new fears and humiliations.

We all felt sad, and returned to our hard beds on the floor. Uncle Vania sat on the bench near the platform and cried bitterly. Uncle Vania cried . . . while outside the New Year snowstorm howled.

EPILOGUE

I am standing and watching the grinding disk of the lathe. Not far from me a huge machine blinks, showing all the different colours of the spectrum every second.

I am a grinder and soon I will be a Canadian citizen. I am free now and I am happy with the happiness that can be known only to those who have drunk from the cup of bitterness and suffered the degradation of slavery.

As I watch the changing colours of the machine, I think, "This is my life", rich in changes but filled with cruel red and black colours.

Slowly pictures from the past arise before my eyes. Of how we took leave of Uncle Vania when he was drunk but in a friendly mood.

"Do not be disheartened, Karelia is Russian land also," he said. Then he whispered to one of the prisoners "Everything will be all right. At first you were to be liquidated, but now everything will be fine".

The news that everything would be fine spread quickly among the prisoners.

They drove us three hundred miles on foot through deep snow. We were marching to the place where everything would be fine.

The prisoners were divided into small groups and scattered among numerous slave camps in the Northern Karelo-Finnish Republic, which was just another name for the White Sea-Baltic concentration camps.

Our group was assigned to the fourteenth section. The camp was situated in a swamp. The barracks had their own portion of Russian bugs and the conditions here were worse than anything I had ever seen before. Nevertheless "it was fine".

It was now the time of mass shootings in Soviet Russia, which took place after short intervals of comparative quiet.

Not only were the small fry shot but bigwigs such as Bucharin, Rakovsky and Piatakov were liquidated.

While prisoners were being shot for "attempts to escape", "agitation against the government", and "sabotage", the bigwigs were shot for other reasons.

Many were shot for maiming themselves. Driven to desperation by the unbearable hard labour and the inhuman conditions, they would cut off their fingers, or toes, saying that it was done accidentally. But the authorities did not believe or condone the accidents and began to add three additional years of imprisonment to their terms. Later for the same offence the men were shot.

However, there were some spirits that could not be bent. Misha Kryukov was one of these. One day, after two prisoners had been shot in front of the barracks for maiming themselves, he started a hunger strike. Lying on the boards of the sleeping platform he wrote an open letter to the Soviet Government. I can only remember the end of his letter where he recited the verses of V. Maiakovsky:

You may shoot me tied up to a post,
I will not change.
If you wish, I can mark my forehead
With an ace of diamonds
So that the target will shine brighter.

I do not think that anyone put an ace of diamonds on Misha's forehead. The NKVD always shoots a person in the back of the head. He was killed, not at our camp, but at Idel, centre of the whole section.

A few weeks later, escorted by two guards, I was taken to Idel also. My fellow prisoners sadly said goodbye to me. I was young, in spite of the impression my long beard gave, and I wanted to live even if it had to be in a slave camp. With a heavy heart I left the 14th Section.

But miracles can happen. Instead of being shot, I spent a few weeks in a deep dungeon, which, for some reason had the impressive name of "political isolation cell".

I was removed from that hole, still alive, but with double pneumonia and other complications. They sent me

to the black barracks near the river Vyg, which, for no reason at all, were called a hospital. Certainly there was not much need to transfer me to the hospital, as I weighed only about 54 pounds.

In the hospital I just lay fevered and delirious. Everyone expected me to die without delay. Out of the low window of my barrack, I could see some old men taking carts full of dead bodies from our hospital to the graves nearby every morning. However, I determined that I would not die, and my willpower won out.

After being discharged from the hospital, I was sent to Yuriev Island, where I chopped down trees and floated them in the river. For many months thereafter I worked in different sections, on different islands, at different tasks, until suddenly, as a bolt from the blue sky, a treaty of friendship between Stalin and Hitler was announced. From then on the authorities called me "an enemy of the people", instead of a "fascist dog".

But I learned always to remain silent. Everyone who had any connection with me looked on me as a person who had achieved the peak of socialistic personality and such a person does not need anything, does not care for anything and has no claims on anyone. In their eyes I was a man who had become accustomed to slavery, had accepted his lot and who had chosen to forgive his judges.

This saved me. I was neither shot nor given an additional term of imprisonment, and after the end of eight years, I was released. Freedom at last! Or so I thought. My relief was short-lived.

First I was deprived of my citizenship rights. Then, after being ordered to shave my beard, I was told to live in the small town of Isyum. As a political prisoner I had no right to correspond with anyone or to go anywhere, but I had the "right" of reporting to local NKVD every week.

I was not given any work or a means to live by. I could not even secure work as a woodcutter, the new trade that I had acquired in the North. I was an enemy of the people.

In desperation, I went to the secretary of the local

communist party and told him, "I am a former counter-revolutionary condemned for an armed uprising against the present government. If you will not give me some work, then put me back into jail or I will have to start robbing the peaceful citizens of this town.

The next day I was sent to a collective group, strangely named "Cultural Collective Group". The task of this group was to "spread culture" and was made up of former barbers, brushmakers, combmakers, and soapmakers.

On Sunday, June 22nd, 1941, I went to bed late, I awoke in a very happy mood, for I had dreamed a beautiful dream.

One hour later my dream came true. Comrade Molotov hysterically shouted over all the radio stations that "a treacherous enemy had attacked our motherland".

My wife visited me illegally for a few hours. I showed her the building of the secretary of the party from a distance and told her that in two months I would be working in that building.

My wife pointed to a forbidding NKVD prison and asked me to be careful not to go there instead. But that dreaded time came and nothing could help me.

On the suggestion of my superiors, I called a meeting of my "Cultural Collective Group" and raved to them with the best of my ability and lungs about my loyalty to Stalin. I also cursed the Germans and Hitler without restraint. I volunteered to "fight the enemy on his own territory". In spite of all my efforts I was soon at rest in the NKVD jail.

But I still kept my faith, for I knew that my dream would not deceive me and that everything would turn out all right.

Two struggling engines were dragging a long train containing the wives of communist chiefs. NKVD stoolpigeons, artists, etc. There was crying, laughing and quarreling. The prisoners were placed in a few freight cars that had barred windows. The night was dark. The September fog and rain covered everything. Above us we could hear the German bombers.

During that dark night a few other prisoners and I escaped to the West, for the West was to us the symbol of freedom.

However, our joy was again short-lived. In a short time we were transported westwards, not to freedom but to a German concentration camp. But still we believed that our hope lay in the West. The Fascist oppression was destroyed and the prison was in ruins. But it was not the end of our suffering. Stalin wanted us all back according to the promise the Western statesmen at Yalta had given him.

I became one of the first of those who refused to return to our "Motherland". The reader now knows why.

The sun of Western freedom had been darkened for us. After a wild and fierce fight in which we used our teeth and nails, tin cans, sticks and other primitive weapons, we were overpowered by both white and coloured American soldiers. Children, girls, aged men and women, and even mothers with babies took part in that fight. They resisted with all their might the armed soldiers who were trying to herd them together and deliver them to the Russians according to the Yalta agreement.

I organized this resistance and took part in the fighting. I was overpowered last among the refugees. I was stripped naked and thrown into a deep cell which had been built by Hitler's Gestapo.

Everything was ready for our return to the "Motherland". The Soviet car arrived. Russia wanted most of all the men like my fellow-refugees and myself. We knew too much.

But finally our friends interceded for us. Colonel Duncan, who was commanding the 137 Tank Regiment, came to my cell, shook my hand and saluted me. As I stood there without any clothing I was so perplexed, that I saluted him too in military fashion. The rest was the fulfilment of my dream. Canada opened her doors widely and generously to the unhappy refugees from Soviet Russia. Now the past appears as a nightmare. I do not blame the readers who will find it hard to believe my story, but it is true. More-

over, I will tell you that I have not dared to write all that I have seen, for some of it is so horrible that I would not be considered sane.]

And now the grinding disk rotates with great speed in front of me, and the huge machine blinks displaying the different colours. I know that neither my foreman nor even the director of the Company where I work will send me to jail for a few years if I fail to do my job properly. I think again about the changing colours of the machine. (How I wish with all my heart that not only for me, but for my Ukraine also and for all the people of Soviet Russia the cruel black and red of Russia would give place to the gladdening sunshine of my life in Canada.)

SEMEN ALEKSANDROVICH PIDHAINY

Semen Aleksandrovich Pidhainy was born on April 17th, 1907. A Kuban Cossack, he lived on the Kuban until he was 17 years of age. In 1922, the Communists shot his father, who had been taking an active part in the struggle for complete independence from Russia and the creation of a Kuban Cossack Republic in alliance with Ukraine. The rest of his family was liquidated by the Bolsheviks. Semen Pidhainy, by using forged identification certificates, escaped to Kiev and studied there at the University.

When he graduated in 1929, the GPU discovered his true identity. Only due to the intervention of Skrypnyk, a powerful member of the Politburo did Mr. Pidhainy escape the slave camps. He went to Kharkiv and continued his studies, intending to become a professor. For some time he taught Ukrainian history as an assistant professor at the same university.

On January 17th, 1933 he was arrested by the GPU and accused of taking part in a Ukrainian underground organization called the Union of the Kuban and Ukraine. It was alleged that this society had intended to unite Ukraine and the Kuban Cossacks after separating them from Russia.

On August 8th, 1933 Pidhainy was condemned to eight years' hard labour on the Solovky Islands. In 1941, after serving his term, he was deprived of all civic rights, and after much trouble was allowed to live in the city of Isum. He was prohibited from leaving the city and was obliged to report weekly to the local GPU.

In August, 1941 he was arrested again but escaped to German territory. He returned to Kharkiv in November and worked as chief of the city welfare department. When the Communists occupied Ukraine again in 1944 he escaped again to Germany and was placed in a German slave camp for refugees.

After the defeat of Germany Pidhainy was active in the organizing of a Ukrainian democratic party which was striving for the liberation of Ukraine. As a representative of that party, he became a member of the Ukrainian Government in exile.

Now in Canada, he is the President of the Ukrainian Association of Victims of Russian Communist Terror, and he is known as a gifted author and leader.