FOR
LAND and FREEDOM

By

KALENIK LISSIUK

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**A STORY OF THE NEVER - ENDING
STRUGGLE OF THE OPPRESSED**

*All monies received from the sale of these
booklets to be donated by me to
the Ukrainian Museum to be
built in Los Angeles,
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INTRODUCTION

The history of the bitter and prolonged struggle between Ukrainia and Russia contains many extraordinary and vivid pages.

For a period of about two hundred years this conflict had been waged undercover and it was only at the time of the general Revolution in the former Russian Empire that it emerged into an opened, armed war between Ukrainia and her historic oppressor, Russia.

Many were the small nationalities subjugated by the heavy Russian crown and not one of them ever for an instant entirely submitted to its fate. Therefore, they all broke away from Russia at the outbreak of the Revolution.

Yet, although Great Russia accepted with comparative calm the loss of Poland, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and other small countries, she refused to be reconciled to separation from the fertile Ukrainia and its industrious people.

The Russians ruthlessly opposed the striving of Ukrainia for an independent political existence. The Soviet Government continued to adhere — in relation to Ukrainia — to the imperialistic policy maintained by the Tsarist Russia.

The Ukrainia - Russian War, which began in 1918, presents an exceptional phase in the history of the Ukrainian fight for independence and abounds in episodes of an exciting and stirring character.

Behind the Enemy Lines

The Commander of the Bolshevist Lenin Division, Iakov Sokulsky, had just arrived in Odessa, where he had been summoned to an urgent and very important military conference.

The situation which necessitated this conference resulted from the recent success of the Ukrainian National Republic Army. By its bold and intelligent operations, it had paralyzed all the movements of the Bolshevist Division commanded by Sokulsky, a prominent Bolshevist leader.

For him to advance and execute the designs of the Supreme Command was a task beset with difficulties. At the front he was annoyed by the activities of the Ukrainian Cavalry, while the partisan detachments strongly pressed on his rear and flanks.

By some means the Ukrainians had succeeded in finding out about all the plans of operation of Sokulsky and very skillfully made use of the adroitness of their military espionage service.

Thus every strategical move of Sokulsky was forestalled by a counter move. The Ukrainian intelligence naturally had the tremendous moral and material support of the Ukrainian population. In every village and almost in every house there was at least one man whose heart and soul was devoted to the Ukrainian National Cause and ready to do all he could to help the work of the Ukrainian military command.

Moscow was dissatisfied with Sokulsky and another Bolshevist commander had been appointed to take his place as commander of the Lenin Division.

The new Commander was charged with carrying out a new plan of advance upon the Ukrainian army; moreover he had special instructions concerning the general situation in the Ukraina.

Prior to this change of commanders of the Lenin Division and the adoption of new plans of military operations, a special military conference was called, the purpose of which was to carry into effect changes in the Bolshevist army in the Ukraina.

On the day appointed for this conference Sokulsky arrived in Odessa in a very bad humor. As soon as he had changed his traveling clothes, he gathered his papers and

went to the War Commissariat, which was located, together with other central Bolshevist Departments, on the Deribasovskaya Street.

He noticed that on his way there, the town once renowned for its street life looked almost dead now. The stores were closed; Red soldiers nonchalantly cracking sunflower seeds, stood guard at the larger stores while the passers-by were few.

Everything had been nationalized in this formerly rich and brisk commercial town, while the nearness to the firing lines increased the general confusion and the feeling of depression and alarm.

The inhabitants preferred to stay away from the streets, where indeed it was not safe to move about. Most of the passers-by were either soldiers or workers hurrying to leave behind them the deserted gloomy sidewalks. Others who found it necessary to be on the street edged along the walls, like wild creatures in fear of hunters.

Sokulsky having gone a few blocks, was already on the Deribasovskaya Street when the noise of shooting stopped him. It soon increased in volume. The few passers-by rushed to safety and in a moment every living creature was in hiding. Then Sokulsky saw several men, revolvers in hand, turning the corner. Those in front were shooting ahead as though afraid that someone might block their way, while the others were firing back into a pursuing party.

Sokulsky's trained eye recognized immediately by the way these men acted, that they were well organized bandits fighting against members of the secret police and Red Guards who were chasing them.

The leader of the bandits directing their movements from the center, attracted the attention of Sokulsky. He was dressed in a workingman's costume and high boots. He acted skillfully and coolly, coming to the rescue of his comrades at critical moments and keeping close to the walls of the building, as did the rest of his followers.

Sokulsky quickly snatched his revolver from the holster and rushed to the leader, intending to kill him so as to deprive the bandits of their guide, and help the pursuers who were sending bullet after bullet into them.

At that moment the leader of the bandits turned sharply around, ran toward the nearest Chekist, secret police of the

Cheka, who was catching up with him, and fired. The Chekist groped at his chest and fell groaning to the sidewalk, Sokulsky was about to shoot and the bandit would have been unable to escape his bullet, but, as is apt to happen in such moments, the glances of the opponents met.

The unknown man smiled, Sokulsky's hand shook and fell at his side. Just then a large number of soldiers and sailors hurrying to the aid of the Chekists appeared around the corner. They carried guns, but at first were unable to get their bearings and hesitated to shoot, not knowing who were the enemies. The leader taking advantage of this momentary hesitation, plastered himself against a wall and threw two bombs, one after the other, in the direction of his pursuers.

Loud explosions shook the air; the sound of broken glass and of moans filled the streets. Several soldiers and sailors were killed, while the wounded ones left bloody tracks as they crawled painfully around the corner to safety.

The bandits took quick advantage of the panic and the smoke. When the air was clear again every single one of them had disappeared. They had rushed down the Military Slope to the port, where their traces were completely lost.

Soon the spot where the bombs had been thrown was filled with Bolshevist and Army officials. In spite of this being war time, the bloody deed which had just taken place aroused the Bolsheviki considerably and a most thorough investigation was started immediately.

Sokulsky approached a group of Army officials among whom he noticed a man he knew very well.

"Tell me, Tovaristch Ivanov," he addressed him, "what has happened here?"

Ivanov turned around and glancing at Sokulsky's hand, asked with an ironic smile, "You have grabbed your revolver only this minute?"

Not until then did Sokulsky notice that he continued to hold tightly his revolver that he had intended to fire at the leader of the bandits. He replaced it in the holster and replied as if trying to justify himself, "It's awkward to shoot in a crowd; one might easily wound an innocent man. But who were these men and why did they shoot?"

Apparently they were not bandits but Ukrainian spies whose meeting place in a house on the Tiraspolskays Street

had been discovered. During the raid some of the Ukrainians were killed but unfortunately most of their number succeeded in escaping.

Sokulsky's face darkened. Bidding goodbye to Ivanov he proceeded towards the building of the War Commissariat, his head bent low. And throughout the lengthy conference he remained gloomy, attracting everybody's attention by his extraordinary absent-mindedness. The sudden meeting with the leader of the intelligence service had shocked him to the core.

I almost killed Bootovitch; this thought kept recurring to his mind. The encounter and the name awakened many memories of his young life of hardship. It was a dismal time when he led a half-starved existence and spent many cold nights under a fence together with his friend and comrade of misfortune, the dear, good, loyal Bootovitch.

The Terror and the Taiga

The inseparable friendship between Sokulsky and Bootovitch was considered a rare phenomenon by all their comrades. When the friends joined the Socialist Revolutionary Party they soon distinguished themselves as excellent workers, heart and soul devoted to the cause and full of revolutionary enthusiasm. They continued to live together like twins, sharing their dangerous and responsible work for the future happiness of mankind. The Fighting Organization of the party was proud of these bosom friends who were always willing to undertake the most important and vital assignments.

Sokulsky remembered well the disastrous year of 1907. The Tsar's Government was choking the first revolution. It was the hardest year for the revolutionaries. Every minute of their lives, every step they took was fraught with danger—the risk of losing everything, health, freedom, life itself.

He recalled their last terrorist act . . . Shooting, bombs, police, troops, actual fighting. The members of the Fighting Organization of whom, in comparison with the troops, there was only a small number, began to retreat; and Sokulsky would have reached safety had not a bullet caught him. He fell. As he lay wounded he understood that he could not

escape the clutches of the gendarmes and later the inevitable rope. Therefore, if he was not to live anyway, why not die immediately, put an end to the unnecessary yet unavoidable suffering, both physical and mental. He lifted his revolver and in an instant he would have ended his life . . . But it was not fated that Sokulsky should die then. In spite of his own critical condition at the moment, Bootovitch saw the plight of his friend and rushed to his rescue. Seizing Sokulsky round the waist, he succeeded in carrying him to safety, where a droshki stood at the curb. He threw him into it, knocked the coachman down, took his place and lashing the horses, drove quickly away.

Fate apparently favored them. The police noticed the fugitives and set out in pursuit. Bootovitch drove at a great pace into the city. The pursuers were overtaking them when they reached a railroad crossing. A train was coming at full speed but Bootovitch challenged death, whisked across the tracks and barely escaped being caught under the wheels. Meanwhile, a long file of cars obstructed the way of the pursuers. They were helpless and the fugitives succeeded in losing themselves in the labyrinth of small crooked streets.

Several weeks passed by. The friends lived in what seemed safe quarters. Sokulsky's wound was beginning to heal when quite unexpectedly in the thick of the night, gendarmes descended upon them. Again shooting and attempts at flight were of no avail. The friends, wounded by the police bullets, were sent to prison.

Like racing clouds the pictures and scenes of the following days passed before Sokulsky's eyes. The trial . . . Moscow . . . Siberia . . . Nerchinsk and the mines. Terrible months, unforgettable because of their horror. For Sokulsky, still weak from his wounds, the work at the mines was beyond his strength. His health was declining, his strength failing, and it was unbearably hard for him, in heavy chains, to stay in the dark stuffy prison or to hollow the hard rock. Many a time did Sokulsky contemplate the desperate thought of freeing himself once and for all from imprisonment and suffering. And if it had not been for his friend's brotherly, moral support he would undoubtedly have taken the fatal step. But Bootovitch calmed and cheered him and sustained

him in the hope which every prisoner cherishes deep within himself.

Once in the night when everybody in the cell was sound asleep Sokulsky heard the whisper of Bootovitch, who had stolen quietly to his side. "We are going to escape. Everything has been thought out. It is better to perish in the Taiga or from a bullet than to continue such an existence. Don't say a word about it, and wait."

Sokulsky kept silent and waited. Days went on, hardships did not lighten but a bright hope lived in his heart. Then one evening Bootovitch winked at his friend and when the latter managed to approach him he heard distinctly: "Provide yourself with bread and biscuits." Sokulsky's heart almost burst from joy and anxiety at these words. Next day the two friends succeeded in being sent to work at the same mine, and in the evening as they were coming out from the mine, they killed one of the guards with stones procured beforehand, while the other convicts disposed of the rest. They all changed into the clothes of the dead men, took their weapons and went into the Taiga through which they hoped to reach the coveted freedom.

Life in the Taiga (Siberian jungle) was much worse than in the hard labor prison. Every one of the escaped convicts, except Bootovitch and Sokulsky, died from some cause or other. Sokulsky would not have come out alive either had it not been for the devotion of Bootovitch, who carried him on his back for many miles at a stretch, gave him his last drop of water and searched the brush for dried berries. Somehow, however, the friends endured this torturing, agonizing superhuman journey, and by Christmas they reached Russia.

Yet, however strong their friendship, however attached they were to each other, the day came when Sokulsky and Bootovitch were to part. The year of 1917 arrived with its "bloodless revolution" and the man who was for Sokulsky the dearest being on earth, left him. Not a word did he say as to where and why he was going. He took his cap, shouted "Goodbye" and Sokulsky did not see him again. He heard that Bootovitch had joined the Ukrainian movement, but he could not believe that such a good revolutionary would go over to the nationalists. And only today, in such bloody circumstances, for the first time since their separation, had

he seen Bootovitch and had almost killed him. At this thought Sokulsky's heart beat fast.

The Cheka Is Working

"Tovaristch Sokulsky . . . your report," he heard the voice of the Chairman. With a start he drove his cheerless thoughts away and began his report of the situation on the firing lines, a situation highly unfavorable to the Bolsheviki. The report and the short discussion that followed it diverted his thoughts, but not for long. The chief of the Bolshevist Intelligence Service rose and after portraying the situation in the rear of the army, he stated: "In connection with our advance on Kazatin, Razdelnaya and Jhmerinka, the Ukrainian Army has increased its activities in our rear by means of the Partisans working under the direction of the Ukrainian espionage service. At the head of this service stands a man by the name of Bootovitch, a fearless and experienced conspirator whom until now, in spite of all our efforts, we were unable to trace. Today, however, we were more fortunate, Bootovitch was brazen enough to come to Odessa and work almost next door to your headquarters. We have now destroyed this nest of spies."

Sokulsky's heart beat faster. He was all attention. The Commissar continued: "True enough, Bootovitch succeeded in escaping, although I hope not for long. The entire city is surrounded and every measure has been taken to prevent him from leaving the town unnoticed. I can guarantee that not even a bird could fly across the city without our knowing it. Bootovitch must be captured at any cost, and crushed. Only then can we paralyze the activities of the Ukrainian partisans and deal destruction to the forces of the Ukrainians."

Sokulsky sighed deeply and wiped the cold perspiration from his face. His thoughts were disconnected and his head felt like a barrel where everything was upside down. Is it possible that Bootovitch went against the Revolution, he wondered. "If I only could see him, talk to him, discuss the matter, discover if there isn't some misunderstanding. No, he could not be with these bandits!"

After the conference Sokulsky went home, lost in

thought. It was already late. The town was silent as a grave except for intermittent shots ringing sharply through the stillness. Were the bandits working under the cloak of darkness? Or was it merely an execution of someone who had dared to venture into the streets after sunset? Perhaps they are executing Bootovitch, the thought stabbed Sokulsky; or he is fighting the Chekists.

He came out on the Marazlievskaya Street where the Cheka (secret police) had just moved. A cannon stood in front of the building of the Cheka, its smooth mouth pointing to the sea; and leaning against it stood a sentinel.

The gates opened noisily and an immense truck loaded to the top, drove out of the yard. Although it was carefully covered with canvas, Sokulsky noticed human heads and hands hanging over the side of the truck. Driving at full speed, it disappeared behind the corner; after dumping the bodies upon a barge, the truck would come back for another load.

"The Cheka is working" whispered Sokulsky with a shudder. Many are the useless victims, many the women and children executed daily; and many of the revolutionary idealists who fell under the bullet fire of the Chekists in these torture chambers. Yet what could be done! How could it be helped? The revolution demanded all sorts of sacrifices, even senseless ones, thought Sokulsky as though trying to justify someone.

"But when will the end be?" he asked himself. "We have fought with Tsarism and have won, and here again we are fighting, still more tenaciously and with greater fierceness. Not until all the world is turned upside down can we breathe freely."

In the Enemy Camp

At the Big Fountain, a summer place in the vicinity of Odessa, on the shore of the Black Sea, a man was hiding in the shadow of the trees and bushes by the gate of one of the summer houses. He could not be seen from the road, but if anyone approached the gate and snapped his fingers twice as a signal, the gate was opened immediately.

This was the house where the Ukrainian intelligence service had established its new secret headquarters. The

house was situated in the midst of a shady garden descending along a slope toward the sea and ending at a precipice. It was very easy to disappear in this locality should unwelcome guests make their appearance. Moreover, it was a difficult task to surround the house with soldiers, for at least several hundred men would be needed for the purpose. Even then one could always escape, especially in the dark of the night.

In the largest room of the house five men were sitting at a large table examining some documents. A man came in and by his attitude it was clear that he was the leader of the Ukrainian unit.

"Now let us see what you have to report," he said, addressing the men. "What have you found out, Simchuk?"

Simchuk, a young man wearing the uniform of a Bolshevist commissar, began his report. He said that the headquarters of the Bolshevist commissar, Sokulsky, had been located and that the Commander of the Lenin Division was about to be dismissed. The chief of the intelligence service listened approvingly. Simchuk possessed the necessary information.

"And you, Kravchuk?"

"The cannon at the Cheka is of the six-inch calibre and has no ammunition. The sentinel is relieved every four hours. The guard room is in the Cheka. The second floor of the building is the most important, and the office of the Chekists is situated on the third floor."

Kravchuk finished his report and handed Bootovitch a note.

"What luck have you had, Stezenko?" said the latter to the next man.

Stezenko, who had seemed to be drowsing on the chair, jumped up with alacrity. "Ha! I? Everything is fine. We can get as many shells as we need, but they are very heavy and I can carry only two at a time."

Everybody laughed.

"What are you laughing about?" Stezenko was hurt. "Try to lift more yourself."

"We did not laugh at you," he was told. "Not one of us could lift more than one at once."

"And what about the breechlocks?" asked Bootovitch.

"Here is the one to the gun which stands by the Cheka," replied Stezenko simply. "Only I promised the Tovaristch

from the armored train to return it by morning because they might miss it and then there will be the devil to pay. They'll find out that he is one of us and will lead him right to the wall."

Stezenko took the breechlock from under his coat and handed it to Bootovitch.

"You have done well, Stezenko," his chief praised him and commanded: "Now run along and bring two shells to the park at the Chernomorskaya Street, to the place where we were the last time. Be there exactly at midnight. Simchuk will bring the others and you will go to the house No. 82 occupied by our members, where you will change into soldiers' uniforms. You will have rifles with attached bayonets and be prepared to perform the duty of sentinels. Before you come to the War Department, look up to the third floor windows and on the balcony there will be hanging a soldier's coat. If the coat is there, enter the house fearlessly, otherwise go to the Military Slope and we shall meet at the tavern."

When the men were gone Bootovitch, who had kept Kravchuk, said: "All our men must retreat to Elizavetgrad, only you and I will stay: we are going to try to get the new plans of the advance upon the Ukraina. I am sure that we will get them by one way or another," he ended, as though speaking to himself, and his face lit with a mysterious smile.

Bootovitch took off his coat and rolled up his shirt sleeves. One of his arms was bandaged for he had been wounded during the battle with the Chekists, and now blood was trickling through the bandage. He changed the bandage and while doing this was thinking about Sokulsky. He dressed himself in a Bolshevist military uniform, took his briefcase and went out, telling Kravchuk to meet him in the park at midnight.

A Night of Alarm and Anxiety

"Your aide is waiting for you; he has just arrived from the firing lines," reported the genitor when Sokulsky came home from the conference, and he added, "I have taken him to your room."

Sokulsky went quickly upstairs, surprised that one of his aides should come without giving warning. Entering his

room, he stopped in the doorway, looking at a man in military uniform who sat at his desk and wrote.

"How do you do, Jasha," replied his guest, turning around. Sokulsky's eyes opened wide with surprise and his face expressed alarm and joy closely interwoven. Bootovitch was before him.

Sokulsky stared at his friend, unable to collect his thoughts or find words. The surprise was too unexpected. Then Bootovitch rose and making a step forward stretched forth his hand. Sokulsky seemed to recover, shook his friend's hand and impetuously embraced him. Then, without trying to hide his anxiety, he locked the door and going to the window looked out, carefully drawing the curtains together.

"What is the matter with you, Jasha? You seem frightened, as though someone is pursuing you. Come, sit down, let us have a talk. We haven't seen one another for such a long time."

"How did you get here?" Sokulsky could not restrain himself from asking the puzzling question. "Who gave you my address? How careless of you to tell the concierge you were my aide. Don't you know that everybody is watched now and that the Chekists are turning the city upside down to capture you? And what was the meaning of that shooting in the street." He spoke sternly, trying to show his friend that the interests of the cause he was serving were dear to his heart.

Bootovitch lit a cigarette and replied, looking his friend straight in the eyes: "First of all, you needn't be afraid, because nothing is threatening us. My men are watching the house. I have simply dropped in to see an old friend. There is nothing strange in that. As to the scene in the street, when we met so unexpectedly, it was a consequence of a call paid us by the Chekists, on whom being very considerate hosts according to all the rules of hospitality, it is now our turn to return the call." Bootovitch smiled ironically and continued, "You know that danger does not exist for me, I see only the possible and the impossible. The possibility to visit you presented itself, and here I am."

Sokulsky, who had been pacing the room, stopped before his friend. "Tell me, is it true that you work in the espionage service of these bandits against us, the proletarian? Is it

possible that you have betrayed the workers movement?"

Bootovitch gave him a long intent glance.

"I have always served the people," he replied proudly, "because I am one of them. I have always been on the side of the oppressed against the oppressors. You know it perfectly well, and I am surprised that you should ask me such questions."

"Yes," Sokulsky shook his head reproachfully, "you are a striking example of the destructive work of the ulcer of nationalism in the midst of strong, idealistic revolutionaries. And you are not the first one to be attacked by this disease. Many were its victims, but the revolutionary storm swept them away, one and all, together with the rotten bourgeoisie. You, too, will be swept along with the rest sooner or later. At the dawn of the revolutionary movement you fell under the influence of the nationalistic psychosis and left the honest path of a fighter for true freedom. Look at the gigantic dimensions of the work going on all around you and yet you are against it. Only a short while ago (Sokulsky was growing excited and more and more enthusiastic) we did not dare to dream of a world revolution, yet now we have already destroyed Tsarism and we are marching upon capitalistic Europe. Soon the kingdom of workers will be established upon the earth. The dawn of freedom is becoming visible, we are advancing to it and we shall trample down those who would dare obstruct our way . . . and you, Bootovitch, who have done so much for the revolution, you left us as soon as we had destroyed the tyrant's nest . . . Why? . . . Tell me why?"

Bootovitch was watching his friend, and only by the way he smoked cigarette after cigarette could one guess that he too was excited. "Sit down, Jasha," he said. "You are right in all you say because you believe every word of it."

A ray of hope flashed in the eyes of Sokulsky. "Perhaps he came to me to acknowledge that he is in the wrong," he thought, and began to evolve a plan of rehabilitating his friend in the eyes of the Bolsheviki.

"But faith is one thing," continued Bootovitch, "and reality another. Apparently you have forgotten what we were fighting for and against whom. We fought for Land and Freedom against those who did not give to the people either Land or Freedom. A common cause united us into one

great force, all united: Poles, Russians, Ukrainian, Letts, Finns. But each one of us stood the closest to his own people and when he dreamt of freedom he thought of it, of course, as freedom for all, in the wide sense of the word, yet he saw it first of all as liberating those who were nearest and closest to him in blood, spirit and culture. In our dreams we naturally pictured the freedom of our own country and not the alien, unknown fields and forests of Siberia or mountains of the Caucasus."

Bootovitch was flushed with a feeling of exaltation and a deep faith in his truth.

"We have overthrown the Tsar, wrecked the throne, thinking that there the root of all evil was hidden. But it was not so . . . The liberated jubilant people rushed to their own towns and villages to do their will in their own huts, as said our great poet Shevchenko. And what came out of the building of our Ukrainian hut — empire? The men with whom we set out to win our freedom from the Tsar wanted to throw us back into slavery, out of which we had just escaped. Proclaiming loudly that you were going to liberate the entire world, you, the Bolsheviki, advanced in hosts upon our Ukraina to subjugate it. What have we gained then after having shed so much blood and given so many lives to the revolution? What does it matter to a slave whether his master is Czar Nicholas or Lenin? You say that you stand for the people. You did not help us as we Ukrainians have helped the Russians. You have only changed the labels on the oppressors. Having thrown out the Tsar's hirelings, you have harnessed yourselves into the same van and are dragging it on. And the people continue to groan as they did before.

"The only difference is that the brutes of gendarmes killed people by the hundreds and you, the Bolsheviki, kill them by the thousands. They spoke of Holy Russia and you shout the dictatorship for the proletariat. But what you have given is dictatorship over the proletariat. You have shut the people's mouths with bullets and bayonets; you destroy everything and are unable to create anew.

"A moth cannot be a bee nor a bee a moth. You are the moth and the people are the bee. The people have thrown down the throne of the Tsar and now you want to annihilate the people. It is true, you do not need the Ukrainian people,

all you want is Ukraina with her land and her natural wealth. But Ukraina has no longer any masters, there remain only those who with their blood and sweat have watered the masters' fields.

"While you, inciting your dark hosts, you are leading them upon Ukraina, treading in the footsteps of Peter the Great and Catherine. We see no difference in being the slaves of the Reds instead of the Whites. The point is that we do not want any slavery and therefore, although we are weaker than the Great Russians, we are bound to win in the end, because we truly fight for Land and Freedom."

Bootovitch jumped up. His face clearly indicated what a storm raged within him; for he was becoming more and more incensed. Brandishing his fist, he flung at his friend: "I have seen the beginning and I can foresee the end . . . I have left you to return to my people. I am a child of the Ukrainian soil and I fight for it! Do you understand?"

He breathed deeply, as if with great difficulty. "And you, Sokulsky, you thought that I, having fought the Tsar's gendarmes all my life, I would become after that a Red gendarme, myself?" he exclaimed with contempt in his voice. "This will never happen! I am not capable of it; I now believe more firmly than ever, that our cause is the right one and I go forward fearlessly in the name of Land and Freedom of the Ukrainian Republic and our Ukrainian people."

Proudly erect, he stood before Sokulsky with blazing eyes and he burned with the desire to lay down his strength and his life upon the altar of his beloved country.

Here a knock at the door startled the friends and set them on their guard. Bootovitch placed his hand on his revolver and instinctively edged towards the window, while Sokulsky's eyes searched the room for a place to hide his guest.

The knock was repeated more insistently. A voice called Sokulsky's name. Bootovitch quickly reached the window, noiselessly jumped upon the sill, and the curtain fell into place concealing him. Sokulsky went to the door and opening it let in a man in military uniform.

"How do you do, Tovaristch Sokulsky?" said the newcomer. "Please excuse me for coming in the night but I have been sent to you on very important business—to tell you

that tomorrow the military conference will sit in another building, on the Sophievskaya Street in the house No. 30 where the Land Department is located. New commissars have arrived this morning who, together with us, are to ratify the plan of advance. Projects of this plan have been worked out in Moscow and they brought them here. Tomorrow we are going to examine them. Here are the copies so that you can acquaint yourself with them beforehand. The former plan of advance, familiar to you, has been modified in Moscow in connection with the activities of the Ukrainian espionage service. The espionage service, however, will soon be liquidated; its days are counted. Tomorrow the cavalry of Kotovsky will steal through into the rear of the Ukrainian army. We do not doubt that he will make enough trouble there to shake the position of General Petlura. He is a clever and brave man, our Kotovsky, and he will not find it difficult to reach his objective through the forest by Balta. He will not be at the conference tomorrow, for he is already on his way to his division, where he is to await the final instructions."

Sokulsky was distressed. He did not know how to stop the torrent of information which the political commissar Rosenberg was so untimely in imparting. He tried to interrupt him by remarks of a general character, tried to change the conversation, but was of no avail. At the same time Sokulsky was puzzling over the question, "Had Bootovich jumped into the street, or was he still standing behind the curtain listening to Rosenberg?"

Rosenberg lit a cigarette and continued with the same frankness. "I almost forgot to give you the pass words. The one for the city is 'Yalta' and the other is 'Soviet.' An hour ago the countersigns were changed because the Ukrainian intelligence service is known to be in town, and they might somehow have found out the pass words." Finally the talkative commissar bid goodbye to his host, and soon his departing footsteps could no longer be heard. Sokulsky rushed to the window and pulled the curtain open; Bootovich was standing on the sill. He looked challengingly, straight in Sokulsky's eyes. He understood the feeling that agitated his friend.

"Did you hear what he said?" asked Sokulsky sternly.

"Of course," replied Bootovitch with a wry smile, "I am not deaf yet."

Sokulsky's face darkened. "I hope that as a friend and a guest that you will not disgrace our relations and make use of the information this babbler brought forth. You give me your word, don't you?"

Bootovitch shrugged his shoulders. A sarcastic smile played on his lips.

"Not at all," he said nonchalantly. "I did not ask him to be so frank. He had a right to speak and I to listen."

Sokulsky was perturbed. He felt that he was not acting as his duty commanded him. An enemy stood before him who was in possession of secret information the use of which by the Ukrainian army would inevitably wreck the military plans of the Bolsheviki. Sokulsky clearly understood that in permitting Bootovitch to escape, he was committing treason. Yet to detain him, he had to kill; kill his life-long friend who had saved his life more than once.

"Well, my time is up; I must go, Jasha . . . I hope we will meet again and will finish the conversation which has been interrupted."

"No," said Sokulsky with decision, "you cannot leave this room. I shall not let you go. I must remain a loyal revolutionary! Please do not test our friendship, Bootovitch! You must understand that I have no right to violate my duty. Don't play false to your friendship, be sensible. I demand that you stay here until the morning, otherwise I shall be obliged to have recourse to measures which I would have preferred not to take."

Bootovitch screwed up his eyes and looked thoughtfully at his friend. Sokulsky had an air of resolve about him, it was clear that he was ready to act, and the Ukrainian grasping his meaning understood that there was no time to lose. Therefore when for some unknown reason, Sokulsky stretched his hand towards the telephone, Bootovitch with one leap was at his side and gripped his hand as though with steel fingers.

All at once the two friends turned into enemies. Fiercely they fought. Sokulsky prompted by a sense of self defense, instinctively seized his revolver. But in a moment Bootovitch with a dexterous movement had knocked the weapon out of his hand and they grappled. There were a few convulsive

movements, accompanied by loud groans of fury, then one of them stumbled over the desk leg and the two men were on the floor. The tight grip of Sokulsky, who had been trying merely to paralyze the movements of his opponent, loosened, and Bootovitch was on his feet, but his friend was still lying between the desk and the bed.

Bootovitch, ready for another attack, was suddenly in the clutches of an entirely different emotion—anxiety. Terror replaced fury as he saw that Sokulsky was unconscious and that blood was trickling from a wound in his head. Bootovitch bent over him. A quick examination was sufficient to ascertain that the wound was not dangerous, merely a rupture of the skin. The unconsciousness of Sokulsky was apparently due to the heavy blow he received in falling, and Bootovitch decided that it would not take him long to come to his sense. The Ukrainian knew that he had to hurry in order to use his circumstance to his advantage. However, he took the cloth from the table, wet it and wrapped it around the head of his wounded friend. Then he quickly jotted on a scrap of paper: "Forgive me, it is not my fault. Good-bye," and hurriedly left the room.

The Fire at the Cheka

Bootovitch was not mistaken. Sokulsky soon recovered consciousness. It is true that his head hurt badly, but having ascertained that the wound was comparatively a slight one, to which at that time no one would have paid any attention, he didn't worry about it. What troubled him considerably was the situation that had arisen in connection with the disappearance of Bootovitch. He tried to justify himself by the thought that he had done everything in his power to ward off the disaster. Yet he felt disheartened. He did not want to acknowledge that he was glad things had happened as they did, and he had not killed Bootovitch. He did not even feel any enmity towards him. Stretching himself upon the bed he tried to sleep. But he had lain there only a few minutes when suddenly an explosion shook the city. Sokulsky rushed to the window. Agitated voices could be heard in the street. A flash lighted the vicinity and then it was dark again. Then came the second explosion.

Sokulsky dressed hurriedly and went into the street.

From the direction of the park came detonations, but he could not guess their nature. Having gone two blocks towards Marazlievskaya Street, Sokulsky discovered that thick clouds of smoke were coming from the building of the Cheka.

A few minutes later he had reached the blazing building. Commotion reigned there. Whoever could was helping to save the documents and the furniture. Detachments of soldiers surrounded the fire. The crowd was small, mostly soldiers and commissars.

Sokulsky noticed the Secretary of the Cheka, Trokine. "What has happened?" he asked him. Trokine handed him a sheet of paper, "It was found on the cannon. Read it."

Sokulsky turned the note towards the blazing fire and saw a well-known handwriting: "I always return the call. Bootovitch."

A dead Red soldier was lying by the cannon which guarded the building of the Cheka. In the glassy eyes of the victim of the attack of the Ukrainians upon the Cheka, Sokulsky seemed to read reproach. He realized that he was partly responsible for it. And this feeling of guilt was enhanced by the words of Trokin.

"Don't you see, Tovaristch Sokulsky, what these scoundrels of Ukrainians do? We have combed the town looking for this Bootovitch and here he was working under our very noses. It is a disgrace! All these Ukrainians should be strangled for only then will it be possible to do something with the Ukraina. Look, how adroitly the rogue has spread his net. Everywhere he has his men. Everybody helps him, and we find ourselves among traitors and enemies. All the Ukrainians must be destroyed. There is nothing else to do!"

Deeply depressed, Sokulsky walked away from the Secretary of the Cheka. Diverse feelings agitated him. "Yes, I am a traitor," he thought. "It depended upon me to ward off this catastrophe and I did not do it."

"All these Ukrainians should be shot, for only then would it be possible to do something with the Ukraina" . . . rang in his ears. Then Bootovitch was right, his thoughts ran on. They need Ukraina and not the Ukrainian people. The people stand in the way of the Russians. He sighed deeply. "Hm . . . They hope to destroy forty million men. Why? What for? So that they would not love their mother

land. They are attempting the impossible. They cannot do it . . ." he exclaimed almost aloud, and the bitter thought crossed his mind. "Look how many of us serve in the Bolshevist army, helping the common cause, yet they don't cease hating us. We are slaves for them, that is all, and they do not want to and never will look differently upon the Ukrainians. It is all hypocrisy. They need the natural riches of Ukraina, while the people hamper them." Sokulsky was obliged to agree with the words of his friend. "Yes, I must straighten out my thoughts. I seem to be all entangled." Without noticing it Sokulsky had reached the edge of the park where it descended abruptly to the shore. Dawn was lifting its powerful shoulders from the sea and the clouds of smoke from the burning Cheka were drifting to meet it.

In the Clutches of Chance

The event of the night became known to the population of Odessa and they could not help but recognize the fearlessness and spirit of enterprise shown by the Ukrainians. Especially was this the case when it transpired that in the morning the latter, after relieving the guards at the building where an important military conference was to take place, had successfully tied up each member of the conference as he made his appearance, and taking all the documents relating to the new plan of advance on Ukraina, safely escaped. The Ukrainians had not feared any interruption on the part of the Cheka because they were sure the thought would never enter the Chekists' heads that the Ukrainians would dare to stay in town, let alone attack the War Commissariat in broad daylight.

The Chekists were in a frenzy. It seemed as if they were revenging themselves on the innocent population. Groans of horror filled the town due to the ferocity of this, the most terrible institution in the history of true mankind and of which the Bolshevist revolution is duly proud. New transports of victims were continually brought up to the Cheka and packed into the deep cellars of these executioners from Moscow for slaughter and torture; blood flowed like a river and corpses piled up.

At the same time rumors—pleasant for some, alarming for others—spread through the city; as if in confirmation of

their validity, the alert attention of the population detected a certain stir among the army, instantly repeated, that the Ukrainian army had advanced much closer to the city.

The activities of the Cheka had reached utmost intensity. At last its goal was attained, it found what it was after, what it had sought with such relentless capacity. The Chief of the Chekists had not promised in vain to discover the most secret hiding places of the Ukrainian espionage service. So it happened one night the summer house of the Big Fountain received an unexpected visit from the men in leather jackets. It is true that they came somewhat too late. The Ukrainians had had time to send over a secret radio station all the details about the forthcoming advance of the Bolshevist army and of a proposed raid by General Kotovsky with his cavalry division; in a word, everything that they had learned from the documents taken from the Red military commissars.

The Ukrainian intelligence service had brilliantly fulfilled its momentous mission, and great was the rejoicing at the Ukrainian Headquarters. The Ukrainians stayed until the last minute for the Chekists were already at the gates, yet one of Bootovitch's men was still at the radio apparatus communicating important information. Only when everything was done did he gather up the documents and quickly go down towards the sea through a thick bullet fire from machine guns and revolvers.

Below, at the shore, the other men were waiting for him in a boat. Their brave chief, their leader Bootovitch, was not with them. He had not come home that night before the Chekists' arrival. The alarmed Ukrainians did not know what had happened to him and waited in the boat until the flashlights of the Chekists searching the slope made it imperative for them to move on. So they steered away from the shore, their hearts full of anxiety for the fate of their leader. This anxiety was justified. The Chekists had succeeded in taking Bootovitch. He was arrested by a patrol on his way to the summer house. He did not resist at first because he was afraid he would be immediately recognized—then it was too late for an attempt to escape. The Chekists locked their important prisoner in their underground dungeon.

The arrest of the Chief of the Ukrainian intelligence service created a great sensation in the city. Sokulsky did not know whether to rejoice or feel sorry; but that was only

at the very beginning. Later he suffered unspeakably. He could not bear the thought of the death of his friend, who for so long had shared his interests, his life, everything.

Around him the Bolshevists rejoiced, expecting with relish the execution of their talented enemy whom they feared, and yet respected. But Sokulsky felt as if a heavy stone was weighing upon his heart—an emotion he could not shake off; on the contrary it seemed to bury itself deeper and deeper within him. He felt angry with himself for such feelings, he accused himself of weakness and sentimentality, yet was unable to get rid of the gnawing anguish. On the top of all this came another trial. Sokulsky was commissioned to question the important prisoner and to try to extract the valuable information for the Bolshevist headquarters.

Sokulsky went to the cell where his friend was imprisoned with despair in his heart. "Cain" flashed through his mind. And when the two friends were left alone, Sokulsky felt as though he and not Bootovitch were the accused and that he was facing his judge.

Bootovitch looked at him with serene eyes; and the Bolshevist commissar bent his head. It was the arrested man who broke the silence, "I beg you, Jasha, do me a last friendly favor. Take measures that this thing goes off without any delay."

"What thing?" Sokulsky did not understand.

"You know that there is no way out for me . . . I am doomed . . . they are going to stand me up against the wall—so what's the use of delaying. I am tired."

"It is too early to speak of it." Sokulsky evaded the question. "Maybe some way out can be found."

"I understand what you mean," Bootovitch interrupted him hastily, "but nothing will come out of it. I will not compromise. Don't waste your time. I know what you have come for, Jasha, and I beg of you, for the sake of the last hours of my life not to defile them by an offer of betrayal."

Sokulsky trembled from head to foot at the insult. He began speaking angrily, vehemently, repressing with difficulty his irritation. "You are ruining us both by your stubbornness and narrow mindedness. You are wrong in every respect. Why do you do it? Why do you take such an unfair advantage of my friendship for you? Why do you

test my loyalty? If you were in my place you would have killed me long ago."

Bootovitch smiled enigmatically. Sokulsky went on with still greater vehemence. "You make me suffer. You know it and exploit my feelings. You take advantage of my weakness, of the fact that I will not lift my hand against you. You are using me unscrupulously, you ignore my right to be faithful to the cause I serve, as you are to yours. You are continually putting to the test my love for you. You have been dishonest and cruel, and you deserve the punishment which is to befall you, against my will."

Bootovitch shook his head and replied in a low even voice: "Listen to me, Jasha. First of all, do not try to frighten me by speaking of the wall. One cannot escape one's fate. It seems as if I am destined to be executed; and you to execute. And I wonder who will be more frightened, you or I. And then let me tell you that I haven't the slightest regret for having acted with you the way I did, for I do not like to trifle.

"If I came here to work for the welfare of my country and brought my comrades to share the danger it involved, then no force whatever, no personal feelings, nothing could make me swerve from the idea to which I have devoted by life. And should the occasion present itself again to make use of your friendship to the advantage of our great national cause, I certainly would not fail to use it.

"One's country stands above everything else. You do not know this because you have renounced her and taken sides with her worst enemies; and that settles it for me . . . Last of all, I would like to tell you my frank opinion. If you, Jasha, were just as deeply and sincerely devoted to the cause of Communism as I am to that of Ukraina, you would never have spared me, you would never have weakened, but would have killed me in spite of our friendship, in spite of anything. Come, Jasha, let us bid each other goodbye for the last time without enmity, and then go. Do not try to do what you have been sent to do. It was not for that I saved your life; I am not going to tell you anything because I can never be of any use to the Communists . . . I can only harm them. Forgive me as I forgive you."

Sokulsky jumped back as if stung. He looked formidable. "No, I don't want to be in your debt," he shouted. Hastily

he whisked out his revolver and threw it upon the bed of the prisoner. "Good-bye forever!" and turning, he ran out of the cell, leaving Bootovitch bewildered beyond expression.

A Turn of the Scales

The escape of the Chief of the Ukrainian intelligence service aroused a still greater sensation than his arrest. It happened in such a simple and easy way that the Communist authorities were staggered.

At that time the Cheka of the Odessa occupied two buildings, one on Marazlievskaya street and one on Kanatnaya street. They stood almost opposite one another. One housed the main office and those of the prisoners who were awaiting trial, while the other building was assigned to the victims whose fate had already been sealed—the Communist torture chambers. It was in this building that the doomed man was usually told of his fate, after which the execution followed almost immediately.

When the head of the Cheka received the report of Tovaristch Sokulsky, that he had been unable to extract any information from Bootovitch, who was very provoking, and that it was useless to hold him any longer, it was decided to execute Bootovitch that same evening.

The situation in Odessa was precarious; the order to march to the firing lines was expected every moment, the Ukrainians were advancing upon the city. There was therefore no reason to hold any longer an enemy as dangerous as Bootovitch. As soon as the dark, moonless night enveloped the city, a telephone message was received in the office of the Cheka to immediately transfer Bootovitch with his things to the other building.

Everybody knew that this expression meant execution.

Bootovitch jumped to his feet when the assistant of the Chief of the Cheka, lantern in hand, entered his cell. He was a young clean-shaven man in a leather costume, wearing several cartridge belts, a revolver and the traditional accessories of a smartly equipped Chekist. Behind him stood two soldiers.

"Bootovitch, come, take your things," he ordered, watching every movement of the prisoner, his revolver pointed

towards him. Bootovitch pretended not to understand what he meant, as though he were unacquainted with Communist customs. He took his coat and cap and asked the Chekist, "Why take my things? It isn't far. Aren't we going to the execution? I understand . . ."

Such an attitude, which Bootovitch had assumed only in order to lull his vigilance, suited the Chekist. It was convenient for him to leave his victim in ignorance of the time of execution, in this way avoiding a display of nervousness, despair and, in the case of men like Bootovitch, attempts to resist and fight. Quietly and easily the doomed man would be turned over to the executioner and then he would neither dare nor have the time to try to save himself. For this reason the Chekist replied with cool assurance, "What execution? Nothing of the kind. You haven't even been duly questioned."

If he had not been told to take his things, Bootovitch might have believed him. But now he thought: "Oh, you are sly! Well, we shall see!" Yet his face expressed full confidence in the words of the Chekist. Bootovitch quietly took his place between the two soldiers, revolvers in hands, while the Chekist followed; and this miniature procession came out of the gates of one of the Cheka buildings to pass to the other.

They began crossing the street in full order, keeping step. They reached the middle of the street. Suddenly a shot rang out, as if coming from under the feet of the soldiers. The Chekist did not hear it. Without a groan he fell to the ground with a crushed skull. The surprised soldiers jumped to one side and mechanically pulled their triggers; but without results. One shot, then another, and they also fell groaning by the side of their Chief.

An earthquake could hardly have produced greater commotion in the midst of the Chekist population of the two buildings than did these sounds of alarm ringing in the quiet of the night. But when the armed men of the Cheka gathered around the corpses, Bootovitch was nowhere to be found. Although every measure was taken to prevent the fugitive from going far, the night passed and he was still at large. Then it was necessary to execute the last prisoners and move to the front. Alarming reports came from the scene of war . . .

The Ukrainian army, having received valuable information about the proposed movements of the Bolshevist divisions, breathed more freely; its operations became more decided and more confident. Soon the Bolsheviki were obliged in order to save the situation, to retreat to Elizavetgrad.

At a short distance from the village Wradieraka, a Ukrainian partisan detachment succeeded in capturing a group of men escaping from Odessa.

"Do you know," the assistant of the Chief of the Ukrainian intelligence service said to Bootovitch the next morning, "who our partisans have caught?"

Bootovitch lifted his head and, like a funeral chant sounded the answer to his questioning glance, "The Bolshevist Commissar, Sokulsky."

With a great effort Bootovitch succeeded in controlling his face so as not to show surprise, even fright.

Now it was the turn of Bootovitch to plunge headlong into hard trials. The arrest of Sokulsky had upset him completely. And when, in reply to the report of the arrest, the Ukrainian headquarters sent a laconical order to execute—Bootovitch, for the first time in his life, almost fainted.

Bootovitch rushed here and there, trying to mitigate the fate of his friend, but after the first attempt he saw clearly that it was hopeless. The enmity between the Russians and the Ukrainians had reached a point where it was useless to raise a plea for mercy and humanitarianism.

But he understood now, that in spite of the horrible deeds in which circumstances forced him to participate, he would never permit the execution of Sokulsky. His duty was to help him. He must save him. He did not want Sokulsky's friendship for him to be greater and more loyal than his friendship for Sokulsky.

Bootovitch suffered unbearably. He found no rest and he could not share his state of mind with anyone because he knew that he would get no sympathy; on the contrary, he would be blamed for showing pity for a Communist, he would be condemned for weakness and lack of patriotism.

Two hours before Sokulsky's execution a man in a priest's dress approached the building in which under strong guard the Communist commissar was kept, and presented to

the chief of the guards a pass issued to the priest, Father Ivan Toleda, to visit the arrested Sokulsky.

The pass was signed by the Chief of the intelligence service, Bootovitch. Under surveillance was the arrested man. The guard could not help smiling at the thought of the Communist being comforted before death by a priest, but approved the idea. He was a religious man.

"Not more than ten minutes, Father," he warned the priest, and ordered him to be taken to the wooden shed in which Sokulsky was locked.

Sokulsky knew what was in store for him, and when he heard the key in the lock he prepared himself to face death calmly, though his heart beat somewhat faster. He was certain that they had come for him to lead him to the place of execution.

When therefore, instead of the soldiers, he saw a priest, Sokulsky could hardly keep back a smile at the thought that they had sent a priest to comfort him before death. He was on the point of remonstrating against such hypocrisy when the guest threw down his wide coat and hat, and before him stood none other than Bootovitch. "You!" was all Sokulsky could utter in surprise.

"And why not?" replied Bootovitch in a hurt voice. "The situation is exactly the same as in Odessa, only our parts are reversed."

Sokulsky shook his head. "Well," he said with great feeling, "friendships after all seem to mean something in this world. Here you have been boasting that for the sake of your motherland you would not take pity on anyone, but that was not true. You have taken pity on me. And it should be so. Whatever way we are turned, we are still human beings, and therefore something human must remain within us. One cannot get away from this."

They were silent for a while, lost in thought; then Bootovitch said in a low voice, "Put these on." He indicated the cassock and hat lying at his feet, and then said, "Go away, I know that again you will work against my country, but I also know that this means you will work against your own country. Go . . . go . . . let this be your punishment."

"What will happen to you?" asked Sokulsky, scrutinizing his friend's face . . . "No!" he said with resolution, "I cannot leave you to your death. I do not want you to die

for me. Leave me here. Let things stand as they are . . . such is my fate."

"Stop that, Jasha," cried Bootovitch with feeling.

"Go, be not afraid, I shall not perish. I'll find a way out. In fact, I have one. My men will pull me out of this. Go quickly because in an hour the courtmartial will begin."

"You give me your word you are not going to be executed?"

"What is the matter with you?" Bootovitch shrugged his shoulders. "Get dressed and go. You are losing time." Sokulsky quickly changed and a minute later a priest passed the guard and disappeared in the darkness.

The court martial of the Bolshevist commissar Sokulsky was to take place in the German Colony, "Tsilenki," and he was to be executed immediately after. When everything was ready, the order was given to bring the prisoner. But when the Guard's officer entered the shed he turned as white as a sheet, it was not Sokulsky who stood before him.

"What does this mean?" The Ukrainian officer did not at once grasp the situation. "Where is Sokulsky?"

"I am in his stead," replied Bootovitch distinctly, looking the officer straight in the eyes.

For a minute the officer considered, then he sharply turned around and left, followed by the soldiers. Bootovitch walked to the bench and stretched upon it, closing his eyes.

The Ukrainian Headquarters, on receiving the report of the treason of Bootovitch, the Chief of the intelligence service, had difficulty in believing it, so irreproachable was his reputation. It was difficult for the Ukrainians to reconcile themselves to the thought that this man, passionately loving his country, could have been capable of betrayal, of treason, that he was a Communist.

This was the limit . . . After this, one could never trust anyone, they told each other. Moreover, this action of the Chief of such an important, responsible post, aroused considerable alarm. Extremely secret and important documents and information were in his possession and their disclosure threatened to be devastating to the Ukrainian army. Therefore, the same day, the courtmartial consisted of the chiefs of the Ukrainian partisan detachments.

Everybody felt heavy hearted. They had come to sit in judgment over their comrade, their faithful companion in

arms, in the hard fight with the Communists. Bootovitch was loved and respected and their disappointment in him was very painful to all . . . everyone felt the necessity of being convinced with his own eyes that Bootovitch was a contemptible traitor . . . Agitation was in the air.

The place for the trial had been prepared at the end of the village. A few steps from the table of the judges the Ukrainian cossacks had dug a grave for Sokulsky. Amidst a general depressed silence Bootovitch was brought forward and placed in front of his former companions in arms. It was said in the crowd that Bootovitch had refused to answer at the questioning and that they had left him alone until the trial.

Contrary to expectation, Bootovitch fearlessly looked everybody straight in the eyes.

"Listen, brothers," he said in a loud voice, and every word was heard distinctly by all for the silence was deathlike. "Listen to me. I have not betrayed my country. I love my dear Ukraina and will continue to love her beyond the grave. Be not afraid, brother, I have not betrayed anything to our enemies, the Communists . . . Believe me."

By their faces he could see that they did not believe him. The judges conferred for a while, nodded their heads in agreement, rose and approached the man they had sentenced to die, but who stood proud and controlled, as if unaware that death would overtake him in a few minutes.

"Do you know, Bootovitch, what you deserve for your crime?"

"I do," replied Bootovitch.

"Well, you shall receive what you deserve. But as you have rendered many faithful and valuable services to our country, the chief partisan commanders have decided to reward you for your bravery although the judges have sentenced you to be shot for treason."

A sad smile played upon the lips of the sentenced man. One of the judges fastened upon his breast the national ribbon, then the two shook hands.

When the sad performance of leave taking was ended, Bootovitch lifted his head high and walked to the grave prepared for Sokulsky. He bent, took a handful of earth and said, as if speaking to himself, "My beloved country! I have loved and fought for thee and in this fight I am dying. Here

I will at last find rest!" He threw the earth into the grave, and dropped his hands by his sides as though standing at attention before death.

"Good-bye, comrades! Love you people and Ukraina! Long live the Ukrainian National Republic!"

The officers and cossacks bent their heads low and cast their eyes down so as not to look at this heartrending scene. Gloomy and dejected they stood. They all loved Bootovitch and would have done everything in the world to save him, but the law was clear and they had to submit to it. It seemed that the end had come. The trumpeter sounded the signal, the cossacks ranged themselves in front of the grave, the command came, and the cossacks took aim. The first words of the command had sounded when, suddenly wild cries, sharp and loud, broke the tension.

"STOP! STOP!"

Hope roused its head in every breast. All eyes turned in the direction whence came the cries, and saw with surprise a priest, running and waving his hat. The rifles came down, the words of the command remained unsaid, the eyes of the doomed man opened wide with amazement.

"Bootovitch is not guilty, I am guilty. I am Sokulsky."

Sokulsky reached the table of the judges, threw down the cassock and the hat and disclosed a face full of despair and fear for the fate of his friend. Then he rushed to Bootovitch and embraced him.

"Forgive me, forgive me! At last I have understood everything. Were I to live, I would follow you, wherever fate would lead us. I am a son of the Ukrainian people and I don't want to serve our oppressors any longer. I have deserved to be shot, and not you, my good friend!"

Bootovitch was in the grip of a deep emotion. His face twitched from repressed sobs. He seized his friend by the shoulders, looked into his eyes, unable to speak, then, having mastered the storm in his heart, said: "But I have forgiven you long, long ago, Jasha. I knew, I was sure that you would come back to our own people, back to your own country, and now I am almost happy and it is easier for me to die. We have always shared life as though we were brothers; now we will share this grave."

"Yes, I deserve death. I deserve such an end," Sokulsky exclaimed, filled with a sense of exaltation and a martyr-like

faith in his own words; "but why have I brought you to death? I should suffer alone for my monstrous crime."

He turned sharply around and addressed the Ukrainians, who stood immobile as if paralyzed by this extraordinary scene.

"Brothers! My friend is innocent. Never for an instant did he betray his cause. But he took pity on me, his old friend. I alone have committed a crime, a great crime before my people, because I have joined the ranks of the oppressors of my country at a time when she needed every faithful son. I know that there is no forgiveness for me and I do not ask for it."

Tears which Sokulsky had not known since childhood, rolled down his cheeks. He could not speak. Sorrow and repentance clutched at his heart and choked his words. Bootovitch seized him, pressed him to his chest and both remained motionless. It was quiet, very quiet. Like carved statues they all stood.

Chiefs and cossacks were at a loss what to do, so extraordinary and overwhelming was the scene.

The Ukrainians exchanged glances, as though asking one another silently what was happening here? But they were all stirred and did not want to break the spell of silence.

Bootovitch turned his head towards the commanding officers and almost inaudibly said, "I am ready."

It seemed like he wanted to put an end to the whole affair.

The commanding officers formed a circle and held among themselves low-toned conversation. One of the officers left the circle, advanced towards Bootovitch and Sokulsky and said:

"Your sentence will be deferred, but you will have to tell us the whole story as it is known to you." He motioned that both of the captives go with him.

Bootovitch and Sokulsky advanced towards their army officers, and being surrounded by their comrades, started to retell the whole story as it is written in this saga. But their story was so convincing, so breath-taking that the hearers were awed at this seeming fairy tale.

A rider appeared on his horse. Unmounting before the officers and saluting his superiors, he whispered to them his report. The officers looked at one another in amazement,

held a hurried conversation, and selected one man to deal with Bootovitch and Sokulsky.

This spokesman hailed Bootovitch and Sokulsky and pronounced the verdict:

"We, in the name of the Ukrainian National Republic, grant both of you freedom and liberty, but for your transgressions you must offer your services for the good of the Ukrainian cause, with everything you possess, even your lives."

He turned toward the cossacks. "Mount your horses!" he ordered.

"We must leave for the front line in ten minutes."

With thundering hoofs, the partisan detachment galloped toward the east in a cloud of dust, on their advance to meet the enemy. With them went Bootovitch and Sokulsky.

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