

"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 divers actions 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-barrows 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, Khvylioviy, Poloz and thousands of other patriots, who, when faced with demands of betrayal of their own country, either committed suicide, like Skrypnyk and Khvylioviy, 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 impresssion 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 Uspekys 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. Neshchadymenko 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.

Vasylo 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 Vasylo. "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."

Vasylo 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, Vasylo. 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 Vasylo.

"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 Sibiriakov 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.