

THE DAUGHTER OF GENERAL BRUSILOV

The visiting session of the Highest Court had been sent to Solovky not only to judge the case of the Russian national-socialists, but also to try other cases. Some of the prisoners had been waiting for months for their "just and merciful" judgment in solitary cells.

The next case considered by the Court Sessions was the sabotage by some prisoners on the dairy farm of Anzer Island.

A number of milch cows were kept on Anzer, near the Kremlin, on Isakovo and Muksolm. The cows had been brought from the famous Kholmogory to be bred on Solovky. They were giving a large amount of milk. The average quantity from each cow during the milking period was 800 litres and it contained 4.2% fat. Some cows were giving up to 1,200 litres of milk. The feeding and care of these cows was so perfect that no citizen in the USSR could ever have dreamed of such attention. Every cow had a specially selected ration of food each week. The cows that gave exceptional amounts of milk had their menu prepared daily. The farms on Solovky were sowing oats in the hot-houses, as every cow had to have two or three pounds of grain a day. The foreman, a zoologist and veterinarian, continually watched these Solovky ladies.

They were proud, and demanded respect and consideration. The cow stalls were quiet, spotlessly clean and the walls of the stalls were always snow-white. The floor was covered with a thick layer of sawdust, on top of which a special bed of hay was laid. Not one of these noble cows would lie down unless some attendant prepared her bed.

An attendant with a pail and a hand shovel walked continually among these ladies. If one of them needed to perform a natural function, the man had to immediately change the sawdust and hay, wash the floor, and make the hay bed again.

No one even dared to think of hitting a cow. He would get far milder punishment if he killed some other prisoner than if he hit one of these favourites of Ivan Ivanovich.

The attendants watched the cows and their needs every hour of the day and night. The manager of the farm and his assistants slept very little as a rule. It was a special type of hard labour to work on the dairy farm.

As a rule, all the cows on Solovky lost calves during the milking period. Very often it was necessary to artificially inseminate the cows as they were indifferent to the pure-blooded bulls kept for breeding. A cow with an unborn calf was a great burden to everyone. If a cow became sick, a council of veterinary surgeons would gather. There was never a shortage of them at Solovky, where the best specialists in Soviet Russai could be found as prisoners. When there was no other solution but to kill the dying cow, Ivan Ivanovich himself would come. Angry, and with his face almost grey, he would threaten the surgeons that he would let them rot in the deepest solitary cells if they would not save the cow. When the threats did not help, he would begin to ask them in a mild manner to do their best.

The surgeons would try to persuade him that they had used all the most modern methods in trying to save the cow. Sometimes during these discussions, the cow would be gripped in her death agonies. Then Ivan Ivanovich would shout, "Kill her! Don't you see, you bandits, that the poor creature is dying" and after cursing everyone with the filthiest Russian curses, he would leave the farm.

But there were happy days also. One of the cows would be ready to calve. Then Synytsky, the chief zoologist of Solovky Islands, and formerly an outstanding professor of Temiriasev Agricultural College, would come to the farm. Synytsky would be followed by kindly old Strugalsky, who was formerly a veterinary surgeon of the Veterinary Department of the USSR. With him would come a few more veterinary surgeons and zoologists. They were all dressed in snowwhite gowns and carried all kinds of instruments, drugs and bandages. After they gathered in the nursery, Ivan

Ivanovich would come, as stern as ever. The labour would begin, the cow helped by the veterinary surgeons. They would bring a big bathtub with warm water and white sheets, and when the calf was born, it would be put in the bathtub. Strugalsky would attend to the cow, while Ivan Ivanovich would smile pleasantly, and tickle the cow under the chin. Then the surgeons would wash her, and clean everything. The calf would be wrapped in the sheets and taken to another room where small calves were kept. It would be received by Ivan Mykhailovich, a former teacher, who had had forty years of teaching experience. Now, instead of children, he was taking care of calves. He would take it in his arms and put it in a specially prepared stall.

After that the whole birthday group would go to the office of the dairy farm. The farm manager would get the book records. Ivan Ivanovich would take the book, and solemnly, like a priest, would give a name to the calf, and, with his own hand, would enter its name into the book. It was his exclusive privilege to name them, and names given without his approval were immediately cancelled. Thanks to Ivan Ivanovich such names as Felix Dzerzhinsky and Vladimir Lenin were immortalized. There were young bulls called Felix and Deputat, a cow named Lena, and many others.

After registering the calf, Ivan Ivanovich would order the farm manager to give each prisoner working at the farm a litre of milk. The surgeons and zoologists received two litres. After that, happy and satisfied, Ivan Ivanovich would leave the farm.

The above proceedings show how much attention was given to the cows and their offspring. It so happened that due to the carelessness of one of the prisoners, twenty cows of the Kholmogory breed died. An Anzer case of cow-poisoning seemed more important than the case of the national-socialist party, which could not achieve anything on Solovky except discussions and lectures.

According to Ivan Ivanovich, the crime of poisoning twenty cows equalled treason. He ordered all the prisoners

who worked on the farm, including the farm manager, to be imprisoned in solitary confinement. A number of other men who, in the opinion of Ivan Ivanovich, could have had some relation to the crime, were also arrested.

Examinations were conducted day and night. The third section worked to the limit. Ivan Ivanovich would not be satisfied with anything less than a signed confession from the prisoners, stating that they had poisoned the cows with evil counter-revolutionary purposes. He wrote a report to that effect, to the Administration of the Baltic White Sea Camps to which Solovky belonged as a special 8th division.

Ikonnikov, the manager of the farm, had been born in Siberia. He had a fine appearance and was considered an expert zoologist. He had taken part in an insurrection against the communists, which the GPU incorrectly connected with the case of the Siberian general Boldyrev. Among the farm labourers was also the daughter of the famous Russian general Brusilov, one of the ablest Russian generals of the first World War, who had joined the communists and served them.

His daughter had already been working for some years on the cow farm in the capacity of a cleaner. She loved these capricious mute ladies, and looked after them almost in the same manner as she herself had been treated in the old days by her personal nurses and governesses. The daughter of Brusilov was not attractive, either in face or figure, and looked an unhappy woman. She never tried to please anyone and was indifferent to everything. However, Brusilova was very much attached to her charges. At that time she was about thirty-five years old and looked much older. Brusilova lived in the women's barrack on Anzer, where Leah Shmidt and other women also lived. Every day she earnestly prayed on her knees before a little ikon which had been given to her by the wife of the late Czar, when she was a small child.

Brusilova prayed long and with passion, but otherwise was quiet. At night, during her sleep, she would suddenly shout, "Cursed Lenin, Cursed Lenin!" Awakening at the

sound of her own voice, and, crossing herself, she would go back to sleep. A tangle of highly-strung nerves she could not stand those who tried to please the authorities. Intolerant, stubborn and unfriendly towards others, she looked on the prisoners as dull, traitorous, cowardly, supine people and carried her cross alone. While she was living on Anzer, there were a number of former pillars of the Russian Empire and the Kerensky government. She despised them all and called them, "Brainless sheep, slaves, and grave-diggers of great Russia". Brusilova never spoke about her father, but worshipped the late minister Stolypin.

All that was connected with communism in any way was hateful to her. She rejected communism completely and without hesitation. The fact that when her cows died she cried attracted the attention of Ivan Ivanovich, who decided that it was under her influence that the night attendant had given arsenic flour to the cows instead of the flour made from bones. In the room where the food for cows (wheat flour, oat flour, bone flour, fish flour, and all kinds and combinations of flours for improving the cows' feed) stood, arsenic flour used for medication was kept. In the same room, for lack of space, a number of veterinarian preparations also stood.

A phlegmatic white Russian — who had always had the night watch — by mistake in the darkness, took arsenic flour instead of bone flour, and spread it over the feed for the cows. The next time he went to the storage room to give the bone flour to the cows in the second and third divisions of the stall, he took it from the right box. As a result only twenty of the sixty cows died. Ivan Ivanovich was convinced that it was not the White Russian or the farm manager but Brusilova who was the main instigator of the poisoning.

Brusilova was imprisoned in the old Solovky dungeon where three hundred years ago the men who had refused to cross themselves with three fingers had been kept. Brusilova's dungeon was deep, dark and damp. Most of the time she sat on a straw mattress laid on a stone bed, or else

prayed on her knees before her ikon. Sometimes she was taken away for examinations. At other times Tsarapkin the examining judge came to her dungeon. He was the terror of Solovky prisoners as he was the most cruel and vile of all the examining judges. Tsarapkin sometimes came during the day and other times at night. Ivan Ivanovich promised him many things if he would procure a "sincere confession" from Brusilova that it was she who had persuaded the White Russian peasant to poison the cows.

Tsarapkin used all the methods of torture known to him to make her confess. He called guards, ordered them to strip her naked, and then had them whip her with rubber truncheons. He tied her to the stone pillar in the cell by her hands and kept her in that position for hours, demanding a "sincere confession", but Brusilova only sobbed silently and whispered prayers. Finally, when he had her untied she collapsed to the ground. Tsarapkin went away, only to return again at night with the same demands. One night when he came in and sat near the door of the cell on a stone seat on which guards left the food, Brusilova jumped from her bed, and, with all her strength, threw a heavy stone at his head. The stone knocked his hat off, but did not harm him much. Brusilova stood trembling on her bed with another heavy stone in her hand. Tsarapkin whipped out his gun and pointed it at her. With the other hand, he reached for the cap and put it on again, then he stood up, and, holding the stone in one hand and revolver in the other, said, "Please put your stone down. Throwing it will not save you". Brusilova did not heed him, but took aim again. Suddenly Tsarapkin threw the revolver and stone on the ground, went to the door, and sat down on the seat.

"Throw it, Brusilova! Hit me!" he shouted, and took off his cap. Brusilova threw the stone on the ground, and falling on the bed began to cry hysterically. Tsarapkin took up his revolver and put both stones on the seat. Then he put his hand on her head in a friendly way, and said, "You should not act like that". Brusilova weakly removed his hand and continued to cry. "I wonder" said Tsarapkin,

"How it is that you, Brusilova, an educated woman, who met kings on a friendly footing do not understand the simple truth, which is clear to me, a simple person. Don't you understand that you and I are only small wheels in a huge machine which is terrible, and subdues all? Neither I nor you should dare to act in this way. You wanted to kill me, a very small cog in a huge mechanism, which bears the name of the world communist revolution. You must understand that in destroying me you would not stop that engine. Immediately I was dead another man would be put in my place, and the mechanism would continue to work.

In an aeroplane, if the heart of it—the motor—works, then the destruction of small insignificant parts would not force the pilot to land. He would fly until his fuel tanks became empty, and until the motor ceased to work. Prisoner Brusilova, your situation is tragic. The motor of the plane which was Imperial Russia has been destroyed for good. Yes, Brusilova, the new Russia is a different Russia. It is the glorious Soviet Russia, and you must serve her instead of standing in her way".

Brusilova stood opposite Tsarapkin.

"Tsarapkin! You are my torturer, my executioner, but do not blaspheme in my presence. Do not make me break my head against the stone walls, it would be against the teaching of my faith. I beg of you, do not offend the name of my motherland, do not mock and say that you are for Russia. You are not for Russia. You are crucifying her, a great and holy country. You, Tsarapkin are only a dirty little traitor, who betrays the great honour of the Russian people, you will fail. You will never extract a confession that I poisoned the cows from me, and the communists will never be able to crush my Russian people".

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Will you sign all that you told me now?"

"Yes, I will sign it".

"Tsarapkin began to write. Brusilova lay on the bed

and covered herself with the coat. He finished and gave it to her.

"I will sign it tomorrow. Leave me alone today".

"You are tired. Very well, rest. I will come in the morning, only do not forget our talk".

Tsarapkin took away the stones which Brusilova had somehow procured, and went to the "White House".

It was about two o'clock in the morning, and he went to the chief of the third section. The chief was not sleeping, as all GPU officials slept usually during the daytime and worked at night. Tsarapkin showed him his trophies. The chief laughed and said that he would have to examine the guards because she could not have obtained the stones without their help.

"Good morning, prisoner Brusilova. Did you prepare a stone for me for breakfast this morning?" These were Tsarapkin's first words as he entered the cell next day.

"I had prepared two for you, only I am sorry they could not have taken effect for the good of Russian people".

"Thank you for thinking about me".

Then he read to her what he had written anew at home.

"What I said was less strong, but it appeals to me. You call yourself a peasant, Tsarapkin, but I see that you belong to those wise peasants, who became either counts like Menshikov and Stroganov, or depraved scoundrels like Rasputin", said Brusilova, and firmly signed her name.

Tsarapkin politely bowed to her and left the dungeon. Two hours later guards came and transferred Brusilova to a clean, dry solitary cell in the third camp. She spent eighteen months there until the arrival of the visiting session of the High Court.

The fate of the other thirty-three prisoners connected with this affair had been no better. Everyone had been treated just like Brusilova. However, they had all gone through this examining school before and they knew the meaning of "sincere confessions".

The prisoners, bathed in their own blood, always told

the truth and refused to admit the things they had never committed.

The examinations continued almost a whole year. During that time, five of the accused died.

The visiting session investigated the case, and every prisoner was given an opportunity to make his plea. All spoke briefly, denied their guilt and asked the court not to extend their punishment. Brusilova also used this opportunity, and, before the defendants and a full hall of the GPU agents and judges, she said the things she had thought about during the ten years of Solovky imprisonment. All her anger and hatred against the communist regime was expressed in her speech. But she was not allowed to finish, as the guards forced her to sit down.

The court left the hall to discuss the cases. After half an hour, they returned and announced that, having in mind the year and a half imprisonment of all those who had worked on the farm, and for lack of proof of any evil intention, all the prisoners would be freed from solitary confinement.

Brusilova, for an attempt to use the court for counter-revolutionary purposes, according to the 58th paragraph of the Criminal Code, was condemned to ten additional years of hard labour.

With the new additional term of imprisonment, Brusilova worked as a laundress in the Solovky bath-house laundry. In July of the same year, she was taken to the mainland to Medvezha Mount, the third camp of Belbaltabor where she was soon shot for counter-revolutionary propaganda.

CAPTAIN STERELHOVSKY

An altogether new and sensational case was that of the escape of the former naval officer, Captain Sterelhovsky, a Pole born in Crakow, but who had grown up, studied and worked in California in the U.S.A.

In 1934, Captain Sterelhovsky, while in the Leningrad harbour, had received permission to visit the city of Leningrad with other officers of his ship. He went to the museum and spent the day looking over interesting collections, and, together with an obliging guide, decided to rest in the apartment of a certain beautiful girl, whom he had met in the museum. The guide, who knew the girl, said that she was a gifted film artist and had a great future as an actress, although she was really only an art student. The young captain had nothing against spending a few hours in the apartment of a future star, and the guide advised him not to hesitate.

Together they went to the girl's apartment and had a drink. Then the guide wished them good night and went away. However, instead of having a pleasant evening, the captain was interviewed by an examining judge in a Leningrad jail on Shpalerna street, where he was taken by the GPU agents who had come immediately after the guide had left. After the examination he was told that they would take him in a plane to the consulate of his own country in Moscow, and from there he could return to his ship. The captain did not object. However, instead of the Moscow airport, the plane came down at Solovky. Here Sterelhovsky was informed that he was condemned to ten years hard labour for spying on behalf of Spain. He had no choice, and, putting on the bast shoes and prisoner's coat, he began to study the Soviet socialism in everyday life.

He had belonged in Poland to the Polish National Democratic party, and, on his arrival, he became a natural leader of the small group of Poles. He was a handsome well-

built man, and as a Polish patriot, hated the communists. Living on the sea taught him to love freedom. He always spoke frankly and enthusiastically, but never risked the lives of others or his own, without need, as Pesotsky used to do.

He knew what to say and to whom to say it, and was popular not only among the Poles, but among other prisoners as well. Sterelhovsky was well acquainted with Polish, French and English literature. It was very interesting to listen to that man, who enjoyed literature as much as women, wine and song. When all these things were taken away from him, he had to get used to the new life of a prisoner in the cloister of St. Zosyma and St. Savaty.

No one else suffered the loss of liberty and the evils of the Soviet jail as much as Sterelhovsky did. When he could not stand it any longer he began to plan his escape from the island.

An attempt to escape, after all the tragedies that had taken place on previous occasions, was foolhary. But the captain was set on getting away. He worked on his plan by night. Sterelhovsky had an original and fantastic idea — he decided to steal the motor boat belonging to the GPU guards.

Captain Sterelhovsky had a rich imagination, but at the same time was a very brave and practical man. In 1936, during a white Arctic June night, Sterelhovsky, Vaska Belov, and Toma Mykhai left the Solovky bay of "Blahopoluchia" (Good luck) and sailed into the wide world.

Sterelhovsky had prepared his escape for a whole year, but when the alarm sounded early in the morning no one believed it. It was interesting to note that he did not take any of his Polish friends with him. Instead he took the carefree criminal, Vaska Belov and a brave liberty-loving gipsy name Toma Mykhai.

Sterelhovsky's escape stunned the authorities. The prisoners had stolen the boat from those who had had to watch them. Nineteen boats, two steam ships and planes, were sent to search for the fugitives.

The escape threatened to become an international

scandal. The GPU officially proclaimed that Sterelhovsky and his guide had disappeared without trace, and that all efforts to find them had produced no results.

They were afraid Sterelhovsky would appear abroad, and tell the whole world about the "revolutionary guardians of the law".

In order to find the fugitives all means were used. They were hunted from the air, on water and on the mainland. However, Sterelhovsky had expected this. He knew that he would not be able to escape to the ocean from the White Sea. He decided, after two weeks of futile attempts to get through by sea, to reach the shore in an unknown place near Kola (not very far from Murmansk). They disembarked by night. Sterelhovsky, Vaska and Toma shook hands, and, dividing their food stores, separated. Sterelhovsky went to the west, Toma travelled south, and Vaska went north to Kola.

Vaska Belov was arrested by the GPU while he was enjoying his freedom with some girl at Kola. He would not tell them anything about Sterelhovsky, but it was enough for the GPU to know that he was on the mainland. A week later Sterelhovsky was brought by aeroplane to Solovky, and imprisoned under the "White House".

Only Toma Mykhail escaped, and a most intensive search by the GPU produced no results. Not only Sterelhovsky and Vaska appeared as defendants before the visiting session of the Highest Court of USSR, but a manager of the supply stores, an agent of the operative section and three guards were also present.

The GPU had found on Vaska and Sterelhovsky food and articles which could not have been obtained except through GPU agents. As soon as the manager of the Solovky warehouses was arrested, he implicated others who had taken part in helping the escape.

Sterelhovsky had promised them that if he escaped, he would help them to go abroad where free life and good earnings would await them. The visiting session, after considering the case, freed Sterelhovsky and Vaska from addi-

tional punishment. However Sterelhovsky had to serve all his term in solitary confinement.

All the agents of the GPU, with the exception of one guard who received ten years hard labour, were condemned to be shot, and the sentence was executed on Solovky. This was a warning to all those who would not serve the GPU faithfully.

THE GIPSIES

A complete tribe of Gipsies had been condemned to Solovky for general reasons. Sixteen men of the group had the same surname, Mikhail. They differed only by their first names, belonging to a rich Gipsy clan, which had moved from Besarabia to Ukraine trading horses and cattle.

Their profit on these deals reached millions. The GPU sent them to Solovky, so that they could confiscate their property. The charge was that they had spied on behalf of Rumania. Also they had demanded the creation of an autonomous Gipsy state in the USSR with a Gipsy king at the head.

Gogu Parfientevich Mikhail, a tall, attractive, middle-aged man, was named as a candidate for the throne.

It is hard to tell if any of the accusations of the GPU were true, but it is impossible that all the Gipsies were spies. However, forcible collective farming introduced by the Soviet government created a desire in them to build their own state. This would have saved them from scattering. Of course such thoughts were considered seditious, and the Gipsies were sent to slave camps.

Toma Mikhail was the best singer and dancer among the gipsies. During the Christmas season I always planned to visit the cell of the Mikhails for at least an hour.

I had met the Gipsies for the first time during the summer. I was ordered to store green crop in a silo and was given thirty carts with drivers, and thirty men to work in the silo. Fifteen of them had to operate the machine that cut the crop, and fifteen had to ram it into the silo. The chapel, built by the Russian Czar, Alexander Second, in memory of the defence of Solovky against the English in 1885, had been rebuilt for this purpose. There were a few chapels like it on Solovky.

I sent all the Gipsies to the silo to do ramming work. Everything worked out very well for a while. All the Gipsies

worked in the tower except their chief, Gogu Parfientevich, who stayed with me in the capacity of a foreman. A general custom in all brigades in which Gipsies were working was never to refuse to work. However, they would not start unless Gogu told them to, then they would work honestly.

One day, I noticed that the hole through which the green crop was supplied had become blocked, and after a while the machine stopped. I climbed quickly into the tower and found that all the Gypsies were sitting around, not doing anything.

"What happened? Why aren't you working, comrades?"

"Let this work be cursed! We have had enough of it."

"This is not enough! They will shoot me if the work is not done. Thirty carts are bringing the green crop and about seventy people are working at it today".

"Do not lie! You won't be shot right away. We have lost a pipe and until we find it, we will not work".

Evidently one of the Gipsies had lost his pipe. It was impossible to find it in the green mass. I called Gogu, and a long discussion began. The Gipsies were in a difficult mood, and I saw that even old Gogu would not be able to help me. Then someone shouted, "The pipe is lost for good. The cows will eat the feed and then it will be found".

"Are you a fool?" I shouted. "Only an idiot would stay here until spring, for this fall we will all be taken to the mainland". I had guessed right. The Gipsies met the news with great enthusiasm and forgot the trouble.

"You are right, friend. It is true. We will not have to wait long. In the fall we will be taken to the mainland".

"Certainly, we will go".

"That is right. May God give you health. We see that you are a Christian man".

"How could it be otherwise, since he is from Kharkiv", said one of the Mihais, embracing me.

"You know", he said, "when I recall the Horse Market in Kharkiv and how, in those days, we traded horses with your people, how our wives told fortunes to your wives, how we drank and danced so happily, I begin to cry. Now this

devil's Soviet government has taken everything and all is lost".

"The devils will take them in the same way they came", I said to the Gipsy.

"That is true".

"Yes, that was the life" said the Gipsy. "Do you remember this song? It describes it well". He sang a humorous song. Everyone laughed, and the man began to smoke his pipe. The one who had lost his, made a huge cigarette from thick paper. In the meantime I started another funny song with a tenor. Everyone who stood near the machine, climbed into the silo and joined us. Our singing was loud and hearty, and relieved the tension.

"We will be free again, fellows. I believe that we will be free. Neither bars nor the sea will be able to hold us" said Toma, in a mysterious manner, knowing that he would escape the next spring in the motor-boat with two other men. We spent more than half an hour in conversation, songs and discussions. In the meantime, the carts brought more of the green crop, and I could not forget that I was to answer for it, if the work was not done.

"Now comrades, will you start to work?"

"Very well," said Gogu, "but let my people work with the machine, and let your people work in the silo."

"But Gogu Parfientevich, will your people be able to operate the machine?" someone doubtfully asked.

"My good man, the Gipsies will give any odds that they can operate this machine". In no time, the Gipsies were out of the silo and the Ukrainians unwillingly climbed into it.

Here, for the first time in my life, I had the opportunity to watch how the Gipsies, whom all the world considered as a lazy race, work.

They worked so energetically, that not only was the excessive Solovky norm fulfilled, but also their norm of production was far above it.

At the end of the day, I had to reduce, in my report, the amount of green crop stored in the silo, so that the norm, already unusually high, would not be made still higher.

From that time on I became a friend of the Gipsies. During Christian holidays I often visited their cell to spend some time with them. They were good people, who loved their wives and families. Among the prisoners, none were so faithful to their wives as the Gipsies. There was no known case of a Gipsy woman being unfaithful to her husband, if he were sent to Solovky for a long time. The Gipsies worshipped their women and no one was allowed to talk about them lightly.

A Gipsy woman, according to their convictions, was an example of faithfulness and sincerity. She was permitted much. She could dance, embrace, flirt, and extract money, but could never be unfaithful to her husband. Their great love for their wives and children was the main reason for their escapes from jails and concentration camps. Gipsies were always kept under special surveillance in the camps, because it was they who tried to escape first.

YAROCKHIN AND HIS FRIENDS

The last case that was considered by the visiting session of the Highest Court of the USSR was a very sordid affair prepared by Ponamarev and Trubetskoy against the chief of the third section. The chief of the third section had become a mortal enemy of Ivan Ivanovich. From the time of the investigation of the affair with the juvenile Trotskyists, he had tried to find grounds for the liquidation of Ivan Ivanovich, who was the uncrowned emperor of Solovky. Under his heavy hand not only the prisoners, but all the free employees of the GPU, including the chief of the third section, were groaning.

This chief was an important person, but Ivan Ivanovich had everyone under his thumb. Now, when the visiting session of the court was completing its "fruitful" work, it received accusations, which had been prepared without the knowledge of the chief of the third section, about his own criminal activities. A number of agents from among the armed guards of the secret division and a few privileged prisoners (informers) were also denounced in the report.

The visiting court session, after a closed hearing of the case, ordered the arrest of the chief of the third section and all other persons mentioned in the report. They also called the chief of the third section of the White Sea-Baltic camps to Solovky.

The investigation was a hurried one, and within a week the court had completed its inquiries into the affair of Vitaly Yarochkin, a criminal about twenty years old. He was a former inmate of the Reform Commune for juvenile criminals at Yaroslavl. His behaviour and appearance were rather strange, and more suited to a woman than a man. He enjoyed freedom and privileges that no other prisoner had. The majority of the prisoners considered him an informer and avoided him. However the court revealed the true state of affairs. Sixty-seven people were condemned for

homosexuality. Most of them were members of the GPU, including the chief of the third section.

The affair was scandalous. The case of the chief was so serious that it was sent to the warden of the Lubianka Jail in Moscow on the demand of the chief of the third section of the White Sea-Baltic Canal Camps. The rest of the accused were condemned to eight years hard labour for sexual perversion.

Ivan Ivanovich sighed with relief. He had broken the chief of the third section and was now supreme. Among the prisoners a rumour was circulating that Ivan Ivanovich would be appointed as the warden of the White Sea-Baltic Concentration Camps, or else as the chief of one of the state departments.

When the visiting session left the island, the short Solovky summer had ended. With the autumn, navigation ceased. The talks about the transfer of prisoners to the mainland also quietened down.

I was not able to visit my friends, the Gipsies. Following the brave escape of Toma, they were imprisoned in one of the large dungeons. All the prisoners expected changes for the better, but every day conditions became worse.

ROSTOV THE TARTAR

"We should kill them with tractors", said Rostov, a Tartar who looked after the bulls of the Kremlin Dairy Farm.

"Whom do you want killed with the tractors, Alexis?"

"Don't you know? Those who deserve it".

Rostov explained to me that he did not want anything in the world so much as the time when I would become the warden of the jail, and he would be my chief of guards. Then he would crush all those who had crushed us, the peoples of Soviet Russia.

"They read the papers. They become excited. They listen to the radio. My God! My God! How foolish are those professors. The fools read and do not understand! They do not know that all that is written in those communist papers is just propaganda, written for fools."

"I think", said a quiet man from Karachai, "That the people should at least understand the purpose of those lies".

"They see, but do not understand, or else are not able to do anything about it. For instance, I see that innocent men have been sent to Solovky. You see it too. But Sultan Galaev saw it only when he came here".

"There is no need to talk about Sultan Galaev. Did you hear how they treated Demian Byedny, the chief of the Soviet boot-lickers. He will become an 'enemy of the people' at any moment now".

Demian Byedny, had written with scorn about the "Valiant Russian Knights". He mixed everything in life with mud. Then Stalin announced a new course of policy he played up the "Valiant Russian Heroes" and Byedny, slow to change his tune, was disgraced.

"There is an attack under way against all people in Soviet Russia who are not Russians. Not only were individuals like Sultan Galaev, Balbekov and others liquidated, but we all followed them, if not to death, then to imprisonment.

That is the important thing for educated leaders of other nations to understand."

"They understand", said Duha Crymovich.

"If they understand, then why do they agree with all the orders from the centre?"

"Why are they afraid to tell the truth? Why, at the congress of all writers, did only one dare to tell the truth to Maxim Gorky?"

Then Rostov told us about the Soviet Union congress of proletarian writers in Moscow under the leadership of Gorky.

"Maxim Gorky made a long speech at the congress, saying that now life had become easier and happier, he was wondering why the writers in the Soviet Union did not reflect this joyful life in their writings. He demanded with emphasis that they rebuild their work according to Stalin's directive that "life had become better".

Then after long speeches of agreement by many writers, an individual, whose name Rostov could not recall at the moment, stood up.

Turning to Maxim Gorky, he said "You demand that we write about our joyful, easy and happy life. How can we write about a happy life, when millions of people have not even finished burying those who died from famine. Other millions are jailed in prisons and concentration camps, still others perish from cold, starvation and torture and, in the face of all this, you demand that we write about a joyful and happy life. Do you think we are insane?"

The congress, in grave silence, listened to this truthful speech. But they did not have to wait long to see how that brave writer was transformed into a prisoner.

I listened to Rostov and was not surprised at all that he was so well informed. The national group of Tartars at Solovky was one of the best organized groups. They rallied around Galey-Halaev, Belbekov and Sultan Galaev. The leaders of the Tartar national group were all graduates of Kasan University, which the Tartars had made their national university. However, with the arrest of Sultan

Galaev, who was the leader of the patriotic Tartar communists in Soviet Tartary, the Russians slowly transformed it into a Russian institution.

Rostov himself belonged to the Tartars, who never compromised with Russian communists and were active in armed insurrections against the bolsheviks. His attitude towards Sultan Galaev was rather of reserve than of enmity. He could not forgive him for surrendering to the communists and believing their promises about "self determination with the right of separation". From Rostov's point of view, Sultan Galaev was a member of a class of "rotten intelligentsia", a "repenting communist". Rostov rather listened to Balbekov and Galey-Halaev, who were great patriots of their people and democrats, appreciating the European way of life.

"Repenting communists", said Rostov, "can only help, but should not be allowed to lead. Only those who know the nature and value of communism, socialism, revolution and counter-revolution and who have remained faithful to the principles of liberty, have the right to lead."

Rostov was direct and uncompromising in his actions as well as in his thoughts. He looked after five ill-tempered bulls from the dairy farm. They had the reputation of being evil beasts, and had already maimed a few prisoners, but they found a real master in Rostov. Rostov was a big man with bushy eyebrows, and reminded one of a bison. He had a deep bass voice, which was strong and commanding. He was not afraid of the bulls at all. Once, when the worst-tempered bull, called "Adam", selecting a suitable moment, attacked him, he quickly jumped aside, and roared at the bull with such a bellow that the animal was startled, and stopped short. He did not try to attack Rostov again. Everyone wondered how he could master the bulls so well. The secret of his success became known much later when all the cattle had been taken to the mainland.

This was his method. He yoked the bulls into a cart to bring hay, silos, manure and other things. This provided the necessary exercise for them. When some would not obey

him, he would take them into the dark bush near Sviat Lake tie them to a tree and whip them without mercy. Every bull finally understood why he was whipped, and so learned obedience.

Rostov was a man inclined to act on the spur of the moment. He spent all his life as a "basmach", an insurgent, and refused to recognise the Soviet authorities. When the chief of the local GPU arrested his wife, Rostov was in the forest leading a group of insurgents. He in turn, kidnapped the GPU chief's wife and ordered her to write to her husband saying that she was in Rostov's hands. The chief of GPU had no choice but to free Rostov's wife. When he did so, Rostov then freed *his* wife. This happened in 1931. He was an uncompromising enemy of the communists and thought that everything belonging to them should be destroyed.

He considered industrialism to be a form of slavery built on the modern achievement of machinery. According to his views, a tractor, as a symbol of peasant slavery, would be most suitably used, after communism had been defeated, to destroy the communists.

However, he did not want the return of the conditions existing before the revolution, when there were privileged classes. He always stood for liberty and free enterprise for every human being. He thought that everyone should be equal under the law, and that everyone should have the opportunity to choose work which he himself felt inclined to do. He was indifferent to religion. All religious feelings in him had been destroyed when, as a boy, he had been forcibly made to give up Mohammedanism and become a Greek Orthodox. In spite of that, when an agent of the third section came to him with the census, he registered himself as a believer, saying that he would always be one. Later Rostov bitterly rebuked an old man from Karachai named Duha Krymovich, for registering himself as an atheist, when in truth he was a deeply religious man. Duha had done this because he was afraid of the GPU census taker. He said that he was an unbeliever, but he was really

a sincere Mohammedan. He did not know what to say when Rostov accused him of hypocrisy.

"You know that I do not believe in God," said Rostov, "but I know that the communists want everyone to register himself as an atheist. Because of this, for spite, I say that I am a believer. They do not need to think that we believed in their Demian Byedny, or 'The Alphabet of Communism' that Bucharin wrote".

Kikodze, a level-headed Georgian, always disagreed with Rostov.

Like all Georgian intelligentsia, he could never forget the four years of Georgian independence during the revolution. Lenin, who had proclaimed the watchword about "national self-determination with the right of separation" later crushed the independence of the Georgian people himself, and destroyed the social-democratic party which had built it up.

Kikodze never anathematized "repenting communists". He believed that they might become leaders of the people in the struggle for freedom. He reminded Rostov that, for instance, Napoleon and his minister Fushe had been extreme leftwing Jacobins and that the power that grew had not originated from the people, or from the followers of the Bourbons, but that it had been the former leftwingers who had liquidated the Jacobin dictatorship and decapitated Robespierre on the very same guillotine on which Robespierre, Napoleon and Fushe had beheaded Louis XVI.

He also condemned Rostov's arguments against industrialisation of the country. He saw a great future for the peoples of the USSR in building a strong industry. However, he thought that the new industry would have to serve the people instead of catering to the ruling clique. He did not share Rostov's idea that it would be possible, with the existing conditions in the USSR, to overthrow the government from the inside by insurrection. He put all his hopes on an unavoidable conflict between Stalin and Hitler. Kikodze loved to repeat "The Sun is rising in the west".

We all looked pessimistically on the future. Stalin was

the enemy but then we did not believe in Hitler either. Rostov could not agree with such thinking. "It does not matter who will lead us against Stalin. Let it be the devil himself. As long as he has a declaration on his banners that he will bring about a liquidation of communism, I will follow him". The majority agreed with Rostov.

"It is necessary to win today. When the masses are aroused and when they possess arms, then they will be able to check Hitler, too, if he is of the same kind as Stalin" said Rostov, and began to talk of his fantastic plans and how he would organise a division exclusively among former prisoners, and visit justice on all the GPU informers and denouncers.

At such moments, Rostov would become so worked up, in his wrath, that no one wished to argue with him, and the discussion would end. Then Rostov would call his favourite cat and go to his bulls. Rostov was a man of contrasts. He was severe with men, strict with the bulls and very tender with his old cat that he called "Vera Mikhailovna". He had picked it up when it was a little kitten, thrown out by some GPU family near the Kremlin walls.

He hid the kitten in his bosom and brought it back to his cell. It was sick and in pain. Rostov secured the advice of all the veterinarians, and the kitten became well. He called it "Vera Mikhailovna" in honour of a singer from the Moscow Opera who was now on Solovky. The woman was pleasant to everybody, but favoured the authorities most. The prisoners did not blame her for that. She was always very sympathetic and popular with every one.

It was worth watching how tenderly he treated his cat. When she gave birth to half a dozen little kittens, he did not kill them, but stole milk from the dairy for them. He gave every kitten its name and he trained them to respond to them. "Bandit", who always followed him around like a dog was one of his favourites. It seemed that there would be no more tragic events on Solovky for Rostov, but one day the third section searched all the Kremlin and other camps. They gathered all the cats on the island in a dun-

geon and shot them. The third section had learned that the prisoners had begun to use the cats as mail carriers between solitary dungeons.

"Our life has become better and happier", shouted Rostov to the group of children of the free hired agents of the GPU, who were playing under an arch near the Kremlin, on which a huge sign said "Life has become better. Life has become happier. J. Stalin."

"No, uncle" the children answered.

These children were allowed, on the first of May, to leave the district for hired collaborators of the GPU and go near the Kremlin. As a rule, the prisoners were confined to the isolation cells in the Kremlin every First of May, after Kirov had been killed. The only prisoners left outside the Kremlin were those who were considered absolutely indispensable. As there was no one to take Rostov's place with the bulls, the authorities had to allow him to stay outside.

"So you say it is not very happy," shouted Rostov. "Never mind, if it is not happy, it is safe, for they have shot every kitten. Now there is nothing to fear. Live happily". And he ended his speech with a Russian curse addressed to the "State Security". Then he returned to Sviata Lake where the dairy was situated.

This speech did not pass without consequences for Rostov. The very same night, he was arrested and imprisoned in an isolation camp.

THE NATIONAL MINORITY

"The guards are beating some prisoners near the North Gate" shouted a young boy, running by our buildings. Everyone whose cells were not locked tried to see what was happening.

A group of Tadzhiks and Uzbeks had been sent in the morning to the vegetable store to sort potatoes, radishes, turnips and other vegetables. The Uzbeks and Tadzhiks had always put long gowns on top of their prison coats. The gowns were always mended and in good repair, as they were, to them, a kind of sacred remembrance from the free life, in the same way as the Persian fur hats, called Kabanka, were with the Kuban Cossacks.

While sorting the vegetables the starving prisoners could not abstain from stealing at least a few potatoes or radishes. When they returned to the Kremlin, the guards searched the whole brigade and found vegetables on everyone. When the stolen vegetables were confiscated, the guards decided to punish the "blacks", as they called the Uzbeks and Tadzhiks and at the same time have some fun. Because the stolen things were under 500 grammes, the rules did not allow the prisoners to be sent to solitary confinement, but they could be punished by hard labour without food. The guards had no right to punish these prisoners, but then who thought about "rights" on Solovky? The guards selected an unusual way to punish them. They lined the prisoners against the wall, and ordered them to stand at attention with uncovered heads, and every guard tried to hit the prisoner in the face with the confiscated vegetables. This method was so novel for the Solovky population that soon a great crowd of the free hired GPU workers had gathered near the gate. They were joined by the wives, children and relatives of the GPU officials. Everyone laughed happily when a guard missed but they applauded louder when the guard scored a hit, and the faces of the prisoners became

covered with blood. Just when a big red-headed guard threw a turnip in the face of an old Uzbek, Beklemanov, a stone whistled from the opposite side of the Kremlin block and hit the guard. The man staggered, swung his hands wildly in the air, and then stretched out on the ground. All the hired men raised a great shout, and ran to the red-headed guard. The first stone was followed by a storm of rocks thrown by a crowd of "natsmen" (members of the national minorities in the USSR) who had gathered at the North Gate of the Kremlin.

"Run to the Kremlin!" Chodzhaev, a former chairman of the council of people's commissars in Uzbekistan, shouted to the tortured prisoners. In 1935, for nationalistic deviations he had been sent to Solovky. Now he stood up in the defence of his countrymen against this humiliation.

"Beat the Russian rabble!" shouted Usmanov, a Tadzhik, while he threw stones as hard as he could at the retreating group of onlookers and guards, who did not show much bravery.

Suddenly, machine guns began to spatter from the towers, showering the North Gate area with bullets.

"Follow me" shouted Chodzhaev, "Break this door". They broke down a light door which led directly into the wall of the Kremlin. He led his people to Uspensky Cathedral and to the place where the outstanding benefactors of the Solovky Monastery were buried. There he tried to break another door and scatter the men in their cells. He did not have time to complete his plan. The guards were ready, and all the Uzbeks and Tadzhiks were tied up and taken to a deep dungeon under the former refectory. However, not one was shot or punished by additional imprisonment. Ivan Ivanovich himself investigated their case and decided in their favour, but from that time on they were all kept inside the isolation block.

MITROSHA

Mitroscha was a professional safecracker. He had given up his real name and surname for the name of Mitroscha by which he was known to the GPU and the prisoners. He was on Solovky from Medvezha Mount where the main office of White Sea-Baltic Camps was located. Mitroscha was successful enough there to acquire the position of a cleaner in the building adjoining the room where the safes were kept. Through bad luck, instead of emptying the safes, he was caught and received an additional term of imprisonment.

"The Natsmen had no reason for the offence" he once remarked. "The guards threw potatoes in their faces, but what did they expect for stealing? A reward? The real hero is the one who steals and is never caught" he continued, spitting from time time.

"Do you think, Mitroscha, that the guards were right?"

"Why do you ask? Naturally they were right. Everything is right here. When Chodzhaev broke the head of the red-headed guard, it was right, and when the guards beat the Natsmen, it was right too. Only I do not know why they had to do all that, and now sit in isolation cells. I would not see any offence if someone hit me on the face with a potatoes which I had stolen. They knew what they would get if they were caught. After all, they had very little reason to get mad at the guards. Of course the guards hit them which is against the law, but what idiot comes to Solovky to look for law? Ivan Ivanovich is not so bad. If the same thing had happened when Nogtev, the governor in 1929, was here, he would have shot not only the whole brigade, but all the Tadzhiks and Uzbeks on Solovky.

"Were you here in the time of Nogtev?"

"Yes, and I also remember Uspenskoho, Gleb Boki and Kurilka. And I will tell you that all these Solovky governors were promoted. Gleb Boki, who shot a great number of

prisoners, became a member of the GPU College of the USSR. During his lifetime a great ship navigating between Solovky and Archangel was named in his honour. After he died, his name was written on the memorial tablet of revolutionary heroes in Moscow in the Red Square. The last time I saw him was on Popov Island in 1930, the time when the guards burned a barrack, and he was sent as chairman of the committee of inquiry".

"Did you say he came from Moscow for the sake of one barrack, Mitrosha? It seems rather unusual".

"Do you want them to burn ten barracks at once? After Gleb Boki visited Popov Island they began to burn barracks with prisoners, as the easiest way to get rid of them. I know five places where, each time, more than two barracks were burned.

"The same happened on Popov Island. The temperature was forty degrees below zero. The prisoners were dressed in rags, their bast shoes were torn, their coats were full of holes, but the guards and foremen ordered them to go to work.

"The men began to beg the guards to let them stay in that day, or at least issue them new bast shoes. The prisoners knew that in such cold, most of them would be crippled for life. The guards would not listen, but tried to drive them out. At first the prisoners pleaded but finally refused to go out until new bast shoes were given them.

"The guards surrounded the barrack with machine guns, poured benzine on it and fired it from all sides. The prisoners rushed to the doors and windows but were met with machinegun fire. In this way more than seven hundred men perished. Someone wrote a complaint to Moscow that innocent people had been burned. Then Gleb Boki came with a committee of inquiry from Moscow. He came, talked with the guards, and went to see the place where the barrack had stood. We were all happy, for we thought that he might take Koshkin, the chief of the local GPU, and have him shot. But, after inquiring into everything, he said, "These counter-revolutionary dogs did not want to work

and they got what they deserved". He praised Koshkin for his action. He gathered all the prisoners and told them that whoever refused to work would be shot. This was different treatment from hitting them on the face with a potato.

"No one can say that the present Solovky doesn't appear to be a summer resort in comparison with what we saw, or what takes place even now in other concentration camps. When we were driven to cut bush at Novo-Sosnova, Valdai, or at the Filipivska railroad branch, we started when it was still dark and returned at night. Many never came back. It often happened that the prisoner would become so exhausted at work that he would not be able to move. The guard would take all his clothing off, and seat him on a tree stump. "Stay naked in the frost if you do not want to work." The man would have to stay like that until he fell down, frozen. If he tried to say something, they beat him, and poured water over him. On Solovky they either put a man in a solitary cell or else shot him. In other places they torture the prisoners until he begs to be shot. There is no reason to complain about the treatment of the Natsmen. The guards simply wanted to have some fun", concluded Mitrosha.

"Since you started the story, tell us everything, Mitrosha" said an old man with a grey beard.

"What shall I tell you, grandfather? I know! Take your beard for example. The guards, in other places, took all the priests and monks, and cut their beards without mercy. Some monks were ready to die for them, but all to no avail.

"Now I will tell you about Nogtev. He was arrested by Solts and sent to Moscow. We were told that he and Kurilka had been shot. But when I was at Medvezha Mount, I found that Nogtev had been made the chief of all lumber camps in the north of the USSR. So for shooting us, they have become governors. I am certain that Kurilka is alive, too, and continues to shoot prisoners in other places.

"Fellows, I do not want to say anything more. I am sick of it. One thing is clear. You can be sure that it is check-

mate for all of us." He covered his head with his coat and fell asleep.

"He is right. It is time to sleep" said someone, and one by one the prisoners slept.

NEWS

The Kremlin was buzzing with the news. It passed from one person to another in whispers, but many prisoners doubted it. Finally the ATC gave us the exact information. On June 25th, 1937, at 10 a.m. a plane landed at the Solovky airport with important members of the GPU. At 12 a.m. Ivan Ivanovich was led from his office without his arms or belt. His insignia had been torn off. He was imprisoned in one of the cells under the White House, and plans were prepared to make radical changes on Solovky.

The prisoners were brought from all the outlying working points to the Kremlin. It was the agricultural season, but no one was let out of the Kremlin. Only those who looked after the cattle were allowed to leave for the day. At night they had to return. At 10 p.m., all the cells were locked. All the pictures of party moguls, propaganda placards and loudspeakers were taken down immediately.

The cultural-educational section was liquidated. The men were divided between the third section and the works section. All the prisoners who had been appointed as managers of certain branches, such as agriculture and the production of iodine, were sent to the isolation cells. Free men were appointed in their stead. The same happened with all the bookkeepers, and the managers of the stores and farms.

On the 27th of June, at 1 p.m. new authorities arrived at the Kremlin. All the prisoners stood in lines, except those who were left in solitary confinement. It was announced that from now on, the "Eighth Special Solovky Division of the White Sea-Baltic Camp would be called the "Solovky Jail of the Special Designation of the Chief Administration for the USSR State Security". The prisoners would be called "men deprived of liberty" (lishennye svobody). There would be two roll calls instead of one. The prisoners who, for some reason, could not be used for work, would receive 400 grams of bread. All activity of the cultural and edu-

cational sections would cease. The activity of newspapers or radio news among the prisoners would be prohibited with death as a punishment for the violation of this rule.

The siren wailed and we were taken back to our cells.

"We thank you, captain of the ship" a prisoner said to Neshchadimenko. "You did well to prepare the bars beforehand!"

"Give thanks to the GPU, my man" answered the smith, who, along with his helpers, were the only ones who had not been sent to the cells. He laughed and said, "My smiths will not be among the 'unemployed' for some time yet. We will work until we have made enough bars for philosophers like you. When we have finished the bars and shutters for all the windows we will make good bars for ourselves, and will join you".

"You may joke about it, but we do not think you will be glad when that day comes".

"What is bad about it? It is fine for us. We will just sit behind the bars and sing the song 'We wave to you from the prison with a handkerchief'".

"The song will not suit you, master. Your bars would not allow you to wave anything, and singing would be prohibited." To change the subject, someone began the song, "The spring came, but not for me". Far, far away the sounds of the song floated, over the wall of the Kremlin, over the red flag waving above Uspensky Cathedral. The prisoners next sang a well known Ukrainian song, called "Before My Eyes an Endless Road Opens", which speaks about death in exile. The man who started it cried as he sang. All of us joined in, knowing the meaning of the song.

"Stop this sorrow! It is time to gather courage," said Zbarazhsky who used crutches for walking. "Tears will not help us. It just won't do any good."

"That is true, father, but when we sing, we feel better and our hearts feel lighter" said a young man, looking over the wall towards the sea.

"It is hot" he said, opening the window. Standing on the windowsill, he shouted, "I will direct the singing, com-

rades." He began, "A Falcon Became an Eagle's Brother." We all joined in. Then with a shout, we ran to the window. Down on the ground, the broken body of the young prisoner lay.

"Return to your cells", shouted the guard from the tower, directing the machine gun on the window. Everyone went to his cell. The body of Yurko Vysochansky was put on a blanket and carried to the morgue.

The next day, five hundred prisoners, as a special task, barred all the windows. Above the bars and over the windows was hung a kind of small protruding roof, which cut off the view of the sea. Now the sea would not tempt the prisoners with liberty, and they would be expected to die quietly without trouble. The new period of the "Solovky Jail of Special Designation" had begun. Silence reigned now. All talk about a transfer to the continent, which usually circulated every spring, ceased.

It appeared that the prospect of spending many years in the closed jail was a certainty.

Large freight ships arrived at the Solovky bay, carefully picking their way through the mine fields, which surrounded the Solovky islands for twenty miles. These ships were filled with thousands of tons of construction materials.

The building engineers planned a huge modern jail about two miles away from the Kremlin on the spot where the former brickyards had been. This jail would serve as an addition to the Kremlin and jails at Savatievo, Anzer and Isaakovo at Muksolma. All together, they would be called the Solovky prison.

The efforts of thousands of human lives and the millions of roubles that had been used for the development of the Solovky agriculture project according to the directives of Michurin, were eliminated in no time. The sows, calves, horses and pigs were taken back to the mainland.

Everything was removed from the island except the men and all loading was done by prisoners under strong guard. A large transport of labourers from collective farms and of factory workers arrived at Solovky. The GPU had taken

them directly from the streets, accusing them of all kinds of trifles. Some were arrested and jailed because they had boarded the street car from the wrong side, against the rules. Some were sent to Solovky for stealing a bag of straw from a collective farm. The old Solovky prisoners were replaced by representatives of the classless socialistic society in the USSR, such as farm labourers on state farms and proletarians. Their garb did not differ much from our prison outfits in spite of the fact that they still wore their own clothing. Speaking about the newcomers, one old prisoner said, "It is true that Solovky is a USSR in miniature. The free people have the same prison coats, the same make of shoes and practically the same regime".

"No, it is not so. All party members, GPU staff, informers and others like them are not dressed so badly. It is only those who do not belong to the party, such as farm labourers and factory workers, who live in the same way as we do. Since the common people live like ourselves, it means that we are the true people and not the enemies of the people", said the former manager of the collective farm, "The Star of Illich (Lenin)". He still did not know why he had been condemned for fifteen years hard labour. He had joined us on Solovky only a month before.

"And you, pest, did not know it till now?" asked Sashka. "Such idiots as you should be sent here to be taught to understand", he continued, shaking the last crumbs of some cheap tobacco from his pockets.

"Give me some more tobacco", he told the former head of the state farm. "Do it like a representative of socialism would to an old Solovky inmate." He stretched his half-empty paper to the man.

"I do not have tobacco, my friend. Really, I have none" said the manager.

"You never have anything. You have it only for Stalin. For him you have everything".

"Comrade, we do not stand up for him. It is he who hunts us and it is he who takes not only what we have in our collective huts, but us as well".

"Do not lie. He does not search your huts. It is you who write denunciations. You do it until the time when you yourself are taken to be killed in concentration camps".

"Keep quiet!" Along the carpeted corridor, a guard trod with silent shoes. He came to the door, stood a while listening, then opened the eye-hole, looked in, and continued his rounds.

"Fellows! A Transport! They are taking away the women" said Sashka in a subdued voice. He tried to bend his head so that he could see the procession. We ran to the windows. Near the wall of the Kremlin marched a column of women.

"Nastia Pleskan! Marusia Semenko! Vechora! Krushelnitska! Vera Mykhailovna! Musa Vasylivna! Klementina Lanina! Leah Shmidt! Odynets-Rabinovich!" called the prisoners as they recognised the marching women.

"So, Sasha, your wards are being sent to the mainland".

"God bless them all! They are all, according to the Soviet law, of the same class origin (socially related) with the ruling party, and it is not proper for them to remain on Solovky".

"How is it that the cannibals have become 'socially related'?"

"It is very simple. Is it possible that in the criminal code of any civilized country there would be a law dealing with cannibalism?"

"Naturally not".

"That is why they are registered as 'socially related'. It was impossible to insert in the criminal code a special law against cannibalism. Instead the government condemned all who, during the famine, had eaten human flesh and had not been liquidated for 'murder for enrichment'. For such murder, the law imposed a punishment for ten years of hard labour. It sounds ridiculous, but it means that those people who ate the flesh of their own children, already dead, did it for their 'personal enrichment'".

"There are many things that are strange in this world, my friend", said Sadovsky and suddenly pointed to the door.

The guard, who had returned again, looked through the eye-hole and said, "You are not allowed to watch through the windows. Get away from them". We returned to our places.

"Our Solovky women have left us," said Slisarenko, a writer.

"You know what?" said Sashka, "Our women on Solovky were heroines. They suffered much, and did not break down. God bless them."

"Vasileva was such a beautiful woman" said someone else.

"Which one? The daughter of the secretary of the Leningrad Provincial Party Committee who was shot in connection with the case of Kirov?"

"Yes," came the answer.

"She was attractive, proud and independent, and how they tortured her".

"Remember Vechora? She came to Solovky when she was seventeen years old, a heroic, clean, fine-looking girl. The GPU rabble tried to break her. Now she looks as if she had been crucified."

"Odinets-Rabinovich was sent here for Ukrainian Nationalism. She suffered only because she married a Ukrainian patriot".

The door opened suddenly and the guard pushed Kan, one of the informers, into the cell.

"O! you spy! You have been finally sent here to stay with us, too. I see that the new authorities do not need informers now", whispered Sashka, and hit Kan on the chin. Blood began to flow from his mouth.

"Citizen guard! Citizen guard!" shouted Kan, his tongue cut by his own teeth. "They will kill me! They will kill me!"

The little window opened and the guard put his head in.

"Who is beating you?"

"Semionov", said Kan, shaking. He pointed to Sashka.

"Semionov, you are not allowed to fight", said the

guard. "He will not do it again, Kan!" Banging the little door of the opening, he went away.

"Are you trying to report us again, you pest?"

"Leave him alone, Sashka. Let the devil take him".

Sashka took Kan by the collar, dragged him into the corner, and sat him on the pail for natural necessities, which was called "parasha".

"Here is your corner, you bitch. On this parasha, you pest, you will perish". The sobbing Kan tried to stop the flow of blood. He leaned against the wall, and streams of tears ran from his eyes.

"You knew what you were doing when you betrayed hundreds of our comrades to torture and death." Sashka looked for a while at Kan as he cried, and then, without a word, spat in his face.

"Genady Leonidovich (Sadovsky) please read to us" asked Sashka and we all joined with our pleas. Sadovsky took the book "Strong as Death" which had been written by Guy de Maupassant, and read it to us, translating it from French. The book had been somehow saved by a prisoner, and was the only one we had.

"That is a wonderful story", said Sashka. When Genady had finished reading, Sashka paced the cell for a long time. Then he came to Kan, who sat without moving on parasha, and said:

"Did you hear what kind of people there are and what love they have in their hearts? And what are you? Who will write a song or tell a story about such a good-for-nothing, despicable informer as you. I, Sashka, who am a thief among thieves, tell you to leave the idiotic habit of selling human lives, for in the end you will sit, not on parasha, but under it".

Kan, covering his face with his hands and bending his head, silently cried.

"Sashka, leave him alone."

"All right, I will not bother him any more. Let him perish here like a dog," said Sashka, going to his corner.

Genady Leonidovich Sadovsky with thirteen years of

slave camps behind him, was still unbent. He always tried to help others to be strong and manly, as he used to do twelve years ago in Kiev, when the Ukrainian nation was fighting for its freedom. He was four years at Moresplav and ten years at Solovky. Now he was always in the centre of everything, teaching the people to love their far-away Ukraine.

Genady was nervous that day. He listened attentively to the conversation. There was a possibility that we would be moved to a transport, or that some might be freed, and so, to calm himself, he took his bandura and began to play an old Ukrainian ballad which told of the suffering of a Cossack, Morosenko, in foreign captivity. As he played, he sang in a pleasant velvety baritone voice. We all listened with rapture.

The singing suddenly stopped. The head of the guard appeared through the small window in the door. We could see tears in his eyes. He whispered, "You can play, boys, only do it quietly. Take care that you are not heard by the chiefs. I will go away. What a life!" and saying this he softly closed the opening.

"Did you see that?" whispered Sashka to Kan. "Now keep quiet about it, you snake". Kan jumped up from his pail, fell on his knees before everyone in the cell and lifted his hands up. His big eyes were filled with tears and he was shaking all over.

"I swear to you by the dust of my parents that I will never betray anyone again", he cried. Then he got up and sat on the parasha again. No one dared to let him leave the pail. He would have to bear the punishment if he wanted to remain alive. Such was the unwritten law among the prisoners.

Genady put his bandura aside. "Comrades," he said, "There was a time when I was sold by my own people through their foolishness and pride. I was saved from death by a Jewish woman. Should we not free Kan from the parasha?"

"We have no right, Genady Leonidovich" said Sashka. "We cannot break the laws of the prison."

"Sashka is right! The prison laws should be kept".

"It is up to you" said Sadovsky, taking up his bandura again. He softly sang the songs, composed by the prisoners of concentration camps, that described their suffering, and the comradeship of all nationalities against the common foe.

When he came to an end we were all thoughtful. Not only the melody but also the words had made a deep impression on us. The siren sounded the end of the roll call in the Kremlin. It was time to go to bed and slowly we fell asleep.

About two o'clock in the morning two guards entered the cell.

"Sadovsky!"

"Present!"

"Your name and the name of your father!"

"Genady Leonidovich!"

"Come!"

They took his bandura and the bag with the things his wife had sent.

"Good-bye, comrades. Think well of me", and he followed the guards.

In the morning we heard knocking at the wall.

"Hurry up, Kolia. It is the ATC". Kolia received the message and read it.

"The ATC is speaking. Ivan Ivanovich has been accused of participating in the conspiracy of Trotsky and Bukharin, and has been charged with mismanagement of the prisons. He will be shot. All Ukrainians will be transported either today or tomorrow. The women were sent to Vegeraksha-Kem. The chief of the ATC will be put in solitary today. The future password is three-seven. Another item. Sadovsky has received three additional years of imprisonment".

The Solovky hospital had special cells for the insane. The windows in the cells were barred but they did not have the small protruding roofs above the windows. From the

third floor of Uspensky Cathedral some prisoners were able to see Genady Sadovsky, who was now insane, as he paced his cell, methodically turning his head from side to side.

Slisarenko said that some of the information from the ATC was not correct. There was no prospect that the prisoners would be taken elsewhere. The whole cell agreed with him.

On the fourth night, all Ukrainians were called for transport! Only Peter Hrebinyk, a professor of Ukrainian literature, and I were left behind. Fate had something different in store for us.

The transport left Solovky. The Ukrainians were transferred to some other concentration camp about which we knew nothing. Now only God and the Moscow tyrants know if these great Ukrainian heroes and martyrs are dead or alive.

In 1937, on the 25th of December, the icebreaker took prisoners born in Siberia to Moresplav. Among them, in the hold of the ship, were Hrebinyk and I.

Under a strong guard, we were taken to the same two-storey barrack where I had been put four years ago. We were placed on the second floor. The barrack was surrounded by two rows of barbed wire, with police dogs in between, and a great number of machine gun towers behind.

Every night we were visited by Uncle Vania, our old acquaintance. He was always happy and drunk. He was the same Uncle Vania who had advised us not to be afraid of Solovky because it was also Russian land.

We inquired about our friends who had gone before us. Uncle Vania spread out his hands, and said, "I do not know. They were dressed in new prisoner's coats. The buttons on their trousers were cut off and the belts were taken away. After that, they were loaded in freight cars under a very strong guard and were taken in the direction of Petrozavodsk. No one knows the destination of the transport".

"What will happen to you, Uncle Vania? What will happen to us?"

Uncle Vania looked at us, shrugged his shoulders and said that he did not know. He really did not have the information. The GPU did not trust him. Besides how could anyone in Moresplav know the secret orders referring to the Solovky prisoners of a special division?

The night before the New Year, Uncle Vania came to the cell, very drunk. When he entered, he commanded, "Stand up! Uncle Vania has arrived".

We all got up. Uncle Vania laughed, and said to us, "Brothers, I have come to greet you with the New Year. "Happy New Year, comrade revolutionaries! Down with Czars! We will level churches and prisons to the ground!"

We stood before that drunk dreamer, one of the last representatives of the old revolutionary guard of 1917, and could not understand him.

"Drink, comrades! said Uncle Vania, and began to pull bottles of vodka from his pockets. One by one we went to him. Of course there were no unwilling persons among the prisoners in the barrack. Everyone had enough, as Uncle Vania had brought five litres of vodka in his bottomless pockets.

Prisoners immediately organised a concert. A Siberian, Leonidiv, a former member of the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra appeared with a violin on the platform.

The sounds of beautiful music filled the badly lighted barrack. Then another artist sang two songs. My comrade, Hrebinyk, could not hold himself back any longer and took his turn next. He was a tall man and had a black beard and a pale face. He reminded us of a martyr in the old painting. Hrebinyk looked at us kindly.

"Happy New Year, my friends," and not waiting for the answer, sang the famous Ukrainian prayer from a well-known opera.

The beautiful melody and the solemn words of prayer touched our hardened hearts. We wanted desperately to

pray and to live but at the same time we realized that the future promised us, not good things, but new fears and humiliations.

We all felt sad, and returned to our hard beds on the floor. Uncle Vania sat on the bench near the platform and cried bitterly. Uncle Vania cried . . . while outside the New Year snowstorm howled.

EPILOGUE

I am standing and watching the grinding disk of the lathe. Not far from me a huge machine blinks, showing all the different colours of the spectrum every second.

I am a grinder and soon I will be a Canadian citizen. I am free now and I am happy with the happiness that can be known only to those who have drunk from the cup of bitterness and suffered the degradation of slavery.

As I watch the changing colours of the machine, I think, "This is my life", rich in changes but filled with cruel red and black colours.

Slowly pictures from the past arise before my eyes. Of how we took leave of Uncle Vania when he was drunk but in a friendly mood.

"Do not be disheartened, Karelia is Russian land also," he said. Then he whispered to one of the prisoners "Everything will be all right. At first you were to be liquidated, but now everything will be fine".

The news that everything would be fine spread quickly among the prisoners.

They drove us three hundred miles on foot through deep snow. We were marching to the place where everything would be fine.

The prisoners were divided into small groups and scattered among numerous slave camps in the Northern Karelo-Finnish Republic, which was just another name for the White Sea-Baltic concentration camps.

Our group was assigned to the fourteenth section. The camp was situated in a swamp. The barracks had their own portion of Russian bugs and the conditions here were worse than anything I had ever seen before. Nevertheless "it was fine".

It was now the time of mass shootings in Soviet Russia, which took place after short intervals of comparative quiet.

Not only were the small fry shot but bigwigs such as Bucharin, Rakovsky and Piatakov were liquidated.

While prisoners were being shot for "attempts to escape", "agitation against the government", and "sabotage", the bigwigs were shot for other reasons.

Many were shot for maiming themselves. Driven to desperation by the unbearable hard labour and the inhuman conditions, they would cut off their fingers, or toes, saying that it was done accidentally. But the authorities did not believe or condone the accidents and began to add three additional years of imprisonment to their terms. Later for the same offence the men were shot.

However, there were some spirits that could not be bent. Misha Kryukov was one of these. One day, after two prisoners had been shot in front of the barracks for maiming themselves, he started a hunger strike. Lying on the boards of the sleeping platform he wrote an open letter to the Soviet Government. I can only remember the end of his letter where he recited the verses of V. Maiakovsky:

You may shoot me tied up to a post,
I will not change.
If you wish, I can mark my forehead
With an ace of diamonds
So that the target will shine brighter.

I do not think that anyone put an ace of diamonds on Misha's forehead. The NKVD always shoots a person in the back of the head. He was killed, not at our camp, but at Idel, centre of the whole section.

A few weeks later, escorted by two guards, I was taken to Idel also. My fellow prisoners sadly said goodbye to me. I was young, in spite of the impression my long beard gave, and I wanted to live even if it had to be in a slave camp. With a heavy heart I left the 14th Section.

But miracles can happen. Instead of being shot, I spent a few weeks in a deep dungeon, which, for some reason had the impressive name of "political isolation cell".

I was removed from that hole, still alive, but with double pneumonia and other complications. They sent me

to the black barracks near the river Vyg, which, for no reason at all, were called a hospital. Certainly there was not much need to transfer me to the hospital, as I weighed only about 54 pounds.

In the hospital I just lay fevered and delirious. Everyone expected me to die without delay. Out of the low window of my barrack, I could see some old men taking carts full of dead bodies from our hospital to the graves nearby every morning. However, I determined that I would not die, and my willpower won out.

After being discharged from the hospital, I was sent to Yuriev Island, where I chopped down trees and floated them in the river. For many months thereafter I worked in different sections, on different islands, at different tasks, until suddenly, as a bolt from the blue sky, a treaty of friendship between Stalin and Hitler was announced. From then on the authorities called me "an enemy of the people", instead of a "fascist dog".

But I learned always to remain silent. Everyone who had any connection with me looked on me as a person who had achieved the peak of socialistic personality and such a person does not need anything, does not care for anything and has no claims on anyone. In their eyes I was a man who had become accustomed to slavery, had accepted his lot and who had chosen to forgive his judges.

This saved me. I was neither shot nor given an additional term of imprisonment, and after the end of eight years, I was released. Freedom at last! Or so I thought. My relief was short-lived.

First I was deprived of my citizenship rights. Then, after being ordered to shave my beard, I was told to live in the small town of Isyum. As a political prisoner I had no right to correspond with anyone or to go anywhere, but I had the "right" of reporting to local NKVD every week.

I was not given any work or a means to live by. I could not even secure work as a woodcutter, the new trade that I had acquired in the North. I was an enemy of the people.

In desperation, I went to the secretary of the local

communist party and told him, "I am a former counter-revolutionary condemned for an armed uprising against the present government. If you will not give me some work, then put me back into jail or I will have to start robbing the peaceful citizens of this town.

The next day I was sent to a collective group, strangely named "Cultural Collective Group". The task of this group was to "spread culture" and was made up of former barbers, brushmakers, combmakers, and soapmakers.

On Sunday, June 22nd, 1941, I went to bed late, I awoke in a very happy mood, for I had dreamed a beautiful dream.

One hour later my dream came true. Comrade Molotov hysterically shouted over all the radio stations that "a treacherous enemy had attacked our motherland".

My wife visited me illegally for a few hours. I showed her the building of the secretary of the party from a distance and told her that in two months I would be working in that building.

My wife pointed to a forbidding NKVD prison and asked me to be careful not to go there instead. But that dreaded time came and nothing could help me.

On the suggestion of my superiors, I called a meeting of my "Cultural Collective Group" and raved to them with the best of my ability and lungs about my loyalty to Stalin. I also cursed the Germans and Hitler without restraint. I volunteered to "fight the enemy on his own territory". In spite of all my efforts I was soon at rest in the NKVD jail.

But I still kept my faith, for I knew that my dream would not deceive me and that everything would turn out all right.

Two struggling engines were dragging a long train containing the wives of communist chiefs. NKVD stoolpigeons, artists, etc. There was crying, laughing and quarreling. The prisoners were placed in a few freight cars that had barred windows. The night was dark. The September fog and rain covered everything. Above us we could hear the German bombers.

During that dark night a few other prisoners and I escaped to the West, for the West was to us the symbol of freedom.

However, our joy was again short-lived. In a short time we were transported westwards, not to freedom but to a German concentration camp. But still we believed that our hope lay in the West. The Fascist oppression was destroyed and the prison was in ruins. But it was not the end of our suffering. Stalin wanted us all back according to the promise the Western statesmen at Yalta had given him.

I became one of the first of those who refused to return to our "Motherland". The reader now knows why.

The sun of Western freedom had been darkened for us. After a wild and fierce fight in which we used our teeth and nails, tin cans, sticks and other primitive weapons, we were overpowered by both white and coloured American soldiers. Children, girls, aged men and women, and even mothers with babies took part in that fight. They resisted with all their might the armed soldiers who were trying to herd them together and deliver them to the Russians according to the Yalta agreement.

I organized this resistance and took part in the fighting. I was overpowered last among the refugees. I was stripped naked and thrown into a deep cell which had been built by Hitler's Gestapo.

Everything was ready for our return to the "Motherland". The Soviet car arrived. Russia wanted most of all the men like my fellow-refugees and myself. We knew too much.

But finally our friends interceded for us. Colonel Duncan, who was commanding the 137 Tank Regiment, came to my cell, shook my hand and saluted me. As I stood there without any clothing I was so perplexed, that I saluted him too in military fashion. The rest was the fulfilment of my dream. Canada opened her doors widely and generously to the unhappy refugees from Soviet Russia. Now the past appears as a nightmare. I do not blame the readers who will find it hard to believe my story, but it is true. More-

over, I will tell you that I have not dared to write all that I have seen, for some of it is so horrible that I would not be considered sane.]

And now the grinding disk rotates with great speed in front of me, and the huge machine blinks displaying the different colours. I know that neither my foreman nor even the director of the Company where I work will send me to jail for a few years if I fail to do my job properly. I think again about the changing colours of the machine. (How I wish with all my heart that not only for me, but for my Ukraine also and for all the people of Soviet Russia the cruel black and red of Russia would give place to the gladdening sunshine of my life in Canada.)