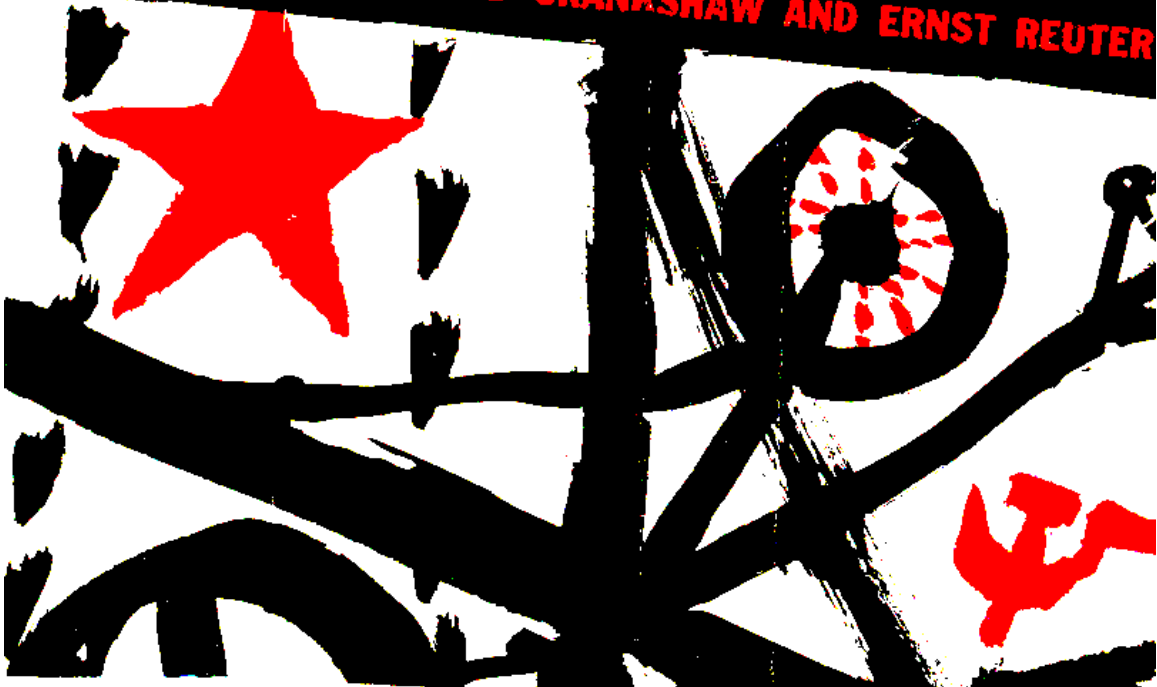


THE TERROR MACHINE

THE INSIDE STORY OF SOVIET RULE IN GERMANY

GREGORY KLIMOV

INTRODUCTIONS BY EDWARD CRANKSHAW AND ERNST REUTER



THE TERROR MACHINE

*The inside story
of the Soviet Administration
in Germany*

by

GREGORY KLIMOV

translated from the German by
H. C. Stevens

introduced by

EDWARD CRANKSHAW

and **ERNST REUTER**

Burgomaster of Berlin



PRAEGER — NEW YORK

BOOKS THAT MATTER

*Published in the United States of America
in 1958*

*by Frederick A. Praeger Inc., Publishers
105 West 40th Street, New York 18, N.Y.*

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 53-8080

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Preface by Edward Crankshaw

the now we know a good deal about the brutalities inflicted by the government of the Soviet Union upon those who incur its displeasure. The independent testimonies of survivors add up to a circumstantial and terrible indictment, so that it may be fairly said that anybody who still denies the evidence is the sort of person who would deny anything-or the sort of person who, to preserve his own illusions, will stop his ears to the cries of the dying and condemned.

Where we are less well informed is about the effect of the regime on the great mass of Soviet citizens who have managed to keep out of serious trouble. It is not enough to be told by Soviet refugees what Russia looks like through spectacles acquired in Paris, London, or New York. We want to know what it looked like when they were still in Moscow, Odessa, or Novosibirsk, before they began to dream of escaping to the West, or at least before they knew enough about the West to make comparisons. This is not idle curiosity: it is the only way of getting even a faint idea of how the regime appears to those who must still live under it.

Major Klimov's book is very helpful in this matter. It is a sober, yet vivid, account of life as lived inside the Soviet bureaucracy seen, as far as it is possible for an outsider to judge, very much as it appeared to the narrator before he decided to break away-as it must therefore appear to countless other intelligent Russians who are engaged at this moment in making the machine work. And this account has an added value because in these pages the machine is seen functioning not in the mysterious hinterland of the Soviet Union, where anything may happen and where events cannot be related to life as we know it, but in the middle of Western Europe, on the familiar ground of occupied Germany. Major Klimov and his colleagues at the Soviet Army headquarters in Berlin were grappling not with Russians but with Germans.

Preface

All this is not to suggest that Major Klimov is in every way typical of his compatriots. Obviously he is not, or he would not have written this remarkable book. He has an intelligence, a detachment, perhaps an honesty of mind well above the average. But although he saw through the hypocrisies of Stalinism more clearly and uncompromisingly than most of his colleagues, his basic emotional reactions and mental processes do not seem to have marked him off from them. With one important difference he accepted what they accepted, rejected what they rejected, and for a long time was prepared to serve his government as a patriotic citizen, whether on the battlefield or on the General Staff.

The important difference was that he was too stubborn to join, as a matter of convenience, the Communist Party, which he, like most of the rank and file of its members, despised. He was prepared to put up with the regime but not, if he could help it, to hand himself over body and soul to it. This attitude is more characteristic of Soviet citizens than some of us care to think. It is probably true to say that the majority of them accept the régime and try to make the best of it not so much because they have no choice but rather because it has never occurred to them that they may in fact have a choice. They do not spend sleepless nights brooding over the iniquities of the MVD: like all human beings everywhere they take life as they find it, enjoy it when they can, and keep their reservations to themselves. Klimov differed from the majority in that he was not prepared to keep all his reservations secret. His failure to join the Party could only be, interpreted as some sort of a demonstration. And it was because of this that he found himself driven in the end, quite suddenly, to take the decisive step and abandon his homeland. There were, to be true, only six million or so Party members at that time; but these included most go-ahead young engineers who wanted to make a career. To join it was interpreted as an act of total submission.

Our own attitude towards the Soviet régime (I speak of people who have taken the trouble to read and weigh the evidence) is coloured above all by horror and disgust at the physical brutalities, as expressed in police beatings, enforced confessions, arbitrary prison sentences and slave-labour in sickening conditions. The reader of this book will observe with interest that Major Klimov takes the physical aspects of the terror in his stride: the degradation of the prisoner plays a less important part in his image of the Soviet

Union than it does in ours. In this he is, I think, characteristic of the majority of Russians, who are less concerned with the details of what the security police do to their victims than with the simple fact of their ubiquity and power, What Major Klimov brings up with extreme sharpness of focus is something far less frequently and effectively reported than the torturing and the slave-driving: I mean the sustained and terrible pressure on the minds and spirits of men who are technically free. We are not allowed to forget that this pressure has its fulcrum in physical fear; but we are invited to contemplate not the by now familiar manifestations of that pressure but its effect on those whose lives are largely spent in trying to avoid the midnight arrest and the labour camps of the Far North. The price they pay for their technical freedom is the corruption of their minds and the atrophy of their will.

Different readers will find different centres of interest in Major Klimov's narrative. For example, it may be read as an enthralling behind-the-scenes account of the workings of a Soviet Army headquarters, or as a revelation of the Soviet way with occupied territory. But for me its chief fascination lies in the slowly emerging picture of what the Soviet regime is making of the minds and characters of its subjects. Without overstatement, without generalizing, simply by recounting his own personal experience of life under Stalin, Major Klimov shows us a system which is rotten at the core. If he showed us only that, it would be a simple story-the story of a system which fears all independence of mind and spirit and in killing it digs its own grave. But it is not a simple story. The truth about the Soviet Union is as complicated and as unattainable as the truth about human nature. Because, as Major Klimov also shows, perhaps unconsciously, the human spirit is so resilient that although whole areas of it may be effectively paralyzed in a multitude of individuals, life still persists, finding its fulfillment in a job well done, or in the heroic fighting of a patriotic war. This is good news about human nature. But in the context of the Soviet Union it has an ironic sting. For it is this stubborn spark of spiritual life, surviving in spite of all the efforts of authority to stamp it out, which alone saves the regime from collapsing under its own dead weight. We may see in it our future hope; but we must also see in it some part of the Kremlin's present strength.

Author's Note

The author of this book is quite an ordinary Russian, soldier, and citizen. He has rather less reason to take offense at Stalin than the majority of Russians. He was born about the time of the October Revolution of 1917, and can be said to have begun active, practical life in the early days of the war, in 1941. His thoughts and experiences are those of the young generation of Soviet people. He is not a renegade communist, for he has never been a member of the Soviet Communist Party. He has come to know the theory and practice of Stalinist Communism in the same way as every other Russian has come to know them, in life and blood. So he is in no way an exception to the rule of present-day Soviet society. He loves freedom and democracy no more and no less than any other Russian.

This book is in the nature of a diary, but it does not pretend to tell the author's life-story. It reports on the Soviet man of the present day, on those who today are wearing gold epaulettes and are driving tanks and flying aeroplanes, those who are living and working behind the Iron Curtain.

If these lines ever happen to find their way to Berlin, many Soviet soldiers and officers-and their number is greater than is indicated in this book-will secretly think: 'This book reports on me.'

Introduction by Ernst Reuter

The decisive problem of our time is that of relations with the totalitarian Soviet system. Despite all the astonishing results that have been achieved, not only in western Germany but in other European countries during recent years, the quite understandable disposition of a large part of the western world to be concerned with its own anxieties and to devote considerable energy to the restoration of its own conditions cannot dispose of the fact that there can be no peace in the world so long as the Soviet problem is not solved. Today the Soviets stand in the heart of Europe; Lubeck and Hamburg, as well as Kassel and Frankfurt-on-Main, lie in a sense at their gates; the bounds between the two worlds run along the Elbe in Germany, the geographical centre of Europe; and countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania are under the domination of a foreign power which is never prepared to give up its ultimate goal. And all these facts show that there can be no serious peace so long as they endure.

They cannot endure, because they will not be regarded as a lasting solution by the people living under the Soviet yoke. They could only endure if the western world were to compound with them. But the western world cannot, and dare not, compound with these conditions. It must clearly recognize that this enemy will never abandon his goal, and by his very nature cannot renounce his conquests, still less his aim to incorporate those countries not yet under his subjection.

Given this situation, which even today is not clearly realized by many millions of the western peoples, it is of decisive importance whether we can keep the way open to the subjected peoples, and also find a way to the peoples who are suffering most of all under the Soviet yoke. I mean the peoples of the Soviet Union, and above all the Russians themselves. More than any other place, Berlin has drunk the bitter cup of Soviet occupation to the dregs, and it is by no means fortuitous that it is in Berlin that the point has been made most persistently and urgently that our spiritual and political dispute is not with the Russian people but with the Soviet system. Again and again, we in Berlin have stressed that we have no hatred and no aversion for the Russian people, whose tremendous cultural achievements we all know and recognize, but that we wish to live and could live in true friendship with that nation.

In the present historical conditions we are confronted with an unprecedented phenomenon. I refer to the fact that we are

witnessing an emigration from Soviet Russia of people who have never consciously experienced any other but the Soviet regime, In all the former periods of world history, emigrants have regularly carried with them memories of the past. When they were compelled to leave their native land they took with them the memory of what they regarded as a better past, the memory of values in which they believed and which they considered it their duty to defend, even in emigration. This is true not only of emigrants from Germany. All through history, every emigration has had this traditional backward look. But now we find that 'Soviet men', if we may use those dreadful words, are essentially cutting themselves off from the system under which they have grown up, from a system whose horrible and profoundly inhuman nature they have been forced to recognize often against their will, and only after a long inward struggle.

Today we see that the identification of all Germans with National Socialism, and the consequent demand for 'unconditional surrender', is one of the mistakes for which all of us, victors and vanquished, must alike pay heavily. It has taken time for this error to be mentally overcome, and meanwhile tensions have been engendered which it would have been better to avoid. This serious political and psychological error must never be repeated on any future occasion. The Russian people and all the other peoples suffering under the Soviet yoke cannot and must not be made responsible for their regime.

One of the most important tasks of the present time is to develop the western world's understanding of the internal struggle and stress of relations inside Soviet Russia. We must work for realization of the fact that often men who carry Soviet passports are even compelled to become members of the Soviet Communist Party; and

we must work for understanding of the reason why such men cannot be made politically and morally responsible for the regime under which they are themselves suffering.

Major Klimov's book is an unusually valuable contribution to the very difficult problem of understanding what is going on inside Soviet Russia. He gives a frequently dramatic description of his own process of development, and of his very rich experience and observation, which should be studied by all who have the future of the West at heart. Russia's internal development during the war, the concessions made by the Stalin regime to the natural and inevitable patriotic feelings of the Russians who were called upon to defend, and did defend, their country against an enemy conqueror, but who hoped that something new would emerge out of

their very defense, and then the monstrous post-war reaction, provide a key to an understanding of all that is happening in that country. His story shows the profound weaknesses of the regime, it reveals how responsive the Russians will be if the western world becomes convinced that our quarrel is not with Russia as such, but with the Soviet regime.

In our own German history we have experienced something similar on a small scale. After the 61st anniversary of the war for freedom of 1813 there was a reaction which made genuine freedom, and with it a genuine unification of Germany, historically impossible. We must get out of the habit of regarding this dispute as in the nature of a quarrel between East and West, or even between Germans and Russians. In Germany especially, but, unfortunately, not only in Germany, all old-style politicians are still inclined to think in categories derived from the past. They do not realize that the true realities of life are the hidden forces and processes at work within the people. They fail to realize that in our own fight for freedom our strongest allies are to be found in the Russian people themselves: people who are no less, and possibly even more, freedom-loving than those who are so quick to turn up their noses at the alleged and actual cultural backwardness of the East. On a former occasion, in a statement on German-Russian friendship, I said that I still hoped to have another opportunity to eat 'kasha' with a Russian peasant in his hut. Perhaps those who cannot understand the depth of this longing, since they do not know Russia, will get some understanding of what I had in mind when they read Klimov's dramatic description of a highly placed Russian Party-general's visit to his

peasant father's home. For those who can read and understand, Klimov's book gives an unequivocal answer to the question, continually being asked, how we are to solve the apparently insoluble problem of dealing with the Soviets. The problem will be solved if all of us, freed from the domination of past power-conceptions, realize that the peoples themselves must be liberated; it will be solved when the peoples realize that their own internal freedom will only be secure again when the freedom of all peoples is secure. Klimov's book reveals what profound possibilities there are of a solution on the lines of freedom in Russia. So it is a message of hope for us all. But it is necessary, too, for the world to understand how difficult, indeed, practically insoluble, is this task for any one people, if it has to live under such a satanic regime as the present Soviet regime. Klimov reveals so impressively the dreadful consequences of this regime, with its destruction of all human and natural inclinations and associations, that it is to be hoped the nonsensical idea which millions still hold, that the Russians as such

cannot be trusted and that they are responsible for the regime under which they are suffering, will be abolished.

There are still only a few who realize that we must win the genuine friendship of the Russian people. That realization is more present in the minds of those who are professionally occupied with the question. It must be our task to bring it home to everybody. Out of it a force of explosive effect can develop. No iron curtain, no terror measures adopted by the Soviet regime, will be able to hinder the long-distance effect within Russia of an inner change in the western world's attitude to that country. In this direction we can forge weapons more effective than tanks, grenades, and atom bombs. In this direction we can forge weapons that will free the world without resort to bloodshed. Our real task is to gather around us men who, like Klimov, have gone through the purgatory of their regime and have retained intact an extraordinary strength of will and a genuine love of truth. I hope that this book will do even more than descriptions by foreign observers to help in shaping our determination to free this world, and with it the whole world too.

ERNST REUTER,

Burgmaster of Berlin.

Aschau (Cheingau), 21 August 1951.

CHAPTER ONE

The Military College

As the call filtered through the thick cloth of my military great coat it seemed to be coming from an immense distance. Surely I had dreamt it! It was so warm under my coat, I drew it right up over my ears. My bed of fir branches was so soft and comfortable. Of course I'd dreamt it!

"Captain Kli-mov!"

The shout again disturbed the nocturnal silence. Then someone muttered something to the guard pacing up and down between the rows of tents.

". . . He's ordered to report immediately to the staff headquarters of the front," the voice said to the guard. Then once more came the shout:

"Captain Klimov!"

"Hell! Staff headquarters! That's no joke!" I threw off my great coat, and at once felt the damp air from the nearby swamp, mingling with the omnipresent, distinctive smell of front-line soldiers. In visible mosquitoes were buzzing. Taking care not to disturb my comrades, I crawled out of the tent backward.

"What's up?" I muttered, still half asleep. "Whom were you shouting for? Did you say 'Klimov'?"

"Comrade Captain, here's a courier for you from the staff," the guard reported through the darkness.

"Where is he? What's it all about?"

"Comrade Captain, here's an order for you." A sergeant in a leather helmet handed me a document. By the light of a torch I read:

'Captain G. P. Klimov is ordered to report to the Personnel Department of the Leningrad front staff headquarters on July 17, 1944, at eight hours.' At the bottom of the paper was a hand written note from my commanding officer: 'Order to report at once.'

'Hm, this might be interesting' I thought. "Have you anything further to communicate?" I asked the sergeant.

"I'm ordered to take you to the staff at once," he answered as he kicked down the starter lever of his motor-cycle combination. In the side-car I quickly forgot my weariness. We jolted over the pot-holes of the forest road, then passed through a half-destroyed, deserted village. Against the slowly lightening sky I discerned the dark chimneys, the roof joists splintered by artillery fire. The motor-cycle wheels spun in the sand; then we made a precarious crossing of a grassgrown ditch, and I was relieved to feel the smooth surface of the Leningrad high road beneath us.

A light early morning haze was hovering over the steaming earth, and now the little houses of the Leningrad suburbs began to appear amid the green of trees. In the distance rose the chimneys of the city's factories and industrial works.

What was behind this urgent summons to staff headquarters? Away back in the tent my comrades would be just waking up. When they saw my empty place they would feel pretty glad that it was not they who had been called out. But then, when they learned that I had been taken urgently to the staff, they would scratch their napes thoughtfully and exchange uncertain glances.

At this time I was serving in a K.U.K.S. force, undergoing a course for advanced training of officer personnel for the Leningrad front. The K.U.K.S. was a very unusual type of military formation, a 'curiosity shop', as the members of the course themselves called it. It consisted of comparatively young men with beards and whiskers of extraordinary shapes and sizes. These grim-looking individuals had a queer habit of wearing fur hats in the hottest of weather. In fact they were former officers and commanders of partisan detachments, who were being purged of their partisan ideas and spirit and were having army discipline drummed into them.

Shortly after the liberation of Leningrad from the German blockade in January 1944 the city celebrated the triumphal entry of partisans of the Leningrad province. But within a month Narcomvnudel Special Brigades had to be ordered hurriedly to the city to disarm the overzealous men of the woods. The partisans were behaving like the conquerors of an enemy fortress and were using hand-grenades and automatic pistols against the militia who tried to reduce them to order. They regarded every militiaman as an hereditary enemy and openly boasted of how many they had bumped off.

After the partisans had been disarmed they were packed quietly

into cattle-trucks and sent to special Narcomvnudel camps. The newspapers had glorified the 'wild' partisans as patriotic national heroes, but when they emerged from their forests into the light of day they at once came under the sharp eyes of the Narcomvnudel. Those partisans who were members of the regular detachments built up out of Red Army personnel, and the semi-regulars under commanders sent from the central command and obeying orders issued by the central radio and air force, were acceptable. But anyone who had fought in the forests and had had to resort to straightforward 'food requisitioning' when their stocks of home made vodka and fat bacon came to an end-God help them. The N.K.V.D. put them through a thorough purging before passing them on to the regular army, and their commanders were sent to receive special training in the K.U.K.S., such as the one for the Leningrad front.

While in the K.U.K.S. I often heard the enigmatic questions:

"Where are you from? Out of the Eighth?"

"No, the Ninth," the answer would come reluctantly. After a time I found out that the 'Eighth' and the 'Ninth' were storming battalions on the Leningrad front. 'Storming battalion' was the official name for punitive battalions in which officers served as rank-and-file soldiers and were sent as such into battle. If they came back alive they were restored to their previous officer's rank. The losses of storming battalions regularly amounted to 90 and even 95 per cent of the strength in every engagement.

As the Red Army went over to the offensive and began to liberate the occupied areas, all the former Soviet officers found in these areas were rounded up, and, like the partisans, were sent to special Narcomvnudel camps. Those whom the N.K.V.D. did not regard as worthy of dying on the gallows were given a preliminary purge, and then sent to the next department of the 'cleansing institution', to a storming battalion. There they were afforded plenty of opportunity to purge their crime against the Fatherland with their blood.

Let them fight! There would be time to deal with them properly after the war!

Those who survived the ordeal by fire were usually sent straight from hospital-freedom from, % storming battalion was gained only at the price of blood-to the K.U.K.S. for final retraining. A number of my comrades in the K.U.K.S. had paybooks which after the denotation 'soldier' or 'infantryman' gave the rank of

'regimental commissar' or 'squadron commander' in brackets. Yes, there was some very interesting human material in our K.U.K.S.! In reality it was a permanent reserve for the Leningrad front. The officers being retrained were not allowed to lounge about, they had to play at soldiers in deadly earnest. The former commander of a machine-gun company had to learn how to take to pieces and reassemble a machine-gun of the Maxim pattern, while the commander of a rifleman's battalion was instructed in the workings of the unsurpassable '1891 muster' rifle.

There was a large percentage of Ukrainians in the K.U.K.S. When the Red Army retreated from the Ukraine many soldiers who came from that area simply threw their arms into the nearest ditch and 'went home'. But when the Red Army began to drive the Germans out again these 'sons of the soil' were hastily rounded up, weapons were thrust into their hands, and they were sent, just as they were, even without uniforms, into the front line. The banks of the Dnieper were strewn with corpses in civilian clothing. Ordinary soldiers were simply returned to active service, usually without any preliminary purge by the N.K.V.D. Personal accounts between State and individual could be settled later; at that moment there was more need of cannon fodder for the army than labour power for the concentration camps.

Though the feeling never came into the open, there was constant tension between the Ukrainians and the Russians in our K.U.K.S. The Ukrainians usually kept their mouths shut, like younger brothers with bad consciences. The Russians only let fall a good natured: "Ah, you Khokols!" (Russian term of contempt for Ukrainians.)

"Ah, those Germans!" The Ukrainians sighed in reply. "They abused our trust, the blighters !"

One day questionnaires were circulated through the battalions of the K.U.K.S.; the command was attempting to establish which of the members of the course were Crimean Tatars. I remember noting Lieutenant Chaifutinov's anxious face as he sat filling in the questions inquiring into his family. We had heard rumours that by the Kremlin's order the entire Tatar population of the Crimean Autonomous Republic was to be deported; several million people were to be transferred to Siberia, and their republic abolished, because of their 'disloyal attitude to the Soviet regime during the German occupation'. This order provoked conversations like the following among members of our course:

"Do you know how the Kalmuks behaved at Stalingrad? The

Germans attacked, but they prepared the way. They cut the throats of whole Soviet regiments in the night."

"I'd like to know why the Don and Kuban cossacks looked on and did nothing," someone interjected.

"What else were the cossacks to do?" remarked a third. "You won't find a single real cossack in the cossack forces today." These officers saw nothing surprising in the fact that the Kalmuks had exterminated their regiments, they were only amazed that the cossacks had stood by idly. For in the past the Don and Kuban cossack districts had been famous as centres of opposition to the Soviet regime. The artificially created famine disaster of 1933 had been forced through in those districts with more than the usual brutality. Down to 1936 the cossacks had been the only national group not called up into the regular army. And so it seemed in credible that the cossacks, who had been renowned throughout history for their love of freedom, had not risen against the Soviets. Among the participants in the course were many former political officers of the Red Army. A number of men in this category had lost their heads already in the Narcomvudel special camps, and those few who survived both these camps and the storming battalions must have had an unusually tenacious grip on life. And hardly had they arrived at the K.U.K.S., than they began with true communist wolfishness to clutch at their former jobs as shepherds of the human herds. Despite all the sifting and purging they had experienced through the N.K.V.D. even in the K.U.K.S. they managed somehow to get into positions as commanders of sub-divisions of our course. The other officers took every opportunity to address them as 'Comrade Political Director' or 'Comrade Commissar', though these ranks had been abolished in the army for some time. Despite, or even because of the fact that the 'curiosity shop' "", as such a haphazard collection of widely varied types, there was

always much coming and going. Almost every day mysterious commissions visited us in quest of various kinds of 'commodities'. For instance, one commission came in search of partisans for Yugoslavia. The conditions were: 25,000 roubles in cash, a month's leave, then a parachute drop into that country. Our men needed no special training for such activities. There was a queue of candidates, the majority being former partisans who could not endure army discipline.

Then came a general search for men with Polish surnames, as recruits for the Polish 'National' Army. Then there was a call for candidates to the Red Army Intelligence School. Conditions: nobody accepted under the rank of major, and graduation from

high school. Yet even these strict standards could be met over and over again.

These 'trading activities' were due to the great shortage of special cadres, which were particularly lacking in the army. And the K.U.K.S. contained a mass of fresh, still unsorted human material, which had not been available until recently, because it had been isolated in partisan bands or in the occupied areas.

The majority of my K.U.K.S. comrades were men almost literally from the other world. One youngster had fled right across Europe from a German prisoner-of-war camp in France. When he reached the Russian area under German occupation he was captured a second time, put into a concentration camp, and then escaped again. Twice he had been set up against a wall and had fallen seriously wounded, getting away by worming his way out from under his comrades' corpses in the mass grave. He had had two years as a partisan in the swamps and forests around Leningrad. And as a reward for his love of the fatherland he had been 'purged' in a Narcomvmudel camp, had experienced bloodbaths in a storming battalion, and at last had found the quiet haven of the K.U.K.S. Practically every member of the course had had a similar past. They were the few survivors. Naturally, they were not very fond of telling their life-stories.

In such company I was a real greenhorn, as innocent as a new born babe. I had been sent to the K.U.K.S. after serving in the 96th Special Regiment of Reserve Officers. I had been wounded in the fight for Novgorod, and had spent three months in hospital. It was during my stay in hospital, which was the former Leningrad Palace of Engineers, that all the city was staggered by unexpected news. By order of the Leningrad City Soviet all the important, historical streets and squares were to have their former, pre-revolutionary names restored to them. Thus the Prospekt of October 25th was renamed once more the Nevsky Prospekt; the Field of Mars was relieved of its tongue-twisting revolutionary name and became again the Field of Mars. The changes left us gaping. if things moved at this rate even the collective farms would be abolished

The staff of the Leningrad front had its headquarters in the horseshoe-shaped former General Staff building, opposite the Winter Palace. The way to the Personnel Department lay through the famous and historic Arches of the General Staff. It was through these Arches that the revolutionary sailors and red guards of Petrograd had stormed the Winter Palace in 1917. On the broad window sills of the reception room I found several

officers sitting, dangling their legs.

"Do you want this place too, Captain?" one of them asked me. When I nodded he asked me the unexpected question: "Can you speak any foreign language?"

"Why, what's going on here?" I asked in turn.

"At the moment it's an examination in foreign languages," a lieutenant explained. "It's something to do with selection for some special school, or possibly a college," another added. "The first requisite is knowledge of some foreign language, and graduation in secondary education. Obviously it's something important. It's even said to involve return to Moscow he said in a nostalgic tone, and clicked his tongue hopelessly.

An officer, very red and sweating, shot through the door. "Oh, hell! ... What's the German for 'wall'? I knew 'window', I knew 'table', but I simply couldn't remember 'wall'. Damn it all! Listen, boys! Mug up all the names of things you find in a room. He points with his finger and asks their names."

Of the officers in that reception room, two knew Finnish, one Rumanian, and the others had school knowledge of German and English. I knew well enough what 'school knowledge' meant. But the less chance a man has, the greater becomes his desire to reach the mysterious spot where this linguistic knowledge is required. Everything in any way associated with the thought of 'abroad' automatically stimulated one's curiosity and imagination. I couldn't help smirking. So here we wouldn't be concerned with

the five parts of the breech of an 1891 rifle I stretched myself comfortably on a distant bench and attempted to continue my rudely interrupted sleep. When my name was called I went in, clicked my heels with all the precision laid down by Hitler's army regulations and reported in German in such a thunderous voice that the major sitting at the desk started back in alarm. He stared at me in astonishment; possibly he was wondering whether he should ask me the German for 'table' or 'window'. Then he asked me a question in Russian. I answered in German. He spoke again in Russian, I once more answered in German. At last he had to laugh. As he invited me to sit down he asked:

"Where have you picked it up, Captain?"

I took out the documents relating to my civilian life before call-up -it was a miracle that I still had them safely-and laid them on the table.

"Ah, this is wonderful!" he remarked. "I really took you for a German at first. I'll present you to the colonel at once."
He showed me into the next room and introduced me to the head of the Personnel Department. "Comrade Colonel," he said, "I think we've got a genuine candidate this time! You needn't worry about his language, he really put the wind up me. I thought he must be a diversionist." He laid my papers on the desk and withdrew.

The colonel took his advice, and did not bother about language tests. He started at once on the moral aspect. The moral and political reliability of an officer is the most important factor, and he is subjected to strict tests in this respect.

"You see, Captain Klimov," the colonel began, "we're thinking of sending you to a responsible and privileged higher s h l)l of the Red Army." He spoke in tones of great solemnity. "You will understand me better if I describe the position to you. Moscow demands a fixed quota of candidates from us every month. We send them to Moscow, and there all those who fail to pass are sent back to us. We send all failures to a punitive company," he remarked casually, giving me a meaning look. "Every day Moscow bombards us with the demand: 'send us men'. But we haven't any. That's one aspect of the problem. Now for the second. You're in the K.U.K.S., and there are a lot of men with doubtful pasts in the K.U.K.S. I don't ask you your record. But one thing is sure: you've got to be spotlessly clean! Otherwise you'll find yourself in a different place from the one we propose to send you to. And we've got to send you! Get that?"

I liked the colonel's unusual frankness. I assured him that I was quite immaculate.

"I don't care a damn whether you're immaculate or not," he answered. "You've got some extraordinary fellows in your K.U.K.S. Only yesterday one of your former colonels swore to me that he was a lieutenant of infantry. We wanted to send him to the intelligence corps school, but he dug his feet in like a mule and said he couldn't write."

I was not in the least surprised. Men who had held responsible posts and had passed through the usual preliminaries to K.U.K.S. lost all desire for rank and responsibility and had only one wish—a quiet life.

"You may try to think up something on those lines," the colonel went on. "So I repeat, this is a serious matter. If we consider it necessary to send you we shall send you! And no monkey tricks, or

we'll report you as refusing to perform military service. You know what that means Field court-martial!" he explained weightily. He knew well enough that members of K.U.K.S. courses and former storming battalion men were not to be intimidated with threats of punitive companies. Only a court-martial, with certain death to follow, made any impression on such cases. He gave me a critical glance and picked up the telephone to get contact with the staff of my K.U.K.S.

"We're sending your Klimov away. Get his documents ready. He must leave for Moscow by the twelve noon train," he told the chief of staff. "And one other thing: why do you let your men go around looking like tramps? Fit him out at once. He mustn't bring shame on our front when he arrives in Moscow."

A few minutes later, in an adjoining room, I was handed a sealed and stamped packet which contained my personal documents and traveling passes for Moscow.

Back in the reception room, I was surrounded by an excited crowd of candidates. "Well, how did it go? Sunk? Were the questions lousy?"

I shrugged my shoulders and showed my order for Moscow. "So it really is Moscow!" they exclaimed. "Well, good luck!" and they shook my hands.

Out of the cool twilight of the archways, I stepped into the

sunlit Winter Palace Square. I simply couldn't believe that I wasn't dreaming! In three hours I would be on the train to Moscow! Such luck, such incredible luck, made me feel queer. I knew of lots of officers, men whose homes were in Leningrad, who had served on the Leningrad front for three years without a single leave in the city. Even in the K.U.K.S. officers who came from Leningrad were not allowed local leave. When we went to the town-baths or on sightseeing tours we were marched in formation. As for Muscovites, even such a short and official visit to their home city was an un-realizable dream. Was it really possible that I was going home? I looked about me. Yes, this was Leningrad, but in my pocket was a voucher opening my way to Moscow. Standing in the middle of the empty Winter Palace Square, I took it out and read it. I deliberately refused to give way to the patrols in green caps who were to be seen everywhere on the sidewalks and at the street crossings. Leningrad was in the frontier zone, and the patrols of the Narcomvnudel frontier regiments were particularly strong in the city. The greencaps were the bitterest enemies of all men in uniform. It was not so long since I myself had spent two days and

nights in a cold cell at their headquarters, without food and without cigarettes, until an officer armed with a machine-pistol had come from K.U.K.S. to take me back. My crime had been that I had left the baths and gone out into the street. While our command was having a steam-bath I had a quick wash and slipped out into the fresh spring air. Right outside the door I had been picked up as a deserter by the greencaps. But today I could cock a snook at them. Today I was going to Moscow.

In the K.U.K.S. staff headquarters a princely reception was awaiting me. In half an hour I was completely refitted from head to foot; new cap, new uniform, even a new pack, filled with cans and cigarettes. Punctually at midday I presented my traveling voucher at the October railway station ticket office.

"Fifty-six roubles," the booking clerk said. I felt hurriedly in my pockets. Hell, of course I needed money! The one thing I lacked. During my soldiering I had quite forgotten what it was. My pay was sent home automatically. A hopeless situation? Not at all! Under socialism everything is very simple, life is absurdly easy. I darted out into the station square, tore open my pack, and whistled. Hardly had I got the pack open when customers came running up. Five minutes later, lighter by a few cans of food, but with my pockets full of roubles, I was back at the ticket office. And ten minutes later the train was carrying me to Moscow.

Through the carriage window I gazed at the straw-thatched roofs of villages, at poverty-stricken fields and glittering lakes, bombed out stations. And yet I felt very light-hearted. Despite all the German resistance, our army was advancing, The scales of history were sinking slowly but surely in our favour.

It was not much more than a month since the K.U.K.S. had buzzed like an excited swarm of bees: the Allies had landed at last on the Normandy coast. For several days we had lived in the fear that the landing troops might be thrown back into the sea, or that it was only another diplomatic, not a military, manoeuvre. I had no connection with the men in the Kremlin and had no idea what they thought about it. But we in the Red Army had read all the Soviet papers with their continual appeals for help, and even their frequent charges that the Allies were pursuing a policy of deliberate inactivity.

We who were serving in the immediate vicinity of the front knew only too well what sacrifices were called for in an offensive, what sacrifices lay behind the laconic report of the Information Bureau: 'On the Narva front, no change.' We knew that whole divisions were being slaughtered to the last man in fruitless attempts to break through the Narva front. The Estonian detachments fighting with

the German Army held those positions on the frontier of their native land, and they held out to their last breath; they were even more obdurate than the Germans. But the Information Bureau reported: 'No change'. The only important things were visible results, not human lives. And that is the case wherever war is waged.

But now we felt grateful to our Allies, not only for their mountains of canned foods, soldiers' greatcoats, and even buttons, but for the blood they were shedding in the common cause. An iron grip had closed round Germany's throat. Even though life was hard, though hungry women and children held out their hands, begging, at every railway station, despite everything we were going forward to victory. We believed in victory, and even more strongly in some thing different that would come after the victory.

The story goes that when he heard the Allies had landed in France Stalin stamped his foot with rage. I don't know whether the story is true, but I know we soldiers were filled with joy. The politicians share out Europe, we soldiers shared out our bread and our blood.

So now I was returning to Moscow. My thoughts wandered back to the day I had left it. It seemed ages and ages ago. After a fine day in the country Genia and I were returning in the cool autumn evening by th suburban electric train to Moscow. I took the city military commmand's order that I was to re-register out of my pocket and remarked: "I'll go along and get them to stamp my exemption tomorrow morning, and then I'll come along to you. And we'll see about it ...

But supposing they keep you there!" Her voice quivered with agitation, her black eyes looked at me anxiously. I was terribly grateful for those words and that look.

"Don't talk rubbish! It isn't the first time!" I answered.

Next morning I went in my padded military jacket, in my blue trousers thrust into my military boots, and my extraordinary headgear, to report to the Military Commissariat. By wartime standards I was dressed like a gentleman. It was common form to be dressed like that in wartime Moscow, and it saved you a lot of hostile scowls. In my pocket I had Conan Doyle's The Sign of Four, which I read in the Underground to practise my English.

After handing in my papers at the Second Department of the Military Commissariat I slipped into a corner and took out to pass the time. The room was crowded with an extraordinary collection of men: chalk-white faces, unshaven cheeks, shabby clothes much too light for the time of year. Two militiamen were leaning lazily against the door. I read while I waited for my

exemption paper to be handed back, stamped: re-registered'.
out with

After some time the head of the department came out with a list. He read out a number of names, including mine. I had no idea what the list was for. The moment he left the room the militiamen gave the order: "Fall in in the street".

We were all, including myself, with my index finger still between two pages of my book, driven out into the yard. What joke was this? They couldn't do this to me! I'd got exemption! I tried to turn off to the left, and found myself looking into the muzzle of

revolver. To the right: another revolver.

"No protests!" the militiamen shouted. "So long as you're in our charge you're prisoners. When we've handed you over at the assembly point you'll be free again ...

Thus I marched through Moscow, guarded by militiamen with revolvers at the ready.

A mistake, you think? Nothing of the sort. There was a terrible shortage of reserves for the front. Yet the needs of the rear were just as great. The rear issued exemptions from military service. But the front carried off the men, together with their exemptions. Behind it all was the 'Plan'.

According to the Plan the Military Commissariat had to send fifty men to the assembly point that day. What else could they do but rake them in wherever they could? So they hauled the short term prisoners out of the prisons-most of them were in for turning up late or slacking at work-took them under escort to the Military Commissariat and then to the assembly point. And if they were still short of men for the Plan, they threw in a few 'exempted' men. And that was how an exempted scientific worker in the Molotov Energetics Institute, which had been awarded the Order of Lenin, became a soldier. Neither Lenin nor Molotov made any difference. This was more exciting than Conan Doyle. The one pity was that I had no chance to say goodbye to Genia.

I soon learned to march as bravely as the rest. We were despatched to the front, and I bawled out the Russian folk-song at the top of my voice:

"Nightingale, nightingale, little bird, why don't you sing me a cheerful song"

All the songs of the pre-war period, about the 'Leader', the proletariat', and similar eyewash, had been swept out of the army as though by the mighty incantation of a magician. Instead, the genuine Russian marching songs conquered the soldiers' hearts. Even quite unmusical fellows bawled them out, simply because they were now again allowed to sing about neighing steeds, old mothers, and young beauties. The magician in the Kremlin realized that such things were closer to the soldiers' hearts than Karl Marx's beard.

Now I was returning to Moscow. Only yesterday I had not dared even to dream of such a thing. I recalled when I had last thought of Moscow. one sunny spring day, as I wandered through a lonely glade in the dense forest of the Karelian Peninsula, I had come upon a deep shell crater overgrown with young green. At the bottom, greenish bog-water shimmered like transparent glass. Forest water,

as clear as crystal, which we often scooped up in our helmets, drink. But there, head in the water, his arms flung out in a spasm, lay the body of an enemy soldier.

As I descended, digging my heels into the soil, clumps of earth rolled down into the pool. Little ripples wrinkled the surface and set the dead man's hair in gentle movement with their mournful caresses. Oppressed by this close union of life and death, I squat down. But at last my curiosity overcame my respect for death.. carefully opened the man's breast-pocket and took out a packet of papers.

The usual military documents, with the eagle astride the swastika letters from home, and the photo of an attractive, fair-haired girl in summer dress. The photo was carefully wrapped in paper its back was written: 'To my beloved from his beloved' the date and the name of a town far away in the south of the Reich. I looked at the dead man's hair in the green water, then again at the face of the girl on the bank of the Rhine. Where she was the orchards were now in full bloom and the vines were showing green on the slopes. One warm spring night this girl had gently caressed the hair of her beloved; now it was being caressed by the cold bog-water of a forest somewhere in Russia.

I took out my notebook and, sitting on the edge of the crater wrote a melancholy note to Genia: 'Perhaps tomorrow I too will be lying somewhere with my face turned upward, and nobody will tenderly caress me, not even the green water of a bomb crate~ Women like a touch of the romantic. And I, too, am not exactly

made of iron.

At that time, when I had no hope of seeing Genia again for a long time, I had written simply, as all soldiers write to their sweethearts. Letters are almost the soldier's only joy and comfort. Stepping out of the Komsomolsk railway station in Moscow, I plunged into the bustle of the Underground, whistling a frontline song as I went. I had given a whole eternity to the State. It could not be regarded as a great crime that I now wished to devote a few minutes to myself. Besides, Genia would never have forgiven me if I had preferred any military unit whatever to her. I found her door locked, pushed a little note through the crack, threw my pack over my shoulder again, and gave myself the order: 'Left turn, quick march' Having dealt with my personal affairs I returned to affairs of State.

Half an hour later I arrived at my service destination. As I walked down a long corridor I was amazed. True, there were many men in uniform scurrying around like ants disturbed from their ant-hill, but the place reminded me more of a university during finals than an army unit.

Some men put their books down open on window-sills to enter into an excited argument, others hurriedly repeated their lessons, wrote notes, and hurriedly took them off somewhere. Nobody taking any notice of distinctions of rank, or shoulder-tabs, nobody thinking of saluting. They all had other cares. Most of them wore expressions very different from those of army officers, whose faces, as well as their souls, are imprinted with the stamp of barracks drill. Close by me two officers were conversing in some incomprehensible language. I noted shoulder-tabs of all kinds, from air force to infantry. And even the black coats of the navy. But most astonishing of all was the large number of women and girls in uniform. Hitherto only a few women had been accepted for propaganda purposes in certain military schools. Here was a very different situation.

I felt a little awkward, and decided to try to get my bearings. At one of the windows I noticed a first lieutenant in a sand-coloured greatcoat, and riding breeches of similar material. He must be from Leningrad! I was wearing exactly the same sort of uniform, and I had never come across it outside the Leningrad sector. When the Americans were preparing for the landing in North Africa they ordered an enormous number of cool, silky, sand coloured uniforms for their soldiers. Later, they found they had such a superfluity of this 'African' clothing that in their friendship for their Russian

allies they transferred it to us. So our resourceful supreme command presented this tropical attire to the very coldest, namely the Leningrad, sector of the front. And thenceforth we had no difficulty in picking out our colleagues from that front on any occasion. "Tell me, lieutenant," I addressed the officer in the sand-coloured uniform. "Are you from Leningrad too?"

"Yes, the Karelian sector," he answered very readily. Apparently in this hubbub he felt as lost as I did, and was glad to meet a friendly colleague.

„Well, how are things?"

"So far, not bad. I think I've fallen on my feet," he answered. But despite the confident answer there was a hint of disillusionment in his tone.

"But what is this show: a boarding-house for respectable girls?" I asked him. "I've only just arrived, and I don't get it at all."

"The devil himself wouldn't get it! For instance, I've been assigned to Hungary. The devil can take the whole of Hungary!" The disillusionment in his voice was now more pronounced. I grew more and more puzzled. "Now if I could get into the English Department," he sighed. "But that is hopeless, unless you've got connections. You have to be a general's son at the least. See them swarming around? And every one of them with a letter of recommendation in his pocket!"

He pointed to a door. On it was a notice: 'Head of the Training Department,' and before it was crowded a group of officers in elegant boots of the finest leather and in extra-smart uniforms. They

certainly didn't look like front-line officers.

"Then what's the best way of tackling the situation?" I asked.

"What languages do you know?"

"A little German, a little English, a certain amount of Russian..

"Quit fooling and tell them you know only English. The English Department is the best of the lot," the future Hungarian advised me.

From various conversations I began to realize that this mysterious educational institution was concerned with training personnel for abroad. None of the novices appeared to know its name. But after I had had a talk with a flying officer, a student at the air force college, who-apparently through influential connections-were attempting to get transferred from the third course of the college to the first course of this mysterious school, I felt convinced that

the place must offer considerable advantages.

During the next few days I filled in a sheaf of questionnaires which attempted to establish all my past: whether I had any relations or acquaintances abroad; whether I had any relations 'in areas temporarily occupied by the Hitlerite land-robbers'; whether I had ever belonged to or had any sympathies with groups hostile to the Party or was planning to have such sympathies; whether I had ever had any doubts of the correctness of the Party line. The questions which showed interest in the negative aspects of my life

far exceeded those that were concerned with my positive qualities.

I had already brought all these questionnaires with me in a scaled envelope from Leningrad; now I had to fill them in all over again. I remember a scandal that occurred over a questionnaire which one of my colleagues of student days had filled in for the Special Department of his Institute. He gave his year of birth correctly as 1918. The next question, 'What were you doing when the revolution broke out in 1917?' he answered with the precise statement: 'I was in the underground movement.' Because of this answer he was summoned again and again to the Narcomvnudel for interrogation.

I spent several days being examined in German and English. Those who failed in the language tests were excluded from further tests and were returned to their previous units. However, the favourites of patronage were an exception: they were all assigned to the first course, and were not subjected to such strict requirements. All others were thoroughly sifted out; if they had sound knowledge they were assigned to one of the higher courses, otherwise they were returned to their units.

After the questionnaires and the language tests came examinations in Marxism-Leninism. In my twenty-six years of life I had passed all the half dozen normal and three State examinations in this branch of knowledge. These were followed by quite insignificant tests in philosophy and dialectical materialism, in general and military history, the Russian language, and economic geography. All this procedure left me pretty indifferent. There was no knowing when the war would end, but one thing was certain: it had already passed its critical phase and was coming to its close. My one idea was to get out of uniform as soon as possible after it was over. Against that, this educational establishment might prolong my time of service in the army, if not extend it into eternity. For the majority of the youth, this school was a means of learning a profession which would enable them to earn their living after the

war. I was less interested in that aspect. But the army was the army; here orders were supreme, and one could only obey them. It was a fierily hot summer. Entire caravans of barges laden with timber were being hauled along the River Moskva. All through the war Moscow had been heated exclusively with wood, even the locomotives were burning wood instead of coal. The city was uncommonly still and peaceful. The only variety was provided by the patrols of the town command, who checked your papers at every step. They treated me with particular distrust: I had a front-line Officer's tabs on my shoulders, but I sauntered about like idler.

All my private plans had collapsed like a house of cards on being drafted into the army. When I returned to Moscow I had unconsciously assumed that now life would return to its old courses. But life doesn't stand still, and I, too, had changed, after my experiences of front-line life. And now, during my aimless wandings around the battlemented walls of the Kremlin, I felt only vague yearning and an empty void. Just one thing seemed to be clear: the war must be brought to an end. For so long as this war lasted there would be room neither for private life nor for personal interests.

After I had passed the questionnaires and the tests I was summoned to the head of the Educational Department, Colonel Gorokhov. Behind a large desk sat a little man with the blue tabs of a cavalry officer and a cranium that was as bald as a billiard ball. In his sly, foxy face twinkled colourless, watery eyes. "Sit down, Comrade Captain," he said courteously, pointing to a chair on my side of his desk.

This was a very different reception from normal army discipline. It was much more like the atmosphere of a university lecture hall and absentminded professors. The colonel ran his thin fingers through the numerous documents devoted to my moral and political standing, the attestation of my participation in battles, my questionnaires and test reports. "So you're an engineer! Well, well!" he observed in a friendly tone. Speaking quite generally, we don't give a warm welcome to engineers. We have a few here already. Too self-opinionated and not sufficiently disciplined. What is your view of your future career?'

"As the interests of the State require," I answered prudently, but without the least hesitation. I wasn't to be caught by such questions.

"Do you know what sort of educational establishment this is?" he asked.

When I answered vaguely he began to tell me slowly with many pauses: "It is the Military-Diplomatic College of the General Staff of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. You must be aware of the fact that, according to the law, men with military high school training, in other words men who have graduated from the military colleges, are obliged to give life-service in the army. The State spends an enormous amount on your education, and so it cannot allow the men to do as they like afterwards. The State has poured out quite a considerable sum on you personally." He glanced at my diploma testifying that I was a graduate of the Industrial Institute.

"I should feel very sorry to sacrifice more time and money on you," he continued with the air of an economical housewife. "And so I must make it perfectly clear that if you are accepted in the college you must throw overboard all your civilian stuff and forget all about demobilization. There are some who think that when the war's over they can slip away out of sight. Forget it! You are of interest to us in so far as, judging from your documents and tests, you have a solid groundwork of knowledge, such as we need. You will give us less trouble to train than others. For that reason, and solely for that reason, we are interested in your case."

After this introduction he proceeded to details. "VMat made you take up foreign languages after you had graduated from the Industrial Institute?"

"I considered a knowledge of foreign languages was essential for an engineer."

"Good! But what the devil made you"-he took another glance at my papers-"graduate from the First Moscow Institute for Foreign Languages, and the Pedagogical Department at that?"

Didn't you like being an engineer?"

The colonel was well posted in all the subtleties of the changes of interests and professions which so frequently occur in present-day Soviet society. Owing to the comparative ease with which one could get higher technical education in pre-war days, the students at the technical high schools included quite a large percentage who were completely unsuitable. As soon as they started practical work they found it unsatisfactory both morally and economically, so they packed their diplomas away and went off to seek a more lucrative or less responsible profession. For engineers were frequently imprisoned for the most trivial of technical mistakes, and they received

relatively low pay. Also, many women with high school education preferred to get married and stay at home rather than follow their profession, provided their husband's salary was large enough. If not, they, too, went in search of a new profession. And so people travelled with their diplomas from one end of the country to the other. The State took steps to stop this: it tied the young specialist

down to a definite works or factory for five years, and if he broke his contract arbitrarily he was imprisoned.

"How did you come to know foreign languages at all?" the colonel continued. "You must have had a governess, surely?"

This was as good as a Narcomvnudel interrogation. In my childhood, to have a governess signified that you belonged to the people of the 'old days'. But now the word 'governess' no longer had this compromising connotation: in the Moscow parks swarms of children from the Kremlin's upper circles were to be seen accompanied by governesses who talked to them in French or English. After they had overthrown and libelled their predecessors the new 'upper ten' had quickly adopted their habits.

"I learned languages parallel with my other subjects. I took my finals in languages and the State examination as an internal student at the Moscow Institute at the one time," I answered.

"Aha! So you studied at two institutes simultaneously. You must be very studious!" the colonel deduced, and stroked his bald head thoughtfully, as though some new idea had occurred to him. I simply don't know what made me decide to study foreign languages. Every student has some bee in his bonnet. I happened to discover that in the Moscow city library there was a mass of unsorted and uncatalogued works in foreign languages. There was nobody to put them in order and submit them to the censorship. Yet until they had been censored they could not be used. I quite quickly obtained permission to work on these materials, and a completely new world, closed to all others, was opened to me. My linguistic knowledge was far from brilliant, but in Soviet conditions even restricted knowledge of foreign languages was exceptional. A Soviet citizen has such a small chance of making practical use of such knowledge that it doesn't occur to anybody to waste time studying languages. 'It might easily bring you to the notice of the Narcomvnudel', was the way people reasoned.

"Well, now to business." The colonel tapped his pencil on my papers. "We can pack whole street-cars with German linguists. And we've got more than we need of English. But as I see you're studious and you're not a child ' I'll make you a much better proposal." He paused significantly, carefully watching my reaction. "I'll assign you to an exceptionally important department. In addition I guarantee that after you've passed out you'll work in

San Francisco or Washington. What do you say to that?"

I didn't bat an eyelid. What was lie after? Neither English nor German Work in Washington I know: as a liftboy in some embassy! I had heard rumours of such things happening. "I'll assign you to the Eastern Faculty," he added in a condescending tone. I went hot and cold. "The Japanese Department," he said in a tone of finality. "And you'll find more use for your English there than anywhere else."

I shivered a little across the shoulders, and felt thoroughly uncomfortable. "Comrade Colonel, isn't there something just a little less complicated?" I said feebly. "I've only just recovered from a head wound. . - ."

"This isn't a shop. The choice is limited." His face changed completely, it went cold and hard. He was obviously regretting the time he had wasted on me. "Two alternatives: either the Japanese Department, or we send you back to your unit. That's settled. I give you two hours to think it over."

The colonel in Leningrad had threatened me with a court martial if I was sent back. And here I was faced with lifelong forced labour on the Japanese language. 'It strikes me, my dear Klimov, you're in a jam!' I thought.

When I left the room I was surrounded by a lively group of my new acquaintances, all anxious to know the result of so protracted an interview.

"Well, how did it go? Where are you assigned to: the Western Department?" they clamoured.

"The geisha girls!" I answered dejectedly.

For a moment they stared at me in silence, then there was a roar of laughter. They thought it a good joke; but I didn't see it.

"Do you know how many signs they have got to their alphabet?" one man asked sympathetically. "Sixty-four thousand. An educated Jap knows about half of them."

"There have been three cases of suicide here during the last year," another told me cheerfully. "And all three were in the Japanese Department."

One of them took my arm. "Come and I'll show you the Japanese," he said.

When he opened the door of the department I saw a dishevelled creature sitting with his legs tucked under him on a bed; he was wearing pants and horned spectacles. He took no notice of us whatever, but went on with his occupation, muttering some exorcism

and simultaneously describing mysterious figures in the air with his finger. I saw several other similar individuals in the room. They were all in various stages of Buddhistic trance; their naked skin showed through their undergarments.

"These are your future colleagues," my companion informed me cheerfully. "Here is the source of all wisdom. And every one of them is an epileptic, so beware!"

A swarthy-skinned, lean and lanky lieutenant-the only man in the room still wearing epaulettes-was sitting at a desk, describing artistic figures on paper. He had begun at the bottom right-hand corner and was continuing his course upward, from right to left. Outside the window was the hot Moscow summer; hopeful youngsters were swarming in the corridors, but these poor wretches were stuck here with the droning flies on the wall and were harassing themselves stupid in their endeavour to split the granite of eastern wisdom.

During the next few days I wandered about the college like a deceived lover. I had been promised a fabulous beauty, but behind the veil I had seen a toad. I made the firm decision to drop Japanese at the first opportunity. But as I saw no possibility of doing so at the moment I began to settle down in the college.

It had only recently returned from evacuation, and had been given temporary accommodation in several four-storied buildings standing on Tagan Square. The various faculties were scattered all over the environs of Moscow. Our building was in a quiet side-street high above the granite embankment of the River Moskva. The windows looking out over the river afforded a view of the Stone Bridge and the Kremlin walls on the farther side.

Of an evening we frequently enjoyed the cheerful and fascinating sight of the victory salutes thundering over the city. The picture of the city lit up by the fire was one of exceptional beauty. The batteries were grouped round the Kremlin in concentric rings. It was said that Stalin often went up one of the Kremlin belfries to enjoy the sight. Our Military-Diplomatic College had been founded in the war years, when changed international relations necessitated the extension of military-diplomatic ties with countries abroad * By the repeated changes in the college curriculum it was possible to trace the course of Soviet foreign policy for several years ahead.

The college was based on the pattern of the High School for Diplomacy, the Military Intelligence High School, the Institute for

Eastern Culture, and several other higher military and civilian educational institutions. To give an idea of the difficulties attending the selection of candidates, one need merely mention that the High School for Diplomacy only accepted men with completed secondary education and who in addition had at least five years' Party membership.

The Eastern Faculty of the college covered not only Japanese and Chinese, but Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Indian, and Afghan Departments. In addition to English, German, and French, the Western Faculty had Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Dutch, Italian, and other departments. There was also a Naval Faculty, which had departments for all the various naval powers. The Air Force Faculty had been temporarily transformed into a Faculty for Parachute Groups, with special emphasis on countries with which Soviet forces might shortly be making contact. As the college itself had been founded only recently, the students attending the first course were numbered in thousands, those in the second course in hundreds, and the third course students numbered only a few dozen. The last, the fourth course, was only in process of organization. In the case of the Eastern Faculty there was an additional fifth course. For entry to the higher courses the requirements were extremely high, while the number of candidates was very small, and so suitable men had to be sought all over the Soviet Union. Foreigners were not allowed to attend the college, but on the other hand Russian citizens with a knowledge of foreign languages were a rarity. Approximately half of the students in the first course were the children of generals or high officials in the Party or State service; it was practically impossible for a man of 'ordinary' origin to get accepted in that course. However, 'Heroes of the Soviet Union', young officers who had particularly distinguished themselves in the war, and celebrities generally were the exception to this rule.

All the college knew the young Tadjik girl named Mamlakat. During the 'thirties her picture had been distributed all over the Soviet Union. In distant Tadjikistan the little Manilakat had achieved a record in cotton picking. About that time a conference of Stakhanovite workers on collective farms was being held in Moscow, and so Mamlakat was brought to the city and decorated with the Order of Lenin at the conference. Stalin personally gave her a gold wrist-watch and was photographed in a fatherly pose with her.

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Since then years had passed. Mamlakat had long since stopped picking cotton, but she still sunned herself in her fame and the favour of her leader. There were smirks as the college students told the details of her career. On returning to the luxurious apartment of the Hotel Moskva after the conference, she had been so excited over her fame and Stalin's gift that she jumped into her bath without stopping to take off the watch. The watch stopped, and she put the whole hotel in turmoil with her wild wailing. Now she was twenty years old. Since that time she had graced four different institutes in succession with her presence, attacking each in Stakhanovite tempo, and now she had entered the haven of our college. She found it necessary to change her subjects and place of study after each examination. But if Lenin Orders and Stalin watches cannot affect cerebral activity, at least they open many doors to their possessors. It was rumoured that Mamlakat was again on the point of changing the scene of her operations. The college students included a number of such parasites living on past glories.

Somewhere on the outskirts of Moscow a second educational institution existed which had tasks similar to those of our college, but where the students were all foreigners, being trained on the recommendation and instigation of the officially dissolved, but in fact highly active, Comintern. They formed a reservoir for Soviet foreign agents. They had no diplomatic passes at their disposition, but their labours were more important and in any case far more active than those of the official diplomats.

In addition, many well-known foreign communists, such as Rakosi, Dimitrov, and Anna Pauker, took training courses at the Sun Yat Sen University or at the Lenin Political Academy. You don't know everything! Our college wasn't talked about much, for that matter, though its objects were quite legal, namely, the training of personnel for Soviet military missions abroad. An interesting and quite safe job. If you did happen to come to grief, you were only sent back home. What happened when you got home was another matter.

Strange to say, Jews were rigorously excluded from our college. Here for the first time I found official confirmation of certain rumours which had been persistently circulating in the country. On the nationalities question the Kremlin had taken a largely unexpected course. Until recently the Jews had played, and they still do play, an important part in Soviet diplomacy and the foreign service

generally. Yet now the doors of a diplomatic college were closed

to them. Perhaps Stalin could not forgive the fact that in the Moscow trials of 1935-38 a large number of the accused were Jews. I could not help recalling certain incidents that had occurred comparatively recently. During the retreat of 1941, Jews were not evacuated from the abandoned areas, but were left quite deliberately to be exterminated by the Germans. The people of Moscow well remember the autumn days of 1941. Hardly any of the Moscow Jews, apart from the Party and government officials, obtained permission to leave the city. When the Germans captured the approaches to Moscow on October 16, thousands of people sought salvation in panicky flight. The majority were Jews, for the ordinary Muscovites had neither the possibility nor the desire to flee. Stalin sent Narcomvnudel forces to block the Moscow-Gorky main road, and gave them orders to shoot at sight anybody who tried to flee without an evacuation pass. This order was published only after the Narcomvnudel forces had been posted, and the result was hecatombs of Jewish bodies on both sides of the Moscow high road. During the war years the unity of the peoples of the Soviet Union was put to a severe test. The national minorities had not justified the Kremlin's hopes. In the army a new, incomprehensible insult came into use: 'Yaldash'. In the language of the Asia Minor peoples the word means 'Comrade'. Introduced to them during the revolutionary period as an official form of address, it was now transformed into a term of contempt.

Another Asiatic word which enriched the Soviet army vocabulary during the war was 'Belmeydy'. In the early days the national minorities went over to the Germans en masse, practiced self mutilation, and later resorted to the passive 'Belmeydy', 'I don't understand'. With true Asiatic impassivity the Turkmen and Tadjiks called up for the army answered every question with the brief 'Belmeydy'. And if they were ordered 'left turn' they unhesitatingly turned right.

General Gundorov, the President of the Pan-Slav Committee, was responsible for putting into circulation the term 'Slavonic Brothers'. And after that, whenever some filthy trick, some act of looting, or some senseless stupidity was observed and discussed in the army, the remark was made: 'That's the Slavonic Brothers!' This was the ordinary soldiers' own way of criticizing certain things that were encouraged by the higher authorities, things which

unleashed the dark instincts of the less responsible sections of the army. When each of these 'campaigns' had served its turn the same higher authorities threw the whole blame on to those who had carried it through, issuing an indignant order and having the

scapegoats shot.

The derisive term 'Slavonic Brothers' was often applied to the Polish and Baltic formations of the Red Army. The Red Army men spoke of the Estonians and other Balts who fought on the German side with more respect. The Soviet soldiers had no idea what sort of 'autonomy' the Germans contemplated conferring on the Balts, but they knew quite well what sort of 'independence' these people~ had received from the Soviet regime in 1940. The Russian soldiers had been thoroughly trained in the spirit of abstract internationalism, but during the war they had had an opportunity to view events from the national aspect, and they appreciated even their enemies' fight for national freedom.

"They hold on, the devils!" they frequently remarked with more respect than anger in their tones.

Some months after the war had begun, during the construction of the second ring of landing grounds around the city of Gorky, I came across thousands of foreigners engaged in excavating and leveling the sites. Their dress at once revealed them as foreigners. Their faces were sullen. They were former citizens of the Estonian, Lithuanian, and Latvian Soviet Republics, who had worked hand in hand with the new Soviet rulers. They had become militiamen and Party and State officials of the new republics. When they fled before the Nazi forces into the homeland of the world proletariat, spades were thrust into their hands, so that they could learn what it meant to be proletarians. Later still they were transferred to the Narcomvnudel's forced-labour camps. And when in due course it became necessary to organize national army units, they were sent into the Estonian and other national brigades, where the majority of them finished their days. Such is the career of the petty opportunists.

August passed into September, and we began regular instruction. I still could not reconcile myself to being condemned to a diplomatic career in Japan. When I talked it over with acquaintances they laughed as though they thought it a good joke.

One day, as I was hurrying across the college yard, I collided with a woman in military uniform. A military man's first glance is

at the tabs. Astonished to see a woman with the high rank of major, I looked at her face.

"Olga Ivanovna!" I exclaimed joyfully, surprised at this unexpected meeting.

Olga Ivanovna Moskalskaya was a doctor of philology, and had been professor and dean of the German Faculty in the First Pedagogical Institute for Foreign Languages. I had met her there in the days of peace, and she had been pleasantly touched by my interest in foreign languages. She was a woman of great culture and unusual personal charm.

"Comrade Klimov!" she exclaimed, just as astonished as I. She gave me a swift look up and down. "In uniform? What a d i here?"

"Oh, don't ask, Olga Ivanovna!" I replied, rather crestfallen.
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"But all the same . . . Have you taken up German again? "

"No, Olga Ivanovna; even worse . . . Japanese !" I answered gloomily.

"What? Japanese? Impossible! You're joking!"

"It's no joke, I can tell you."

"I see!" She shook her head. "Come along to my room and we'll have a chat."

On the door of her room was the inscription: 'Head of the Western Faculty', and her name. So she held an important position in the college.

"What idiot has put you in the Japanese Department?" she asked. I saw at once that she was well acquainted with conditions in the college.

"It wasn't an idiot, it was Colonel Gorokhov," I answered.

"Would you agree to being transferred to the German Department?" she asked in a curt, businesslike tone. When I said yes, she added: "I'm just engaged in making a selection of candidates for the last course, and I'm racking my brains to know where to get the people from. If you don't object I shall ask the general this very day to have you transferred. What do you think?"

"Only for God's sake don't let Colonel Gorokhov think it's my Personal wish . . . Otherwise I don't know what will happen," I replied as I gratefully shook her hand.

"That's my headache, not yours. See you again soon!" she laughed as I left her room.

Next day the head of the Japanese preparatory course sent for

me. As though he were seeing me for the first time in his life he asked distrustfully:

"So you're Klimov?"

"Yes, Comrade Major," I answered.

"I've received an order from the general to transfer a certain Klimov"-he contemplated the document-"to . . . the fourth course of the Western Faculty."

He gave first me, then the paper, a sceptical look.

That look was quite understandable. Conditions in the college were decidedly abnormal. The students of the preparatory course lived in a state of bliss. Those assigned to the first course, especially those concerned with the 'leading' nationalities, were inflated with conceit. Those attending the second course were regarded as made for life. Of the members of the third course it was secretly whispered that they must have pulled unusually effective strings. As for the fourth and last course, little was known about it, but it was regarded as the dwelling-place of the gods.

"Do you know anything about this?" he went on to ask suspiciously.

"Oh no, Comrade Major," I replied.

"Very good! Here's the order-as we haven't any other Captain

Klimov at the moment-and you can go off to the West. But I think there must be some mistake, and we'll be seeing each other again soon," he added.

"Very good, Comrade Major!" I clicked my heels.

So now I was in the final course of the German Department. Fortune had smiled on me after all.

CHAPTER TWO

Soldier and Citizen

The victory salutes thundered over Moscow, while the struggle continued at the front. Superficially the city showed little sign of the war. Anyone who had heard of the desperate air-battles over Moscow would have been amazed not to see any destruction that could be attributed to bombing. In Gorky Street only one house had been destroyed by bombs. I passed by the ruins more than once without even noticing them. Boards, painted like a gigantic film set, concealed them from the eyes of passers-by. Bomb damage generally was rare, and there was nothing in the nature of planned strafing from the air.

The same was true of Leningrad. The Leningrad houses were pitted with shell-scars, practically all the wooden houses in the suburbs were pulled down and used for fuel by the people themselves during the blockade. But in Leningrad, too, there were no extensive signs of bomb damage.

In Moscow there were many who wondered whether it really was not possible for the Germans to drop at least one or two bombs on the Kremlin. Just as a joke, to put the wind up its residents ! It could not have done any harm, for a bomb-proof shelter had been built for the government in the nearest Underground Station, Kirovskaya, and it was connected with the Kremlin by an underground passage. The Moscow people firmly believed that the shelter had been constructed long before the outbreak of war. In 1942 the government was evacuated to Kuibishev, but the news papers proudly emphasized that Stalin himself was remaining in Moscow. Of course the Muscovites added that a tunnel was hurriedly being constructed all the way from Moscow to the Volga town.

By 1944 the majority of the government departments had returned to Moscow, and the city throbbed with a bustling, almost peace-time activity. The barrage balloons sent up for the defence of Moscow every evening seemed an obsolete procedure. The chief sign that the war was still going on was the great number of uniforms to be seen in the streets. There were more uniformed people than civilians. The Moscow command had very strong patrols in the city, and they not only checked documents, but saw to it that uniforms were scrupulously neat and boots and buttons polished. The patrol posted at the escalators of the Baumanskaya Underground station were rather worried about the swaggering fellows in uniform who

had been using this station regularly for some time past. They wore the normal soldier's shoulder-straps, but the red ground was edged by a very unusual gold piping. And almost all of them wore new officers' coats of green English cloth. In addition, they had new Russian leather boots which were the object of the patrol's envy, officers' swordbelts with a red star and swordknot, and fur caps dashingly worn over one ear. Even these caps were not of the usual lambswool, but of grey caracoul. To crown everything, many of these foppish soldiers carried document-cases. In the army the function of the hands is to extend down the seams of trousers or to salute, not to carry document-cases.

At first the military patrols were dumbfounded at such disregard of all the army regulations. Then, licking their lips at the thought of having such a rich booty in the guardhouse, they asked these youngsters to show their documents. When they presented crimson personal identity cards bearing the State escutcheon and the words 'Military College' in gold lettering the patrols involuntarily saluted these extraordinary soldiers and shrugged their shoulders helplessly: 'Soldiers' tabs and officers' documents!'

Not all the students in the first course were officers. When the son of some Moscow proletarian leader was called up the leader phoned the head of the college, General Biyasi: "Nikolai Nikolaich! How's things? I'm sending my son along to see you today. Have a chat with him." That was one way of doing your military service, even in wartime, without leaving your hearth and home, and with the opportunity of learning a valuable profession into the bargain. Unlike the students of other colleges we did not have to live in barracks, but could occupy private dwellings. As each student successfully completed each course he was advanced in rank. At

the end of the first course an ordinary soldier became an officer, and a first lieutenant a captain. In this way a man who held no officer's rank at all when he entered the college could leave it with a captain's commission. On the other hand, a captain might have to start in the first course. The important thing was not one's rank, but the faculty and course which one was attending. The members of a first course waited in a queue until it was their turn to enter the dining hall, but members of other courses walked in without having to queue. The members of the fourth course enjoyed many privileges and liberties. They could even take their rations home, a right that even officers on the teaching staff did not possess.

In my time there were only eight students altogether in the fourth course of the German Department of the Western Faculty. They had been drawn from all over the U.S.S.R., and most of them had

attended a university before. Their knowledge was of a very high standard, but so were the demands made of them by the college curriculum. They had to work hard and intensively. In addition to taking the normal subjects of the fourth course they had to get through the so-called 'special subjects' of preceding courses, for instance, 'army service regulations', 'army equipment', 'army organization', and 'army special training'. The discreet phrase 'special training' connoted secret service and defence. And, of course, the 'army' covered by the German Department was not the Soviet, but the German force. Outside his own special province, no Soviet officer knew as much about the Red Army as a student in our college had to know about all the formations of his 'army', whether German, British, or other army covered by his particular department.

For study of the special subjects the educational material provided usually consisted of handwritten matter or the service regulations of the respective army. It was forbidden to take notes on subjects which had to be kept very secret, and those concerned with the immediate past. But duplicated and carefully numbered rough notes could be obtained on these subjects, against the student's signature and deposit of his personal documents. But these notes could be used only in the hall set apart for the purpose. The contents of these rough notes were always kept up to date, they were never more than a month old. The information covered not only the actual position at the moment, but even matters that were only in the planning or preliminary stage. Frequently photo-copies of the original documents were attached to the notes. The quality of the photograph indicated

whether the document had been photographed legally, so to speak, or whether it had been done in rather less convenient and normal conditions. Sometimes one could tell quite easily that it had been taken with a micro-film camera. Such cameras can be built into a button, into the fastener of a lady's handbag, etc.

We in the German Department were taught some very interesting things. We had to study the medieval originals of literature in Gothic and old High-German, languages which would completely baffle a twentieth-century German. From the manner in which a man pronounced the words "Gebratene Gans" we had to determine exactly where he came from, to within a few kilometers. We had to know the local food and drink of the various parts of Germany, how the people in various districts dressed and what were their characteristic habits. We had to know the smallest detail of the distinctive features of each national group, and learned to distinguish any faded German wine label with absolute certainty. We were told which of the German national groups cannot stand one another, and why; and what were their usual terms of abuse for one another. We

were shown the historical genesis of all the present and past political and economic, ideological and religious antagonisms inside the German nation.

The history of the Communist Party of Germany as we learnt it was very different from that to be found in the usual handbooks. The lecturer usually referred to the Party by the phrase 'our potential' or other, more precise terms, but one might listen to a two-hour lecture without hearing the words 'communist party' at all. These lectures would have been of great interest especially to German communists. Many of them honestly believe they are fighting for a better Germany. A political movement is to some extent only a trap for the credulous. Of course the leaders, who are in touch with the Comintern, are better informed on this delicate question. Once one of our students asked the lecturer: "Why don't we get any communist come-overs from Germany these days?" "Think it over and you'll find the answer for yourself," the lecturer answered. "I can't waste the other students' time in giving explanations of such an elementary matter. We don't want any come-overs. They're much more use to us when they work outside." In addition to lecturing at our college, this lecturer was an instructor at the Red Army Secret Service High School, his subject being 'Underground work in the rear'.

Despite what he said, if the issue be examined more closely certain questions remain unanswered. What has happened to the enormous German Communist Party? Germany was the first world power to enter into commercial and friendly relations with Soviet Russia. She had the strongest Communist Party and the most clearly defined industrial proletariat in all Europe, and for us Russians they were the shining example of proletarian consciousness and solidarity. At one time communism had struck its roots deep into the souls of the Germans. It had been regarded as axiomatic that Germany would be the next link in the chain of world revolution. Thalman's cap was as familiar to us as Karl Marx's beard. And now ...

Now the Germans were fighting like devils, and our propaganda had thrown overboard all the principles of class approach. Instead, all Germans were branded as fascists and all we were expected to do was: 'Kill the Germans!' Hitler couldn't have thrown all the communists in Germany into concentration camps. Even our propaganda did not go so far as to say that. And yet Nazism seemed to be growing stronger and stronger among them. So what had happened to the communist consciousness, the proletarian solidarity, the class struggle, and so on?

After a time our college transferred to new accommodation in a building right opposite the Stalin Academy for the Mechanization and Motorization of the Red Army, in Lefortovo Street. Under the old regime the building had been a Junker school; then it had become an artillery school. The place was rather uncomfortable, it stank of a barracks. On the other hand, this removal solved one of the most important problems of our command: now we were all under one roof, behind one fence. There was a parade ground in the middle, and a guardhouse somewhere in the background.

In those autumn days of 1944 one often saw an edifying sight: students sauntering about the courtyard under the guard of other students. The prisoners had been relieved of their sword-straps and tabs, and they carried brooms and spades " With perfect equanimity they swept up the leaves that the autumn wind sent flying from the trees. The work was about as productive as bailing out water with a Sieve.]But the prisoners didn't worry about that. Midday was still a long way off and life was boring in the clink.

Other students did their best to cheer up the prisoners. "What Kolya, you in again? What heroic deed have you done this time? How

long have you got?" Others stopped to stare at one of the generals' sons long have you got?" Others stopped to stare at one of the generals' sons among the prisoners. A very piquant situation: the father a general and the son collecting cigarette-butts under the eyes of a guard !

The victims were usually first course students, many of whom were not yet accustomed to army discipline. Their punishment consisted mainly of sweeping up the leaves and collecting cigarette-butts. This was the method used to purge them of any desire for independent thought and to drill into them unquestioning submission to orders. Someone at some time or other had carefully carved the words on the door of the guardhouse: "I'll teach you to love freedom!" This phrase was fashionable in the army about this time. Generals shouted it at the officers when they came upon signs of indiscipline during inspections. Sergeants shouted it into the faces of recruits, usually garnishing it with strong language and emphasizing it with blows of the fist.

To this phrase there was one mysterious, but eloquent answer: 'Till the first battle. . .' There is good reason for the change made in the new service regulations, as the result of which officers march, not at the head of their unit, but in the rear.

Many of us officers were genuinely angry at the methods used to

train reserve soldiers before transferring them to the front. They were drilled almost entirely in the manner of the parade ground; they learned to react to the orders 'right' and 'left', to salute their officers in the regulation style, to march in close order, etc. All through their training they used only dummy weapons, and they often reached the front without having fired a single shot from a rifle or other arm. The men themselves grumbled about this at first, but then they got used to it and submitted. This sort of thing often had its origin in local circumstances, but the general direction came from above and had a deeper significance.

For the outcome of a war it is of no importance whether one man falls or another. But it is important that he should obey orders. And that is a decisive factor in training.

The winter passed. I gradually got used again to study, and made acquaintances. I don't remember how I first got to know Lieutenant Belyavsky. Some thirty-one years old, lean and upright, he seemed to possess an imperturbable calm and unconcern. But in reality he was very passionate by nature, and capable of great enthusiasms. At one time he had studied at the Leningrad University, and then had taken special courses preparatory to work abroad. He was

master of several languages. During the Spanish civil war he was sent to Spain, and for some time passed as a Spaniard. For some mysterious reason he had remained with the rank of lieutenant for nearly ten years, whereas all his former Spanish comrades had by now achieved much higher rank and responsible service posts. He had a great love of the theatre, and brought tickets for an the Moscow first nights a month in advance. I sometimes thought he suffered from the spiritual malaise which affects so many Leningrad people, and that he turned to the theatre for temporary oblivion. For he had gone right through the worst period of the Leningrad blockade, and you could never get him to say a word about those days. All the college knew Valentina Grinchuk, generally and affectionately called Valia for short. While fighting with partisans she had been seriously wounded, had been brought out by air, and sent to a hospital just outside Moscow. On her recovery she was sent to our college to study. She looked like a child; her head reached no higher than my waist. In all the warehouses of the Moscow military district not one pair of boots could be found to fit her, so a pair had to be made to measure for her, on a children's last. Yet few of our students could wear so many decorations, genuine battle orders, as that child. They were in such contrast to her clear, childishly innocent face that one could not help looking round as she passed.

Even officers of superior rank to her involuntarily saluted her first. Before the war she had been a fourteen-year-old girl, running barefoot through her forest village to take a bucket to the well. She had had no idea who Hitler and what Germany were. Then one fine June morning the war violated the peace of her childlike heart. The Germans occupied her village; in the first intoxication of easy victory they did as they liked in the new 'eastern space'. With a child's instinct she began to hate these strange men in grey-green uniform.

By chance she happened to come into contact with the members of a regular partisan unit which had been detached from the Red Army for operations in the German rear. At first they used her as a scout. It never occurred to the Germans that this straight-haired, skinny little girl, who looked no more than twelve years old, could be in touch with the dangerous partisan movement. Soon after this, she was left an orphan, and she went off to join the partisans. She acted as machine-gunner, saboteur, and sniper, she volunteered for long treks as a liaison, she carried out highly dangerous acts of espionage. Many a German who thought of her as only a child had to

pay for his negligence with his life. She had no real knowledge of life, and possibly for that reason she looked death fearlessly in the face; her soul was steeled in the fight.

Just one thing was lacking in her-she never smiled. She had no knowledge of laughter, happiness, and joy. The war had robbed her of her chance of knowing the brighter aspect of life. Now she was an attractive girl of eighteen, attending a privileged Moscow college. Her contemporaries were still attending school, but this child wore the insignia of a first lieutenant, she had spent years in fighting, her officer's tunic carried rows of active service decorations and gold and silver wound stripes.

A flying officer, a second-course student, once invited Valia to go to a concert with him, and she readily agreed. Nobody knows exactly what happened that evening. It was only known that he tried to treat Valia as he thought girls who had fought at the front were used to being treated. Officers who had not themselves been at the front were always making this sort of mistake. When Valia sharply told him where he got off he shouted at her in a rage: "Everybody knows how you got all those orders! You're all . . ."

A little later he was found lying in the street with a head wound inflicted by a pistol butt.

When the head of the college, General Biyasi, sent for Valia and demanded an explanation she curtly answered: "He can think him

self lucky he got off with his life." The general did not know what to say to that, and only ordered Valia to hand over her pistol. But after that even the most presumptuous critics of front-line women fighters treated her with respect.

February 1945. The German counter-offensive in the Ardennes was drowned in its own blood. The Allied invasion armies were preparing to leap over the Rhine and break through the notorious Siegfried Line. After prolonged preparations our troops on the Oder had gone over to the offensive, had broken the resistance of the East Wall and had enlarged the bridgehead, ready for the last blow against the heart of Germany. The war was nearing its end.

Strange to say, conditions in Moscow had improved a little by comparison with the previous years; possibly the difficulties had been stabilized and the people had grown accustomed to them; possibly the successes at the front and the hope of a speedy end to the war made

it easier to endure the difficulties. In the army and all over the country there was a clear improvement in morale. A miracle had been achieved: instead of being exhausted by the long years of war, the army was technically and morally stronger. Towards the end it was using a vast number of planes, tanks, automatic weapons, munitions, and equipment; in other words, it now had all that was so disastrously lacking at the beginning. That was difficult to understand, and many of us racked our brains over the problem.

It would be naive to assume that this miracle was due solely to our military efforts and the moral transformation that had occurred in the nation's soul during the war; nor could it be ascribed simply and solely to Allied aid. For one thing, by the end of the war the Soviet war industry potential was lower than at its beginning. The moral factor played a great part, especially when one remembers that at the beginning it completely failed to come up to the Kremlin's expectations; but then, as the result of skillful internal propaganda and the enemy's mistakes, it was brought up to specification again. The military aid provided by the Allies was enormous; it greatly lightened the burden of the Russian soldiers and the Russian people, it made up for many defects in the Kremlin's military apparatus, and shortened the war. But not one of these factors determined the outcome of the war.

War is like chess, it is susceptible of innumerable variations. The single moves may change in accordance with circumstances, but the game as such is determined from the beginning by the fundamental strategy of the players. In this war the Kremlin developed a strategy that at first deliberately resorted to a gambit opening, in order that reserves could be thrown in at a later stage with all

the greater force. This quite clearly occurred during the final phase. We students of the college often discussed the 'three stages'. While we were of various opinions in regard to details, fundamentally we were in complete agreement as to the general interpretation of our war strategy. These discussions had their origin in the very restricted circle of the Kremlin and Red Army general staff milieus. There was good reason for the fact that our college was secretly known as the 'Kremlin college'; not for nothing did many of our students have their 'papas' on the General Staff. In the college one learned a great deal which was quite unsuspected by the ordinary soldier. It is very significant that all who took part in such discussions emphasised that they paid no attention to the official statements and

rumours. Many 'rumours' were deliberately put into circulation by the 'rumour-mongers' of the Narcomvnudel. The Kremlin made use not only of an official propaganda machine in the form of the press and radio, but also of a remarkably efficient network of 'rumour mongers' organized by the Narcomvnudel, with the task of systematically leading the people into error in the direction the Kremlin desired. It need hardly be said that the Kremlin never publicly admitted adoption of the gambit strategy known as the 'three stages'. According to this interpretation, the story of the war can be divided into three stages, or phases. The first phase began the day the Soviet-German Pact of Friendship was signed. The following day, in September 1939, I was to start my course of training in practical work at the Rostov Agricultural Machinery Works (Rostselmash), the largest producer of agricultural machinery not only in the Soviet Union, but in all Europe. When I went to the reaper-combine department, to which I was assigned, I was struck by a remarkable sight. The most important feature of this shop was the U-shaped conveyor belt, on which the combines were assembled. The conveyor was mounted on the floor, and each combine was fastened to a hook rising from the belt, so traveling round the shop. But now the conveyor was at a standstill, the combines stood motionless, half assembled. And literally every square yard of space between the conveyor belt and the workmen's benches was packed with a new production line: thousands of munitions chests for anti-tank guns. They had been made overnight, after the conclusion of the Pact of Friendship. A similar sight was to be seen in all the other shops.

On the day the Pact of Friendship was signed with Germany telegraphed orders were sent out from Moscow to put into operation a secret mobilization plan; this plan had been kept in the safe of the secret department attached to every Soviet factory and works. During all the three months I worked at Rostselmash every shop, all of which in normal times were concerned only with production for

peaceful purposes, was engaged in turning out military material. Not only that, but from the very first day of the works' existence so called 'special departments' had worked uninterruptedly on orders connected with the production of military weapons.

In the course of my work I frequently had to visit the goods yards in Rostov station, and could not help seeing the endless trains loaded with armaments which were being produced by the Rostov industries which had been engaged in peacetime production. I must make it

clear that I am not referring to the normal armaments works, each of which had its own railway lines, and whose production did not come under public notice.

If one may digress into the field of political economy, the Soviet industry engaged in producing means of production could be analysed into two basic categories: the armaments industry as such, producing exclusively military material; and the other industries, which can be described as industries for peace production, but which, even at the time of their inauguration, were so planned that they could be turned over to armaments production in a moment. It is very difficult to draw the line between the two categories. Machinery construction appears at first sight to be a peace industry, but ninety per cent of the machinery produced goes to equip armaments works. And in September 1939 even this second category, which hitherto had been working, within limits, on the production of consumer goods, was geared wholly and completely to the mobilization plan, and from then on worked exclusively for war purposes. Like myself, the other students of our Industry Institute had to undergo practical training, being sent to hundreds of the larger works all over the Soviet Union. They all reported the same picture everywhere. The open preparations for war were obvious, even in September 1939. The only uncertainty was: whom was this war to be waged against? There were many who rather assumed that the Kremlin had decided to join with Germany in sharing out the world.

The events in Finland, the Baltic States and Bessarabia, which followed soon after the Pact, seemed to confirm this view. In any case the Kremlin had already decided that the time had arrived for an active solution of the foreign policy problems. So the Kremlin prepared all its war machinery for the struggle. Friendship with Germany was made to serve the same end. U-boats bought in Germany arrived in Kronstadt, where the German distinguishing 'U' was painted over with the Soviet letter for 'shch', after which the Soviet naval men called them 'pike', since the 'shch' letter was the first letter in the Russian word for 'pike' (shchuka). These U-boats served

as prototypes for the Soviet dockyards to turn out 'pikes' by the dozens. Later on battleships were ordered in Germany, but their armaments were to be supplied by the Kirov works in Leningrad, where they were to be mounted. But these battleships did not arrive in time. At a certain moment in this 'friendship' period-the historians could establish the exact date-unexpected changes occurred in the

relations between the 'high contracting Parties'. Both the partners' appetites had grown immensely. Apparently Hitler, intoxicated with his successes, now felt convinced that he could manage to eat all the cake himself, without the aid of his be whiskered friend. Any Soviet General Staff officer would laugh outright if anyone were to tell him that Germany's attack on the Soviet Union took the Kremlin by surprise. And with justice, for no other regime in the world is so well informed on the situation in neighbouring countries as is the Kremlin.

The myth of the unexpected 'perfidious attack' was put out in order to justify the Kremlin's mesalliance to the world. Weeks before the start of fighting on the Soviet-German front many citizens of the Soviet Union heard the British radio reporting the transfer of 170 German divisions to the eastern frontier of the Reich. And did the innocent children in the Kremlin have cottonwool in their ears? Anyone who did not happen to hear the radio transmissions could draw his own conclusions from the official Tass "dement": 'The foreign press recently has contained provocative reports of a concentration of German forces on the Soviet frontier. From well informed sources Tass is authorized to state that these reports are completely ungrounded fabrications.' The Soviet people knew Tass far too well not to know that the truth was exactly the opposite of this statement. By the early spring of 1941 the Kremlin knew that war was inevitable during the next few months. An extraordinary session of the Politbureau was held to draw up the basic decrees covering the strategy to be adopted in the event of a 'change in the situation' i.e., in the event of war. A Defence Committee was set up at the same time, though its existence was made public only after the outbreak of war.

The Kremlin knew the power relationships perfectly, far better than did the German, Supreme Command. Despite all the enormous war preparations it knew that Russia was at a disadvantage in this respect. The only hope of salvation lay in wearing down the enemy by means of a protracted war, in thorough exploitation of the country's vast territory and her material and human reserves, and therefore in the application of the Kutuzov strategy adapted to the requirements of modern war. It was about this time that the

Kremlin decided on a gambit opening. This form of defence strategy was to cost the country dearly; it was completely contrary to the Kremlin's pre-war propaganda, which had always talked of a 'bloodless war on enemy soil'. Naturally these new plans could not be made public. They were the Kremlin's deepest secret since the first days of the Politburo.

Even at that stage the lines of retreat were foreseen and approximately determined, the presumable losses and the available reserves were balanced against each other; even then Stalingrad was recognized to be the farthest point of retreat. They coldbloodedly worked out on paper operations involving tens of millions of human lives, and the results of the toil, sweat and blood of a whole generation. The members of the Politbureau could feel the ropes round their necks, it was a question of saving their own skins. The price.... Even at that stage the war was divided into phases, and it was calculated what must be held in reserve for the 'third phase'. All else, everything that did not seem to be required for the 'third phase', was condemned to be sacrificed in the 'second phase'.

When the war broke out, men were sent to the front with old, quite unserviceable uniforms and weapons. Yet millions of sets of complete, modern equipment, armaments, and automatic weapons were lying, packed to resist the ravages of time, in scaled warehouses: these were predestined for the 'third phase'. When the Germans advanced more swiftly than the Kremlin plans had provided for, such stocks were destroyed or they fell into the hands of the enemy; but in no case were they distributed to the forces ahead of schedule. In the 'second phase' there was much that did not go according to the Kremlin plan. Most of all they erred in their estimation of the people's moral state. The Russian people made it quite clear that they had no desire whatever 'to defend the Politbureau. The morale of the troops was much lower than expected, and so the loss in human material was much higher. In order to retrieve the situation the Kremlin was compelled to resort to extraordinary measures and declare the war a national patriotic war for the fatherland.

The loss of territory was more or less in line with the 'plan', but fulfillment of the 'territorial plan' cost far more human- lives than had been expected. The losses in material corresponded with the calculations; the forces thrown into defence received only out-of-date equipment and weapons; 'old stock', planes and tanks of the most ancient type, were disposed of. This held good of the human material too. Sixty-year-old men, and women, were sacrificed to the 'defence phase', while reserves for the 'third phase', the 'offensive phase', Waited in the Far East for the day when they were to be thrown in.

At the critical moment a new and favourable factor came into the reckoning. The western democracies, who in the period of Stalin-Hitler friendship had been reviled as bitter enemies, were now, willy-nilly, the Soviet Union's allies.

This was when the great game began. The Kremlin showed that, if it was not clever, it was at least cunning. Its aim was to spare its own reserves and to squeeze all the help possible out of the western democracies. And then, at the end, it would play its trump card, the reserves held in readiness for the 'third phase', and the Russian bear would not only be left alive, but going forward to victory.

The farther the Red Army advanced westward during the third phase, the greater was the quantity of first-class equipment of Soviet production that reached the front. It was no secret to staff officers that in 1945 great masses of arms were thrown in, much of it bearing a pre-war production mark.

But since in the early stages the Kremlin had spared its manpower less than its material, toward the end of the war there was an acute shortage of soldiers. Moreover, the industries not regarded as of 'war importance' were no longer able to fulfill the tasks set them, and so during the 'third phase' there was a disastrous shortage of transport and other 'war-unimportant' details, whereas Soviet-produced tanks and planes were available in adequate quantities. The majority of the military transport lorries and the like were of American production. The situation was still worse in regard to food. The food shortage was terrible. But, after all, that was nothing unusual in Soviet conditions. It was much more important to keep the war industry running at full speed.

Such was the theoretical explanation of the war successes put forward by Moscow military circles.

The Yalta conference came and went. After they had settled their military problems, the Big Three turned to the problem of restoring order in the world after the war.

In connection with the Yalta conference, 'high circles' of the Kremlin openly talked of two attempts to enter into peace negotiations between Hitler and the Soviets. The first attempt to sound the ground for a separate peace on the eastern front was made by Hitler when the Red Army gained a foothold on the right bank of the Dnieper. The Kremlin was quite ready to talk, and stipulated that observance of the Soviet 1941 frontier was the most important prerequisite. This shows how little the Kremlin then hoped for any great successes. Their only concern was to save their flayed hide

from being worried any more. But Hitler still doubted whether the wheel of history had begun to turn to his disadvantage, and he demanded the Ukraine on the right bank of the Dnieper as his price. In this instance both the totalitarian opponents played with their cards on the table; at least they were more frank than they were with their democratic opposite numbers.

The second attempt to conclude a separate peace was made by Hitler when the noose was already round Germany's neck, immediately before the Yalta conference. On the eve of Stalin's departure for Yalta he had no hesitation in entering into preliminary negotiations with Hitler. Who would offer him more, Hitler or the democracies? This time Hitler was asked to pay dearly for his immoderate demands in the earlier negotiations. Now the Kremlin no longer insisted simply on the retention of its pre-war frontiers; it required a free hand in the Balkans, possession of the Straits, and extensive concessions in the Near East. This time it was Hitler who was offered his former frontiers. Now the dream of world domination had come to birth in another brain. The policy of keeping trumps up the sleeve was justified; it brought not only salvation, but also the possibility of continuing the game. Hitler flatly rejected the Kremlin's conditions. To accept them would have been a moral defeat for him. He preferred to suffer both moral and physical defeat, and to drag his whole nation, his Reich, down into the pit with him.

The Yalta conference appeared to achieve complete unanimity among the partners. And then Stalin threw overboard all thoughts of a separate peace with Germany and concentrated all his attention on the diplomatic game with the western democracies. In the castle of Livadia he felt far more confident than he had been in Teheran. But even now he preferred not to make great demands, but to apply the tactic of squeezing out aid and concessions in exchange for promises and guarantees which he had no intention of keeping. It was still too early to show his strength. The Kremlin's strength was only just beginning to develop, and the Kremlin itself had no clear idea of its immensity. It was best to gain time, and meanwhile get as much as possible in negotiations.

The western allies proved very complaisant. They were quite convinced that the Kremlin was not strong enough to overrun Europe, and that the 'coup de grace' would be administered by

them, while the Soviet bear would remain stranded somewhere on the frontier of Poland. They made many concessions in the belief that the Kremlin would not be in a position to take advantage of them. Only the prudent and farsighted Churchill perceived the

danger, hence his proposal to build up a second front in the Balkans and so protect Europe from the Red peril advancing from the East. The execution of this plan would have cost the Allies far more dearly than the invasion on the Atlantic seaboard, so its opponents won the day and it was decided to give the Soviet bear a further opportunity to burn its paws in pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for them. The Soviet bear pulled out the chestnuts, but he put them into his own mouth, even while he went on complaining of his weakness in order to obtain further deliveries of commodities. Quite convinced that he was bleeding to death, the Western Allies readily threw him further milliards in the form of lend-lease deliveries, and the bear prudently locked them away in his store-room.

So the 'high contracting Parties' shook one another's hands' and signed the communique, which at least one of them did not believe for one moment, having no intention of observing its terms. The communique was published, and all mankind, with the exception of the signatories, believed in it and were overjoyed. The future lay before us like a sunny May day, or like the blue sky above the Yalta shore. True, the only thing the ordinary Russian knew about current policy was that bread in Moscow cost fifty roubles a kilogram. I took the final course examinations in the middle of February 1945. As I was credited with several subjects which I had taken during my studies at other schools, I was set free ten days earlier than my colleagues. After much difficulty I succeeded in getting a week's leave. I obtained an official 'order' from the college, and an official travel voucher to correspond, and so was enabled to visit my home town in the south of Russia.

This trip was not a very cheerful one. The town gave me the same sort of impression as that conveyed by an autumn garden after a stormy night: bare boughs, leaves rustling underfoot, broken twigs. In my heart I felt desolation and emptiness.

Before the war Novochoerkass had been famous for its high spirited youth. There were five higher educational institutions to its hundred thousand inhabitants, and students dominated the town. But now I walked along the main street from the station at twelve o'clock midday and met only a few wizened old women. The typical picture of the Soviet rear. I walked beneath the cool colonnades of my alma mater. The pictures my memory conjured up out of the past seemed far finer than the present reality. But had the reality changed so much, or had my wanderings about the world led to my applying a different yardstick?

At the street corners women in rags were sitting, selling sun

flower seeds and home-made fruit drops. Just like 1923! Only now I had to give my little cousin a thirty-rouble note to buy the same quantity of seeds as five kopeks had bought in those days. The need, the poverty, were so hopeless, so completely without the least ray of light, that even the modest conditions of pre-war times seemed like a golden age. What we had thought wretchedness then passed for prosperity now.

As I left the station at Moscow and plunged into the midst of the great metropolis's swirling hurry and activity, I felt as relieved as a man returning home from the cemetery. In Moscow there was an upsurge of hopeful life. But in all the rest of our vast country men were conscious only of the bony hand of hunger, they felt only utter hopelessness. Now, after the German yoke had been thrown off, something much worse had taken its place: dread of a settlement of accounts. Men did not know what crime they had committed, they knew only that there would be no escaping the reckoning. Enormous areas of the Soviet Union, and over half its population, had been under German occupation. And now, over every one of these people hovered the spectre of a reckoning for 'betrayal of the fatherland'.

At the end of February all the graduates of our course were sent to the front and attached to the active army; before taking their State examination they had to have a period of experience on active service. I was attached to the staff of the First Byelorussian Army.

During those days the divisions of the First Byelorussian and the First Ukrainian Armies were fighting desperately to overcome the latest achievements of German fortifications technique. After breaking through the East Wall a fight began to enlarge the Oder bridgehead. Inspired by their successes, the Soviet troops were burning to tear on into the heart of Hitler's Germany, on to Berlin. Towards the end of April, just as the street battles in Berlin had reached their height, I was unexpectedly recalled to Moscow.

CHAPTER THREE

The Song of the Victor

The music flowed in caressing waves through the twilight hall, under the great crystal chandeliers, between the lofty marble columns. The air was heavy with the warmth of human bodies, the titillating scent of subtle perfume, all the characteristic respiration of the life of a great city. I thrust my fingers behind my belt and looked about me eagerly. I could hardly believe that only yesterday I had felt the Berlin sidewalks still shaking with explosions, that around me men in field-grey coats had been falling, never to rise again. I had the feeling that my uniform was still impregnated with the pungent stench of the Reich capital, the smell of burning, of powdered mortar and rubble, of gunpowder.

From the platform came the familiar words of a soldiers' song simple, moving, intimate. Where had I heard that song last? Of course, it had been a favourite of the tank-driver, Sergeant Petrenko. A young, dashing fellow, he often sang it to the sounds of an accordion he had knocked off. He was a great lad, was Petrenko. He didn't quite get to Berlin: he was burned alive in his tank somewhere among the sand-dunes of Brandenburg.

Lieutenant Belyavsky was sitting next to me. We had met in the college, and he had mentioned that he had tickets for a concert to be given by artists, every one of them decorated with the order: Meritorious Artist of the Soviet Union. "Come along with me," he said. "You need a little cheering up." He slapped me on my back. And that was how, the day after my return to Moscow, I found myself sitting in the Pillared Hall of the House of the Trade Unions. During an interval we went to the foyer. For two months I had been in the most exposed section of the front-reason enough for watching

Moscow life with hungry eyes. Even after a brief absence one notices many things which the regular inhabitants -don't see at all.

The great majority of this audience consisted of officers working in the defence ministry or members of the Moscow garrison, students at military colleges, and front-line officers in Moscow for short leave and seizing the opportunity to attend a concert again. Practically all the male members of the audience were wearing military uniforms; any man in civilian dress was regarded either as a hopeless cripple or as a doubtful sort of individual. There were many war-wounded, also in uniform, but without shoulder-tabs. And a large number of the audience, civilians included, were wearing orders or ribbons.

The authority of the military profession grew enormously during the war. Before 1939 officers were shown little consideration, they were regarded as drones and parasites. But in the war years the officer corps was enlarged by a mass of reserve officers. The army became an inseparable part of every family; people began to regard military service as a necessary and honourable obligation. The external and internal reforms in the army and all over the country forced everybody to revise their ideas of the military class. The front-line officer was of all men the most respected. Before the war the civilians had looked down with some condescension on the military, but now the situation was diametrically opposite. The men in dark blue worsted civvies were inferior beings. The majority of them looked pale and worried; the feverish strain of unremitting labour had left its mark on them. The women, too, had the same grey look of chronic undernourishment, everyday anxieties and need, in their faces and clothes. Their features were indifferent, pasty, weary. Even the youngsters had lost the unconstrained, invincible, carefree air of pre-war days. The general war-weariness was much more perceptible at home than at the front.

The so-called 'Narcomatics', the higher officials of the People's Commissariats, were in a class by themselves; they were well-dressed, well-fed, and repellently self-satisfied. One could recognize them at once in the street by their light-brown leather coats, which they had all started wearing as one man on one day. The Americans had sent these leather jackets over in 1943 as part of lend-lease deliveries, together with hundreds of thousands of brand-new lorries. The jackets had been intended as service clothing for the drivers of the lorries. The lorries were sent to the front, but the leather jackets remained Moscow as official equipment for the higher functionaries of the

commissariats. They were a quite unnecessary luxury for the men at the front, and ever since the early days of the revolution So functionaries have had a childish weakness for any kind of leather garment. In Moscow it was rumoured that the Americans were greatly astonished to find high Soviet officials decked out chauffeurs' uniforms. Perhaps they thought it indicated the proletarian modesty of the Soviet bosses.

After Belyavsky and I had wandered about aimlessly for some time among the brilliant orders and pale, hungry faces in the foyer came to the glass showcase of the buffet. Behind the glass were marvelous delicacies, the sort of thing one found in Moscow only in the best of the pre-war years. But the prices! It was painful to see men gathering round the case as though it were a museum-piece

then turning away with hungry looks and empty hands.

"I'm glad we haven't any ladies with us," Belyavsky remarked with stoic calm. "Why the devil do they put such things on show? I'd rather not have my imagination stimulated like that!"

The second part of the concert consisted of a performance by the State jazz orchestra, directed by the 'Meritorious Artist of the R.S.F.S.R.', Leonid Utiessov. Utiessov was the most popular jazz band leader in the Soviet Union: he was assigned the ticklish task of adapting western European jazz music to the frequently changing demands of the 'social command'. His repertoire consisted of fox trots on the motifs of Stakhanovite songs, and blaring, anti-imperialistic marches. But now, with the help of trombones and saxophones, he was celebrating the demise of fascist Germany. Utiessov, a tubby man, showed off quite unconcernedly on the platform. He was wearing the artist's traditional uniform: evening dress complete with boiled shirt. In his buttonhole he had the Order of the Red Banner ribbon. He waved his arms in a fever of patriotic exaltation, squeezing the last drops of the 'Waves of Leningrad' out of the perspiring band.

Utiessov had achieved a great public success with his 'confidential talks' from the platform. "My father lives in luxury. I myself earn twenty thousand roubles My daughter brings home a little more, some five thousand And, of course, her husband -he's an engineer-he helps a little too He contributes a full six hundred roubles a month." This talk received wild applause but of course he had to withdraw it quite quickly. Rumour has it that in the end he was snapped up by the Narcomvnudel.

Suddenly silence fell. The orchestra came to an unexpected stop, there were excited whispers, a feeling of uneasiness spread through the audience. From the back of the hall spotlights were switched on, focusing into a ring of light on the platform. Utiessov stood in the spotlight, a sheet of paper in his hand, a strand of hair hanging over his sweating face.

„Comrades ... friends!" he shouted.

The entire hall held its breath expectantly. Speaking slowly, brokenly, he cried to the silent, excited audience: "An order of the day ... of the ... Supreme Command This day, 2 May 1945, the troops of the First Ukrainian Army and the troops

His voice billowed from the platform, but I did not see where it was coming from. It beat in my own breast, it rose in my own

throat, it might have been my own voice. So this was victory! In very truth, in the rumbling, stony gorges of the Berlin streets, in the turret of a staff tank, in the everyday existence of a soldier, all the pathos of struggle and victory was much more simple and plain than it was here, in this Pillared Hall of Moscow. There it was only the accomplishment of a military task. Here it was the climax of years of straining expectation, a moment of boundless joy and unrestrained pride.

The people of the home front were sick with a chronic psychosis. They were filled with an unshakable conviction that the day of victory, the day marking the end of the war, would be like a fairy story, would not only bring deliverance from all the fevered night mares of wartime, but would bring something bigger and better than had existed before the war. This mass psychosis which marked the final phase of the war was visible in the eyes of every man and every woman. Clenching their teeth, they advanced to the victory like a runner making his final spurt: a last dash to breast the tape, and then drop exhausted. Then all would be well. Then there would be a pleasant rest, the well-earned reward for all the arduous labour, the sweat and the blood.

I closed my eyes so as not to see the man on the platform. The voice swelled in the silence, grew even stronger, rose in a triumphant shout:

"Today, after bitter and bloody struggles, our troops have conquered the heart of Hitler-Germany, the city of Berlin."
The entire hall rose as one man. The thunder of the applause shook

the marble columns. These walls had surely never heard anything like it before. We clapped till our hands smarted, and we looked one another in the eyes. During the ordinary applause of official ceremonies Soviet people avoid one another's eyes. But today we had nothing to be ashamed of, today we could give free rein to our true feelings.

I looked around. This was no highly organized ovation in honour of the Party and government leaders, when each participant would watch out of the corner of his eye to see whether his neighbour, was clapping hard enough, and secretly waited for the chairman of the Presidium, the conductor of this show, to stop clapping, thus officially bringing the ovation to an end. This was a genuinely spontaneous demonstration. For the first time in my life I did not feel ashamed of clapping; I was taking part in an honest and passionate expression of feeling. The Russian people were thanking the

Russian soldiers for fighting so hard and well, for shedding their blood.

From a long distance the words reached my ears: "To celebrate the victory over Berlin I order, today, 2 May 1945, at 22 hours Moscow time, a salute of twenty guns from two hundred and twenty cannon, in the city of Moscow, and in the heroic cities of Stalingrad, Lenin grad, and Odessa."

We left the hall and went out into Sverdlov Square. The crimson of the sunset had not yet faded on the horizon. The sky was bright over the victorious city sunk in the dusk. The house roofs emerged in marvelous silhouettes against the darkening azure. The May evenings in Moscow are wonderful at any time. But in the light of victory salutes, under the nimbus of military glory, they are fabulous. ' Somewhere far to the west another city, a vanquished city, was lying in total darkness; its inhabitants had no feeling of joy that day. The ruins that once had been habitations were still smoking; bodies were still lying in the street, the bodies of men who yesterday had had no thought of death. The survivors huddled trembling in their locked rooms, without light or heat, starting fearfully at every sound outside the door. For them the future was heavy with the chill of the grave. Yet they hardly even thought of the future. They were still unable to measure all the depth of the abyss into which human arrogance had plunged them.

The fire of the last salute died away. In the ensuing stillness the closing words of the order of the day rang in my ears: "Glory and honour to the heroes who have fallen in the struggle for the freedom and independence of our native land." 'May the blood you have shed not have flowed in vain,' I mentally added.

Everybody in Moscow knows the monument to Minin and Pozharsky. The bronze figures of these Russian patriots' have stood on the Red Square, close to the Kremlin wall, for many years. The dreary rains of autumn wash them, the harsh December Winds comb their beards with prickly snow, the spring sun caresses them. The years pass over them like clouds across the sky. Tsars and dictators come and go behind the walls of the Kremlin, but Minin and Pozharsky stand inviolably in their place.

Surreptitiously crossing themselves, the old women of Moscow whisper the story from mouth to mouth that sometimes the bronze giants let their eyelids droop and close their cold eyes in order not to see what is happening all around them.

Yet once, just once in all the long years, they expanded their lungs to the full, they drew themselves up to their full height, looked each other joyfully in the eyes, embraced and kissed each other fraternally. The old women swear that on this occasion the cold bronze shed hot tears. And why shouldn't they, these men of the Russian soil? I can well believe it, and every Russian who was in Moscow on that sunny morning of 9 May 1945, will confirm it.

For some days rumours had been running through Moscow that the Western Allies and representatives of the German Supreme Command were engaged in secret negotiations. Nobody knew anything exactly, but the uneasiness increased, the atmosphere of strained expectation came to a climax.

The true circumstances of the capitulation were not made known in the Soviet Union. It took place at the staff headquarters of General Eisenhower, a small schoolhouse close to Rheims, in France, on 7 May 1945, at 14.41 hours Central European time. On the German side it was signed by Colonel-General Jodl, chief of the German General Staff, on the Allied side by General Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General W. Bedell Smith, and on the Soviet side

' Two heroes of the 'Troublous Times' at the beginning of the seventeenth century, who organized and led the force that freed Moscow from Polish troops, 1612-Tr.

by General Susloparov. The final capitulation document was signed on 8 May at 12:01 Central European time in the Berlin suburb of Karlshorst. It was officially announced at once. In the Soviet Union Stalin himself announced the news of the capitulation in a broadcast on the 8 /9 May.

On the morning of May 9, as I lay in bed, I was struck by earthquake. Someone was shaking me madly by the shoulder. Even before he spoke I read the news in Belyavsky's dilated, jubilant eyes, I dressed feverishly, buttoned up my tunic with trembling fingers. He

urged me to hurry still more, and I did, although I didn't really know why. I still had my boots to polish; on such a day they must be as dazzling as the sun. And I must put on a clean collar, and polish my buttons with a sleeve of my greatcoat epaulettes. Never before had I felt automatically to make a military uniform absolutely brilliant. I automatically slipped the strap of my swordbelt under my greatcoat epaulettes though swordbelts were worn over the greatcoat only on parade and during guard duty. There wasn't to be a parade today ! But let anyone try pulling me up today for violating the regulations! We

dashed downstairs. We longed to be among the people, in the joy, the triumph, the jubilation.

The college, was buzzing like a disturbed beehive. All the students fell in in the Yard, by faculties, to hear the order of the day issued by the commander-in-chief. The sun shone in the sky. And the orders sparkled on the officers' breasts. Trumpets blared. Two adjutants with drawn swords marched in front of the crimson silk flapping in the wind, its golden tassels swinging; the standard-bearer and the adjutants were all 'Heroes of the Soviet Union'. The Head of the college read out Stalin's order of the day, which marked the end of the Russian people's heroic four-year struggle against Hitler Germany. Then the head of the Western Faculty, Colonel Jachno' spoke to us. But his remarks seemed feeble and hackneyed. They could not express all the greatness of this moment that we had waited for so that we had paid so dearly for. We all wanted to get out into the streets, among the people, where the joy of victory was unconstrained, exuberant. Without waiting for breakfast a number of us hastened to the city centre. On the way we turned into an 'Amerikanka' (snack bar) to drink a glass of beer at the bar. Only recently had it become possible to buy beer again in Moscow, at 16 roubles a glass. One day's officer's pay for a pint of beer!

Several of us hadn't enough money in our pockets to pay for a glass; our comrades helped us out.

"You're better off at the front than at home," one of us remarked.

"You have got something to drink, at least, at the front."

"Don't worry! Soon we'll have everything!" another assured him.

"We've already got beer. Before many months have passed we shall be living like in a fairy-tale. We haven't fought for nothing. You wait, you'll soon see !" His tones expressed an unshakable belief in the miracle that would shortly occur; you would have thought he already knew a present was waiting for him, only it mustn't be mentioned at the moment. If any of us had expressed any doubt, he would have called him a traitor to his face. He wouldn't have known why or how it was treachery, but he would have been perfectly sure the man was a traitor.

We didn't talk much about such things, and the papers, too, did not write about them in so many words, though they made obvious hints. This mysterious and intangible something was in the

air, we drew it in greedily into our lungs, and it intoxicated us. The name of that intoxicating feeling was hope. We were hoping for something. And that something was so drastic, was perceived as so unattainable, that we could not bring ourselves to speak about it or even hardly to think of it.

What were we hoping for? The past would not return and the dead would not live again. Perhaps we were glad that we would be returning to the peaceful existence of the pre-war years? Hardly! Our great joy that day arose from the fact that we stood at a frontier, a frontier that marked the end of the darkest period of our life, and the beginning of a new, still unknown period. And every one of us was hoping that this new period would fulfill the promise of the rainbow after the storm, would be bright, sunny, happy. If anybody had asked us what we really expected, the majority would have expressed our common feeling very simply: "To hell with all that was before the war!" And every one of us knew exactly what had been before the war.

I have witnessed many Moscow celebrations and parades. The strongest impression one got from them was that the people would much rather have really made merry and enjoyed themselves than be forced to demonstrate their merriment and joy. They were simply Puppet shows, and one could not rid oneself of a loathsome feeling of hypocrisy. Most of the people tried to avoid thinking that the main

reason for their presence at the celebration was the haunting desire not to be put on the list, not to give offense by being absent.

That day the feeling was quite different. There was no organized demonstration, nor was it necessary. The streets of Moscow were packed with people, everywhere: on the sidewalks, in the roads, at the windows, on the roofs. In the centre the streets were so crowded that wheeled traffic came to a standstill. All the population of Moscow had taken to its feet.

As we walked along, a group of girls in bright spring clothes came towards us, happy and excited. They had flowers in their hands. In wartime Moscow flowers had been as rare as they are at the North Pole. Measured by European standards, they were more precious than a bunch of black orchids, or roses in January. Just in front of us several flying officers were talking together animatedly; they were obviously members of the Moscow garrison. One of them, was in civilian clothes; his right sleeve was empty. The left breast of his jacket was studded with orders, and above the breast-pocket shone two five-cornered gold stars: the stars of a 'Hero of the Soviet Union'. One of the girls, her eyes glittering like stars, rushed up to the airmen

as though she had been looking for them for a long time. She kissed one, two, all the whole lot of them. She kissed them heartily, and they seemed embarrassed. But why? Proud and happy, in the sight of all Moscow, she was kissing the men who had risked their lives to defend the Moscow sky.

She thrust her flowers into the wounded man's hand, and he awkwardly pressed them to his chest. The tender petals caressed the cold metal of the orders. The girl was particularly warm in her embrace of him, and did not want to release him. They said not a word to each other. Their feelings, ardent human feelings, were more eloquent than words.

We saw an old woman in a white kerchief, peering about her uncertainly, as though looking for someone in this seething torrent of human beings. Obviously she was not accustomed to the bustle of the city. Just a homely, Russian mother. We had come across thousands of such mothers as we entered the villages evacuated by the retreating Germans. And hardly had we taken one step across the thresholds of their cottages than we were calling them 'mother'. Without a word they thrust a hunk of bread into our greatcoat pockets and surreptitiously signed the cross over us as we turned away.

Two elderly soldiers in ragged front-line uniforms were leaning against a house-wall. Their faces were unshaven and bristly; wretched packs hung over their shoulders. You could see they had either come straight from the front or were on their way back to it. But they were in no hurry; today they had no reason to fear the military police patrols. They warmed themselves peacefully in the sun and stared blankly at the people, who seemed to have lost their senses. The two men calmly rolled themselves cigarettes from their favourite home-grown tobacco and a strip of newspaper, just as if they were at the front. What more does a soldier need than a piece of bread in his pack,) a small packet of tobacco in his pocket, and the sun shining?

The old woman in the kerchief pushed uncertainly through the crowd, and went up to the two soldiers. She spoke to them in an agitated voice and tried to pull them by the sleeve. The soldiers looked at each other. Of course they must do as she asked: she was a mother.

How many sons had she given for the sake of this sunny morning? The sons who were to have been her support and comfort in her old age had been taken from her. All through the war she had held on

to an expensive bottle of vodka, not exchanging it even for bread. She had suffered hunger and cold, but that bottle of vodka was sacred. Her son Kolya had fallen at Poltava; Peter the sailor had gone down in a sea-fight; her happy-go-lucky Grishka had vanished without trace. But now her heart was no longer suffering in its loneliness. She had gone into the street to find her sons, to invite the first soldiers she met to celebrate the victory with her. Today the bottle of living water would be brought out. These two men should know the heart of an old mother, the mother they had sung so often in their soldiers' songs.

Comintern Square. Outside the American embassy, between the Hotel Metropole and the block of the Moscow University, there was the same solid mass of human beings as everywhere else. Women were gazing curiously out of the open Embassy windows; they were wearing clothes so brightly coloured that they could never have been mistaken for Moscow inhabitants. Cameras were clicking. The embassy was calm and silent. Old Glory fluttered sluggishly in the gentle breeze.

The people in the square stared up inquisitively, as though they expected the American ambassador to step on to a balcony and

speak to them at any moment. The crowd eddied round the building like water streaming over shallows. But the ambassador had gone to the Kremlin. What had he to do with this grey, impersonal mass? And besides, it's hardly politic for a diplomat to speak to the people over the heads of their government.

The consulate automobile made its way slowly through the mass of people. Then an American officer in cream-coloured trousers and green tunic attempted to get- to the embassy. If he did not know of the Russian habit of tossing people into the air, he must have been rather alarmed when he went flying up. Up he soared into the sky then dropped gently into many outstretched hands and went up once more. Thus he was carried above the people's heads, thrown up again and again by dozens of hands, till he reached the embassy. He pulled down his wrinkled tunic and went up the steps, cap in hand, smiling with embarrassment and obviously not knowing whether to say "Okay!" or "Goddamn!"

The sun shone down graciously on jubilating Moscow. People embraced and kissed one another in the street. Strangers invited one another into their homes. Everything was set on the table, the pockets were unloaded. Life had been difficult, but now it was all over. We had held out and won. Now an end had been put to

the bloody battles, to all the difficulties and privations. The leader would thank the people for their faithful service to the fatherland
The leader would not forget!

The psychiatrists are well acquainted with the phenomena of psychosis. But in its mass aspect it remains unexplained. Yet any one who was in Moscow on 9 May 1945, and who had gone through what every Russian had gone through during the years of the war, knows exactly what mass psychosis is. I have seen and experienced it only once in my life, and I am not likely to experience anything like it again. It was the discharge of a nervous-system accumulator the discharge of a force that had been accumulating for years. Many did not understand it, but all felt it.

During the last years of my studies at the Industry Institute, examination time was a difficult period for all the students. Later, at the front, I seldom saw any man really worked up before going into battle. But I do remember that while waiting outside the door of the examination hall the students suffered nervous convulsions. At the front a man can only lose his life. During examinations we risked losing hope. For the soul of man that is a much more important matter. During the actual examination I myself was superficially calm and never felt any great excitement. But after it was over I lay on my bed for days without moving, as though I were paralyzed. So was it that day in Moscow. A prolonged and complex psychic process in the soul of the nation was finding vent at last. The outbreak of war had initiated the process. The people regarded it with relief, as an opportunity to free themselves of the hated conditions of the existing regime. The curve of this feeling of relief gradually flattened as the people realized that their hopes had been disappointed. This was followed by a period of comparative stability, when the people were aware of only one thing: the vanity of all hope. Then the process of charging the human accumulators began.

Simultaneously with the growth of a negative attitude towards the external factor of the war a new hope was sown and began to strike root—the hope that a better future could be achieved by their own power, once the foreign enemy was defeated. At that point the external factor became their enemy. Driven by their hate for the enemy and by their growing hope of a better future after the war, the people went through unimaginable difficulties. The Russians smashed the Germans out of their desire for vengeance, vengeance for the unfulfilled hopes, the shattered wishful thinking. But still stronger burned the guiding star of a new hope. They would never have fought in defence of the fatherland they had known before the war. And at first they had no desire to fight, they hoped the Germans

would bring them to the Promised Land. But then they turned and fought because they thought they saw the Promised Land on the other side.

On 9 May 1945 the charge of the people's psychic accumulator had reached its culminating point, the overcharge was causing sparks to fly. And now came the discharge. No wonder Moscow lived as though governed by electric impulses, no wonder strangers embraced us and kissed us simply because we wore uniform, no wonder men wept openly in the street.

Outside the History Museum I ran into Lieutenant Valentina Grinchuk. A smile was playing on her face, as though she could not understand all this bustle and excitement. She had found her way infallibly through the darkness of the forests in her partisan days. but here she was like a little child, lost in the primeval forest of human elements. She did not even notice the admiring looks of the men who turned to stare after her.

"Well, Valia, congratulations on the victory," I said, as I had said already a dozen times that day. I looked into her violet-blue eyes, took her by the chin as though she were a child, and raised her head. Those blue eyes shone at me earnestly and a little sadly "Congratulations on victory, Valia." I bent down and kissed her on the lips. She did not resist, she only looked helplessly with her dilated eyes, staring into the distance. Beneath the hard leather of her belt I felt her delicate, girlish figure.

(You seem so very tiny today, Valia. What's up? Why, you have more right to enjoy this day than anyone else. Open your blue eyes still wider, you child with orders on your breast and wounds of your girlish body. Fix this day in your memory for all your life, this day for which you have sacrificed your youth.)

She and I spent a long time wandering through the city, right along Gorky Street, past the Bolshoi Theatre, along the embankment below the Kremlin wall. One would have liked to absorb all the spirit of the victory-drunk metropolis that day. One would have liked to soar high above the world and thus observe all that was happening below, to memorize for ever this day in all its unique greatness and exaltation. For not to everyone was Fate so kind as to allow them to be in Moscow, to be in the centre of those vast events. Valia and I walked in silence, each sunk in his or her thoughts. If there can be such a thing as perfect happiness in this world, then I was perfectly happy that day. Humanity's golden dream of peace all over the world came down to earth, that sunny day of 9 May.

The evil forces had been routed. The majestic hymns of the victorious powers were sounding over the world. They proclaimed freedom to the peoples. Freedom from anxiety for their own lives, freedom from the race-hatred of Nazism, from the class-enmity of communism, freedom from fear for one's freedom. Were not the words of the Atlantic Charter eloquent in their sublimity?

Our leaders had turned their backs on the doctrine that it was impossible for the capitalist and the communist systems to co-exist. With the blood of their soldiers the western democracies had won the indissoluble friendship of the peoples of our lands. The mutual relations of peoples and nations, of states and governments, had been forged in the fires of war. Such historical cataclysms sweep political systems and states from the face of the earth, change the political map of the world. The war which had now ended must lead inevitably to a fundamental change in the Soviet system. With good reason had the Party and the government given the people clearly to understand that, during the last years of the war.

I glanced down at Valia out of the corner of my eye.

4, "Why are you so quiet, Valia?" I asked. "What are you dreaming about?"

"Oh, nothing," she replied. "I just feel a bit down, somehow. So long as the war was on one simply went on fighting. If you ever stopped to think about it, you only hoped that it might soon be ended. That end seemed so splendid, but now it's all so ordinary. And this day will pass, and once more"

She did not finish her remark, but I knew what she was thinking. I suddenly felt sorry for her. Without doubt she was thinking of the straw-thatched roofs of her forest village, the crane over the well, and the little barefoot girl with water-buckets in her hands. In her own soul she was pondering on the question that now confronted every one of us. She was afraid the hope that had kept us going all through the years of the war might vanish, and that then once more

Through the dusk that was falling over the city the aluminium balloons of the barrage swam slowly into the sky. They were rising for the last time, to take part in the last victory salute. Search light batteries were posted all round the Kremlin; young girls in field-grey military greatcoats efficiently controlled the mechanism of those gigantic electric eyes. Today their beams would grope across the sky of Moscow for the last time.

I said goodbye to Valia and joined another group of officers from our college. We made our way slowly to the Red Square. Soon now

the guns would be firing their salutes, and the Red Square afforded the best view. No official demonstration had ever drawn such an enormous crowd outside the Kremlin walls. It was impossible to do anything but let the torrent take charge and carry one away as it wished.

Amid this human ferment the Kremlin stood silent and lifeless, like a legendary castle fallen into an enchanted sleep. The granite block of the Lenin Mausoleum rose above the heads of the crowd. The leaders and minor leaders stand on that platform on days of parades and demonstrations and smile amiably from a safe distance behind the bayonets of the armed Narcomvnutel guards. Now the granite Platform was empty. And the bayonets were absent. That day the Red Square belonged solely to the people.

Hundreds of thousands of heads. Since early morning people had filled the Red Square, Waiting and staring as though they were expecting something. But the powerful loudspeakers which were ranged in numerous batteries round the square were silent. More and more people poured into that vast open space. What was drawing them there?

The Kremlin remained silent in its sleep. The silvery firs stood guard along the ancient walls. The pointed pinnacles of the towers pierced the darkened sky. The ruby-red stars gleamed high above on the invisible points of the towers.

When I was a child we used to be told that the red five-pointed star was the symbol of communism. The symbol of the blood that had been shed by the proletariat of all five continents. Truly, much blood had flowed on account of those ruby-red stars on the Kremlin. The earth began to thunder under our feet. Above the black outline of the Kremlin the sky turned crimson with gunfire. Lightning from hundreds of cannon illuminated the battlemented walls, the pinnacled towers, the black cube of the mausoleum, the sea of human heads turned upward. Hundreds of lines of fire drilled into the sky above the victorious city, driving away the darkness of the night. The fire streamed higher and higher, hung motionless in the zenith for a moment, then burst downward in sparkling, multi-coloured little stars. The stars shivered, sank slowly earthward, they fell faster, ever faster, to die in their flight. Hardly had the last sparkles faded when the air was shattered with the rolling thunder of a salvo. The first salute to final victory! The last seconds of a glorious epoch. Open your eyes, open your hearts, fix those seconds for ever. The earth drummed again, the crimson fire of the victory salute lit up the walls of the Kremlin, the sky, and the soul of the

people. Once more the fire shot into heaven, once more the little stars shone out like rays of hope, and faded. This was victory captured in a point of light. You saw the victory, you felt its breath on your face.

The fountain set upon the historic place of execution in the Red Square began to play, to gush in a vehement rainbow. As the fountain sent the water running over the square it splashed in little streams under our boots. The arrows of the searchlights quivered and danced. The ancient cathedral of St. Basil the Blessed was thrown up somberly in the flaming salutes. A boundless sea of men and women surged under the Kremlin walls.

From the mist of the past another Red Square emerged in my memory.

The morning of 7 November 1941, was leaden and dull. A flurry of falling snow blurred the face of Moscow. The Kremlin was feeling a draught. The enemy was at the gates! Moscow was threatened! The crenelations and pinnacles of the Kremlin walls showed gloomily in wintry twilight. The cupolas of the Kremlin churches were obscured under palls of snow. Cold and raw was the Red Square that day. In full field equipment the troops marched past the granite mausoleum. A man in a soldier's greatcoat, standing on the platform, stretched out his hand to the troops as if he were a beggar. With outstretched arm the man greeted the divisions that were to march from the Red Square straight to the fight at the gates of Moscow. My ears still hear the words of the marching song of those days: "For my Moscow, for the dear city . . ." We kept our oath of allegiance, leader! Now it is your turn.

But now, on that day in May, the Kremlin was silent. The crimson stars on its towers glowed like blood. Nobody knew what the men in the Kremlin were thinking. Hand in hand with the people they had won the victory. Would they not be stretching out their hands to the people's throats again tomorrow?

Not far from us two elderly workmen were standing, rather unsteady on their feet. They were wearing caps with broken peaks; their white shirts were open at the collar. Because they found it difficult to keep their feet they supported each other. Probably they had been drinking beer on an empty stomach.

"Come home, Stepan," said one of them, a man with reddish, tobacco-stained whiskers.

"Home? I'm not going home," the other protested.

"What d'you want to hang about here for? The midnight mass is ended. Come along !"

"Wait a bit, Ivan... There's sure to be a decree."

"You've already got your decree: don't oversleep your knocking on time in the morning."

"But I tell you there's sure to be another decree. Do you or don't you know what a decree is? As soon as twelve strikes a decree will be issued. It will shine out in the sky like a star Where's the star?" He swayed as he stared upward.

"There's your star." His companion pointed to the red star on a Kremlin tower. "Come along, do !"

"There's something wanting;" one of my companions turned to me. "It's twelve o'clock, but the people are still hanging showing no signs of going. They know quite well there's nothing more to be seen, yet they're still waiting."

"Shall we go?" I asked.

"No, let's wait a little longer." He hesitated. "There may be something yet."

We wandered aimlessly about the square for a long time. The people looked at one another, looked about them, and went on waiting for the belated wonder. At last, when the hands on the clock tower above the Spasskaya Gate drew near to one o'clock, they began to stream away to the Underground station. The trains would stop at 1 a.m. They must get home, so as not to be late next morning. "Pity the day's gone so quick!" my companion said. "There was obviously something lacking."

We took the Underground. Opposite us sat an elderly woman in threadbare military uniform. She looked as though she had come straight from the front. Her eyes were closed with fatigue and she swayed to the movement of the train. At the next stop a lieutenant got in. All the seats were already occupied, so he glanced at the epaulettes of the seated military people. In Moscow the regulation is strictly observed that the junior in rank gives up his seat to a superior officer. The lieutenant's eyes rested on the sleeping woman in front line uniform. He stepped across and ordered her brusquely: "Get up!" She opened her eyes in bewilderment and sprang up automatically. The lieutenant roughly pushed her aside and sat down in her seat.

"There's your reward to the victor," my companion remarked
"Get up and give your place to someone else."

May time in Moscow is rarely accompanied with such filthy weather as we experienced on 24 May 1945. A fine veil of rain had hung about the city since early morning. Vainly did we stare up at the sky in the hope that the clouds were breaking. It was as though the celestial powers were deliberately out to ruin our festive spirit. For it was a day set apart for a great celebration: by special order of the day issued by the commander-in-chief, a great victory parade was to be held in the Red Square. A review of the best of the best. The parade had been long and carefully prepared. Soldiers and officers who had distinguished themselves in the war had been recalled to Moscow during April. The choice fell chiefly on those who had most distinctions, orders, and medals to wear on their chests. On arrival in Moscow they were allocated to special units, and were issued with new dress uniforms, such as we had seen hitherto only in pictures. Special training for the parade went on for more than a month. The people of Moscow were lost in conjecture as to why these fine companies and battalions of men hung about with decorations from head to foot were marching in full dress uniform through the Moscow streets while desperate battles were still going on at the front.

Those of us students who were selected to take part in the parade wore through more than one pair of soles as the result of our daily four-hour exercises on the parade ground. We were drilled very strictly, for military exercises were not regarded as of much importance in the college, and so normally they were neglected. Now we were forced to acquire the infantry knowledge that we lacked. In preparation for the parade we polished our buttons and buckles till they dazzled, and tried on our new uniforms again and again.

And now this endless steady drizzle was failing. We knew that if the weather was unfavourable the civilian demonstration would not be held, only the military parade. Soldiers are used to being wet to the skin.

In the Red Square, the gigantic crimson banners on the buildings of the All-Union Executive Committee and the History Museum hung in heavy folds. In broad daylight the square looked very different from its aspect at night under the gunfire of the salutes. Sober and plain. As if the road did not end but only had its beginning here. A grey road into a grey future.

Eyes right! There, on the platform of the mausoleum, stood the

leader, our sorrow and our glory. In honour of the victory, today he had abandoned the modesty of his usual parade uniform and was decked in the brilliant uniform of a generalissimo. When Joseph Vissarionovich signed the order conferring the rank of generalissimo of the Soviet Union on Comrade Stalin, he must have smiled wryly at the thought of his colleagues, Franco and Chiang Kai-shek. The parade was headed by the picked regiment of the People's Commissariat for Defence and the Moscow garrison. It was followed by the picked regiment of the First Ukrainian Army, which had

always been flung in where the main battle was to be fought, and which had stormed into Berlin.

The picked regiments of victory and glory marched past: tankmen in blue Overalls and leather helmets, cossack cavalry units in long Caucasian cloaks with red and blue hoods; airmen with golden wing badges. The glorious infantry marched past in an endless grey-green band, men of various complexions, various tongues. Now they all had one thing in common: on the chest of each one burned the tokens of intrepidity and heroism, the orders and medals of the great patriotic war, the proofs of faithful war-service to the father land.

At the head of each picked regiment marched the outstanding generals from the various fronts. Grey-blue uniforms, silver belts and swordbelts, lacquered boots. Gold on their buttons, their caps, their orders. The stars glittered, the medals gleamed. They were transformed, were those once so mod~st proletarian generals. Amplified through batteries of loudspeakers, the greetings of the party and government leaders thundered over the Red Square to the victorious army.

One after another the captured banners of the German divisions, the standards of the S.S. storm troopers, were thrown down at the foot of the mausoleum. Symbols of departed glory, once proudly fluttering over Europe, they lay in a formless, pitiable heap at the foot of the Kremlin wall.

Despite the rain, despite our soaked uniforms, we felt light and joyful at heart. This was the last solemn act of the great struggle.

We had sacrificed so much for this day: flourishing towns and villages, millions and millions of human lives. The bloody wounds that those in search of 'living-space' had inflicted on us would be gaping for long yet. For many years to come the husbandman's plough would go on turning up alien bones from the Russian earth, and for many years to come would the burnt-out hulls of tanks go on rusting

in the midst of cornfields.

But all this lay behind us. We had emerged from the struggle as heroes and victors. Through hard work we would heal the wounds, we would begin a peaceful and happy life. We would begin a new life, and all would be better than before the war. There was much that we forgot in our consciousness of victory, as we looked hopefully to the future.

An old, sturdy sergeant marched along with a weighty step.

A real rock of a man. Thick whiskers, like those shown in the picture of the oldtime Zaporozhe cossack camp; sunburnt face, heavily lined. Rows of orders and distinctions glittered across his chest. All his life he had flourished the hammer and sickle, but he had never been able to endure their representation on a red ground with all the trimmings of communist fripperies. Nonetheless, today he threw out his chest, with its many orders bearing these symbols. At the front the sergeant had had less regard for his head than for his luxuriant whiskers. During the years of collectivization he had shortened them considerably, in order not to be taken for a kulak. In those days things had been worse than they ever were at the front. In those days nobody knew whether and when fate would knock at their door. But now a free wind seemed to be blowing. You could even grow your whiskers long again.

During the war many quite young soldiers and officers had let their beards and whiskers grow. Before the war such liberties had been risky. A small beard was regarded as Trotskyist, a thick beard indicated a kulak, a long beard a priest. Then there were merchants' beards, archbishops' beards, and generals' beards. The position was just as bad in regard to moustaches. A small moustache was regarded as 'white-guard', a bigger one suggested a Tsarist policeman. Over such superficial social distinctions one might find oneself behind bars! But today the old sergeant didn't know whether to be more proud of his orders or his whiskers.

There had been great changes during the war years. Before the war, would anyone have dared even to mention the George Crosses of the Tsarist days? The chevaliers of the Cross of St. George had thrown their medals away, or buried them deep in the earth. But today the old sergeant marched across the Red Square, past the Kremlin walls, with four George Crosses hanging on his chest beside the Soviet orders. After that, let anyone tell me that the Soviet regime had not made any revolution, that the collective farms might not be abolished tomorrow! And weren't the churches open again,

weren't the bells ringing from their belfries?

Before the war hundreds of thousands of priests had been liquidated as propagators of 'opium for the people'. Of those few who were left in freedom the Soviet people knew only one thing with certainty: they were agents of the Narcomvnudel. Every week, under cover of darkness, they slipped through the doors of the Narcomvnudel with reports on their flocks.

But now religious freedom was proclaimed. A clerical training college had been opened in Moscow, and a Special Committee for Religious Affairs had been set up under the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., with Comrade Karpov in charge. The church had been harnessed to the service of the State. It was wiser now, and would obey.

Only one thing astonished us in all this comedy. The newly opened churches were filled with people. Church weddings had become quite fashionable, especially in the country. Despite everything, it had not been possible to cut religion out of the people's souls. Even I often felt a hankering to enter the open church doors. But as a student in a Kremlin college I knew certain things only too well. I could not risk the possibility that later the head of the college would hand me a photograph taken of me in the church, with the observation: "You appear to have forgotten that students of the college are strictly forbidden to let themselves be photographed anywhere else but in the college's special photo-studio." That was the kind of false step that often served as a ground for expulsion from the college.

Now, from time to time, church bells, miraculously saved from destruction, sounded over Moscow. Priests were hurriedly brought back from Siberia, straight from forced labour to the altar. Before the callouses had vanished from their hands they were offering up prayers for victory and asking heaven to grant the leader health. The people listened with unconcealed joy to the bells. But nobody had any doubt that the new priests were in close contact with the Narcomvnudel.

The Narcomvnudel never forgets its old clients. When they have done their eight or ten years in a punitive camp, on their discharge the majority of its prisoners are invited to serve it as informers. "Justify the trust we are putting in you, in giving you back your freedom," is the way it is put. In reactionary countries, when a prisoner has served his time he is left to his own devices. But we show greater thought for the man. Freedom is granted him

as an act of grace, which he must be thankful for, working to justify the 'trust'.

Innumerable orders glittered on the Red Square. Many new decorations had been created during the war years. Even they had made their evolution backward. The rank-and-file Glory medals instituted in 1944, and the medal for 'Participation in the Great Patriotic War 1941-5,' were a direct borrowing from the black and orange ribbons of the Tsarist George Cross. New orders, the Ushakov and the Nakhimov, were instituted for admirals and captains in the navy, and medals similarly named for the sailors. The army generals were adorned with Suvorov and Kutuzov orders, the higher officers with the Alexander Nevsky and Bogdan Khmielnitzky orders. But the most widely distributed of all was the Order of the Patriotic War. Not just any war, but the Patriotic War! And for marshals there was a special Victory order, made of gold, platinum, and diamonds, and worth 200,000 gold roubles. Though they retained five-pointed, the stars of these orders were very similar to those issued by Katherine 11. And there were Guards regiments again, Guards standards, and Guards distinctions. But in pre-war days? God protect a man from letting the word 'Guards' slip out! '

The impersonal greeting, 'Good day, Comrade Colonel,' had been replaced by the official 'Zdrav'ia Zhelayu' (I wish you health). And the gold epaulettes? In past days the worst charge an investigating officer of the Narcomvnuvel could have made against anyone would have been to designate him a 'wearer of gold epaulettes'. The generals, marching along on parade just like the portraits of former Tsarist generals, had mottled silver belts. The 'International' had been superseded by the new 'Hymn of the Soviet Union'. Even the slogan 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!' had vanished from the front page of Pravda.

According to a recent decree of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet, on retirement generals were to receive a piece of land for life tenure, and interest-free loans for the erection of their country houses. There we have the aristocracy of socialism! The only snag to all these blessings was the circumstance that so many of the Soviet generals ended their careers in the Narcomvnuvel.

The people simply went dizzy with all these innovations. The victorious army marched in parade step across the Red Square. The drumming of their feet found an echo in my breast, To me, today, the army meant not simply military service: in the army I had first found my fatherland. Before the war I had lived

in an illusory world of new concepts: communism, socialism, Soviet farms, collective farms. The papers had given me astronomical figures, fine words and slogans, talk of tractors and factories, new houses and construction works. Nonetheless, like everybody else,

in my own life I had experienced inhuman difficulties and privations, though I justified them all by reference to the necessities of 'the great upheaval'.

But when the war broke out I saw all the wretched impotence of the world in which the Soviet man lived hypnotized by propaganda. Yet as it went on I recognized something greater, I recognized the nation. I felt for the first time that I was a member of the nation and not merely a unit in a Marxist classification. I was not the only one to realize that: it was shared by millions. It did not come to us as the result of the new manoeuvres of Kremlin policy, suddenly switched over to emphasis on the national, fatherland aspect. That manoeuvre was rather simply a consequence, a forced way out of the situation that had been created.

The war stirred the country to its innermost depths, brought to the surface things that hitherto had been concealed in those depths. All the artificial trimmings were pushed into the background, and the true power, man, was restored to the foreground. The man as he really is. In blood and agony is man born; in blood and agony men learn to know one another.

In the light of real life, among living men, all the theories of dialectical materialism faded and were put in the shade. I realized that all that for which we had made incredible sacrifices over twenty-five years was, if not the product of an experimenter's delirious fantasy, at any rate only an experiment that called for great improvement. Now as I marched across the Red Square I still saw no way out. But I was thoroughly convinced of the falsity of that which we had lived for in pre-war days.

The victory parade thundered across the Red square. Dashing soldiers in blue overalls stuck their heads out of the open turrets of the heavy tanks. Proud of their gold epaulettes and their George ribbons, they signaled with their red flags, saluting the Kremlin walls and their leader.

Generalissimo, today we greet you and congratulate you on the victory! Just as you greet and congratulate us. Yet we remind you: do you think of the summer of 1941? Do you remember how you suddenly struck up a new tune? 'Dear brothers and sisters, citizens and citizenesses. . .you said. We could

hardly believe our ears. For twenty-five years you had set brother against sister, sister against brother. Until that summer of 1941 the word 'citizen' was commonly used only by the investigating official sitting behind his desk in the Narcomvnudel, using it as a form of address to an alien, enemy element. Where had your communists, your commissars, political functionaries and other 'comrades' got to then? You were right in calling us 'citizens and citizenesses'. We were not your comrades! When you felt the rope round your neck you called to the people for help. And we came. We died, but we fought. We hungered, but we laboured. And we conquered. Yes, we conquered, and not Generalissimo Stalin and his communist party.

But today, in honour of the victory, I shout a thunderous, triple cheer. And may the wars of the Kremlin tremble !

Thus victory came. And whenever my thoughts turn to that V-day I recall the thrill in my heart, the feeling that rose in my throat. The victor raised his head and sang his victory-song. And he rejoiced at the road that lay open before him, the road into the future.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Rational Basis

In the spring of 1945 one of the officers studying at the college was the victim of an extraordinary, an idiotic incident. He had just graduated from the last course of the Japanese Department, and had already been nominated to a senior post in the foreign service; in addition, he was happily married. He seemed to be on the threshold of a brilliant future. And yet ...

Two of the college buildings fronted on to the street, with a gap of some fifty yards between them. This gap was blocked by an ordinary fence, and General Biyasi, who took great pride in the outward appearance not only of the students but of his buildings, ordered the old fence to be taken down and one more worthy of the college erected. When the old fence was taken down the students found they had a very convenient route through to the car-stop on the street, whereas previously it had been necessary to make a considerable detour to leave by the main door. As a result, all the college began to come and go through the 'new gateway'. When the general discovered what was happening he had a one-man guard posted at the gap, giving him the strict command that nobody was to be allowed to pass through. But how can one man be expected to hold a fifty-yard front against an entire college, his own comrades into the bargain? So the general sent for the guard and personally gave him a dressing-down, threatening him with the clink.

"But what am I to do, General?" the man pleaded. "Shoot?"

"Of course! A guard post is sacred. You know your service regulations," General Biyasi answered.

At the close of studies for the day a crowd of officers once more poured through the gap. The guard shouted and threatened them till he was hoarse. In vain. But in the distance the general's tubby form was to be seen on a tour of inspection. At that very moment the 'Japanese' captain was passing the guard, taking no notice of his shouts.

"Halt!" the man shouted desperately.

The captain went on his way, apparently sunk in thought.

"Halt, or I'll fire!" the guard roared again.

The captain went on; but the general steadily drew closer.

Almost frantic, the guard threw up his rifle and shot without taking aim. It was four in the afternoon, the street was crowded with people, and the man was so agitated that if he had taken deliberate aim he would almost certainly have missed. But now the captain dropped to the sidewalk with a bullet through his head. During the war he had not spent one day at the front, he had never heard the whistle of a bullet; but a few days after the war had ended he was struck down by a comrade's deadly bullet, in a Moscow street. Of course nothing happened to the guard. Although the affair was really scandalous, the general sent him a message expressing his gratitude for 'exemplary performance of his duty'. In such cases the guard is free from blame. The army regulation says on this point: 'When on guard it is better to shoot someone who is innocent than to miss an enemy.'

This incident involuntarily turned my thoughts to reflections on fate. 'No man can avoid his destiny,' our forefathers used to say. We don't believe that any more; or rather, we have been taught not to believe it. Then there is more room for belief in the leader. At that moment I had every reason to reflect on my destiny. I had finished the college course, and was standing on the threshold of a new phase in my life. I saw clearly the crossroads that lay before me, but I saw even more clearly that once I had set out along any one of those roads there could be no turning back. At the moment I had at least some possibility of choice, so I must give ample thought to the choice. Recently I had heard rumours that

I was being considered as a candidate for a teaching post at the college. One could not have had a more brilliant prospect. Practically speaking, that represented the finest opportunity a graduate could have. The teaching staff was in a continual state of flux, for it constituted an immediate reserve for the army General Staff, which always gave close consideration to the claims of college staff when there were special tasks to be performed abroad. Today one

might be sent to somewhere in Europe, tomorrow to America. Truly, the chosen individual usually went as an unassuming auxiliary member of an impressive delegation, but he always had independent and responsible special commissions to execute. And on return Moscow he reported not to the civil authorities who had sent the delegation, but to the corresponding department of the General Staff.

Only a short time before, one of the college staff had been sent on a round tour of Czechoslovakia, Austria, and other countries of central Europe. He had gone as an 'interpreter' for a world-famous

Soviet botanist, a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. It is easy enough to guess what sort of plants the professor had in mind to bring home with the aid of such an 'interpreter', and who was principal and who subordinate.

Once attached to the college staff, one was at the starting point of many highly promising paths. The staff was very well informed on the backstairs questions of the General Staff. And personal understandings, patronage, connections, played a great part. In such a post one could always bring unobtrusive influence to bear. In a few words, membership of the college staff was the surest start to a career of which the majority of the students could only dream. When I first heard that I was being considered for such a prospect I had decidedly mixed feelings. On the one hand, it meant life in Moscow, mingling in the new leading circles, the broadest of possibilities, an extensive field of activity, alluring prospects. But ... There was a very weighty 'but'. That road led in one direction.

One glance back or aside and you were finished. If you wished to travel that road, you must be completely free from inner conflict and possess perfect faith in the rightness of what you were doing. Of course there are substitutes for these things: hypocrisy, careerism, lack of principle in the choice of means. I was an educational product of the Stalin era and had had ample opportunity to see that in the Soviet Union these substitutes played a fundamental role. And yet, could I be satisfied with them? I was not a naive youngster, nor was I a philanthropist: I could justify the application of dubious means in order to achieve a higher end. But before I could do so in this case I had to be perfectly sure that the final goal was beyond criticism. And, despite my own personal desires, I did not feel that surety. After the jubilant days of victory the atmosphere in Moscow had grown grey and monotonous. A fresh breeze was blowing in Europe, a great historical transformation was being accomplished there.

College students who returned from short official journeys to the west had interesting things to report. It would do me, too, no harm to get to know the patient I would be called upon to cure. For me, personally, the best thing would be to be sent to one of the European occupied countries. There, in a new environment, in lands where we had gained the victory, in creative work I could recover my shaken equilibrium and return to Moscow full of confidence, full of faith. In any case, I would still be part of the General Staff Reserve. These reflections provided the stimulus to a conversation I had with Lieutenant-Colonel Taube.

Professor Baron von Taube was one of Colonel Gorokhov's

deputies in the Educational Department. In the college he was regarded as a kind of museum piece, and yet, because of his extraordinary range of knowledge, and his capacities, he was irreplaceable. Despite his compromising 'von', his name carried weight and his word was quite often of decisive significance. The students regarded him as an extremely cultivated man, a practical and observant officer and teacher, with whom one could talk openly.

Besides Lieutenant-Colonel Taube, Major-General Ignatiev, too, had a good name in the college. In his youth he had been a page to the last tsar, and then had studied at the tsarist General Staff Academy; later he had been tsarist military attaché in Paris for many years. After the revolution he remained abroad quite a long time as an emigre, but in the 'thirties, for unknown reasons, he took the road to Canossa. His memoirs, *Fifty Years in the Ranks*, enjoyed a great success among the students. Now the former Guards officer, Count Ignatiev, was wearing a general's uniform again, and had been appointed historian of the Red Army. Naturally, he was not trusted, and his chief task was to proclaim the Soviet regime's tolerance towards repentant sinners. In his memoirs he gave a vague reason for his return, but in Moscow it was openly said that he had got tired of washing dishes in Paris restaurants.

During the last year or so of the war a number of more or less well known emigres had returned to the Soviet Union. For instance, the once famous writer Kuprin had recently arrived in Moscow. It is said that when he walked out of the railway station he put down his case and knelt to bow his head to his native earth in sight of all the people. When he got up he found his case had vanished.

Only recently, Belyavsky and I had heard a concert given by Alexander Vertinsky. His public appearance was quite unexpected,

and most people were delighted, regarding it as confirmation of a new~ liberal course in governmental policy. It is true that he could appear only at small clubs in the suburbs. But the very fact that he could appear was more important and more pleasant than his performance.

A smell of morphia came from the stage, and the human Wreck that walked on, accompanied by his wife, a young singer, made a wretched and sentimental impression. The past is more pleasant in memory than in its resurrection as a corpse from the grave.

It may not have been in their minds, but the government took a clever step in letting the young generation see the old world in this form. With our own eyes, without propaganda, we clearly saw

how far our world and our interests had advanced in the meantime, Lieutenant-Colonel Taube listened closely to my superficial arguments-naturally, I made no mention of the personal reasons leading me to ask to be sent abroad-and promised to speak in favour of the -proposal to the higher authorities, while not withdrawing my candidature for the college staff.

Besides the lieutenant-colonel, I brought influence to bear on other people who had some say in the allocation of posts to college graduates.

Some time later I was summoned to Colonel Gorokhov. He greeted me as an old acquaintance.

"Ali, Major Klimov! I'm glad to see you!" he began affably, as though to see me was all he wanted of life. I at once took guard. The more affable he was, the more unexpected the conversation might prove to be.

"So you didn't follow my advice after all. You turned your back on the Eastern Department." He shook his head mournfully. "I wouldn't forgive you, except that you've had such good reports." I remained silent, waiting for him to come to the point.

"So you would like to have the opportunity to work in perfect freedom?" came the friendly question.

I raised my eyebrows in astonishment.

"We were thinking of keeping you here," he went on. "But now it's proposed to give you an opportunity to prove yourself in a different post. I take it that this has come about not entirely without your intervention

He looked at me ironically. No doubt he had guessed long since what part I myself had played in getting transferred from the Eastern to the Western Faculty.

I do not object to your being sent abroad," he said after a brief silence. "I think you don't, either."

I tried to look unconcerned. It is better for an Officer of the General Staff to avoid displaying excessive curiosity.

"You have just one defect," he continued. "Why haven't you yet joined the Party?"

"I've been at the college only a year, Comrade Colonel," I replied.

"And one has to have the recommendation of three Party members, one of whom must have worked together with the candidate for at

least two years."

"And before you came to the college?"

"I've never had the opportunity to remain two years in one post."

I felt like telling the colonel frankly that I considered a man should join the Party only when he had become a leading member of society, and not in order to use his membership as a springboard for his career. The majority of the present-day 'true communists' worked to the latter principle. It was they who made the most stir, in order to show how 'true to the Party line' they were. But those who had achieved something by their own merits, and in consequence, for good or ill, had to join the Party, were usually passive and silent camp-followers.

But could I have told him all that? It would have meant that I was myself uncertain, dubious. And if a Soviet citizen wishes to live, from the day of his birth he must believe absolutely in the infallibility of the Party line. I would have shown myself a poor student of his college if I had told the colonel such things.

"I hope that by our next meeting you will have remedied this defect," he said in conclusion. "Apart from that, our reports on you are excellent. Your case will be remitted to the army Personnel Department, and they will notify you of your future post.,, After this conversation I waited to go through the usual examination by still higher instances.

The students of our college normally had to pass very thorough-going tests, but before being appointed to a post abroad even they were customarily subjected to a questionnaire test by the Mandate Commission of the Red Army Personnel Department and the Foreign Department of the Soviet Communist Party. One could never be sufficiently on one's guard. It was always possible that meanwhile someone or other had become 'wormeaten', or important changes might have occurred among his or his wife's relations.

One of the most unpleasant features of Soviet life is the collective responsibility of all one's relatives. No matter how beyond reproach a man may be as a member of Soviet society, if any even of his distant relations comes into conflict with the Narcomvnu del he is automatically entered in the category of 'politically unreliable'. During the war there was a special category of 'unreliables', who were not called up for military service. Many of them had to serve in labour battalions. They were not issued weapons and were kept at a safe distance from the front. They consisted mainly of people whose relatives had made too close acquaintance with the

Narcomvnudel. Anyone who had personally come into contact with the Narcomvnudel or was on their black lists was rounded up and interned in the first few days of the war. If any 'unreliable' offered to go as a volunteer to the front, he was arrested at once and sent to a Narcomvnudel camp. The military command knew what value to set on this kind of patriotism. The Soviet government reckoned that despite the long years of re-education, the feeling of loyalty to one's father, or mother, and one's own blood was stronger in the Russian soul than the husks of communist teaching.

During the later years of the war, owing to the great shortage of manpower some of the 'unreliables' were taken into the regular army. Although the majority of them had had higher education and were officers on the reserve, they had to go to the front as privates. During the many years of the Soviet experiment the number of those who had suffered repression reached such an enormous figure that without doubt the automatically 'unreliable' group constitutes the most important social stratum of the new Soviet society. Both sides have got to seek a way out of this complicated situation. Men want to live, and the regime needs men. But between the reconciliation of these two necessities there is an insurmountable obstacle: the questionnaire. Many of these 'unreliables' have never seen their 'evil genius', they have never had anything to do with him, and naturally they make no mention of him when filling up their questionnaires. The authorities know quite well that the questionnaire is not filled in with strict accuracy, but they often find themselves forced to 'overlook' this inexactitude. Their terror policy has driven the Soviet rulers into a blind alley: if one accepts the Soviet classification, there are fewer immaculate and reliable citizens in the Soviet Union today than there were thirty years ago. And so, if the case is not highly important, or if there is urgent need for any particular individual, they check the details of his questionnaire less strictly- On the other hand, in important cases they trust no questionnaires whatever, nor even the opinion they have themselves formed concerning the person under consideration, so they put him under examination again and again, with hysterical distrust and a meticulous scrupulosity.

Between three and six months elapse between the first candidature and the final appointment to a foreign post, during which period the candidate is subjected to various checks. Thus, the local Narcomvnudel in his place of residence has to check his statements relating thereto, and if it is established that some distant relative, it may be, has vanished without trace in mysterious circumstances, that in itself is sufficient to dispose of the candidate. Any circumstance not clarified is taken as a negative factor.

I was expecting to be summoned to the Personnel Department of the General Staff, but a few days later I received the order to report to the head of the college. This was outside the normal routine, and I was rather troubled to know what lay behind it. Opinions concerning the head of the college, General Biyasi, were wildly contradictory. One section of the students rather suspiciously expressed great enthusiasm for his unusual ability and declared that he was a highly cultured man, that at one time he had been Soviet minister to Italy and was not only perfect in all the languages covered by the college, but could even read human hearts and discover one's most secret thoughts. No doubt these students would climb higher up the diplomatic ladder than those who declared that the general had begun his career by selling Halva and fruits in the Tiflis market, and who considered that his only outstanding qualities were his glossy exterior and his floridly melifluous manners and speech.

Anybody summoned to the general's room could never be certain of the outcome. We were always ready at any time for the greatest of surprises. For instance, only recently the entire Japanese Department, with the exception of the last course, had been reorganized for the preparation of army translators in a short course of instruction. The disillusioned would-be diplomats were assured that it was only a temporary measure, that they would all have the opportunity to continue their studies later. But meanwhile they were sitting all day grinding at Japanese military terminology. This reorganization Occurred immediately after the Yalta Conference, and the rate of

instruction was accelerated to such an extent that the students gave one another unequivocal glances. The plan clearly indicated the date by which the training had to be completed, and therefore the way by which the wind was blowing. For that matter, from the beginning the secret clauses of the Yalta agreement were no secret for us. We saw the point when we were informed that the members of the foreign delegations would be very glad to make the acquaintance of any of us. Before that, if any one of us had ventured to exchange a few words with a foreigner in the streets of Moscow without special permission, he would have been presuming too much on the powers of his guardian angel.

Before taking up a post abroad certain of the students were put through a special course of instruction in rules of conduct and good manners in relations with foreigners. In such courses a student would often be given individual instruction suited to the country to which he was assigned. And frequently special emphasis was laid

on learning the modern dances of western countries or the art of relations with ladies, including the art of breaking hearts, which is one way of getting to diplomats' private safes. In these courses General Biyasi had no rival as an instructor.

After my rather gloomy reflections I was not a little surprised when he briefly informed me that by the command of higher authorities I had been posted to the staff of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany. Evidently I was regarded as so reliable and so thoroughly proved that a further check-up before my departure was superfluous.

"We can be proud of you in every respect," the general explained. "But don't forget: wherever you may find yourself, you are and will remain one of us !" He put special emphasis on 'us'. "From now on you are under a different command, but we can order your recall at any moment we wish. If necessary you are fully entitled to get into contact with us over the head of your future superior officers. As you know, that is strictly forbidden in the army, but we are an exception to the rule. Your future destiny depends on how you show up in your practical work. I hope we shall meet again later. . ."

The general's words left me unusually calm. During the war I had been full of enthusiasm and ardor for all I experienced; I had definite objectives in front of me. But now I was filled only with icy calm. The same calm that I had felt in June 1941, on the outbreak of war. Then it had been due to the tense expectation of coming experiences. But now I simply could not understand why it was. our inner world is the reflection of our surroundings. Now I was quite deliberately putting my inner world to the test. In active work, in the interplay of international interests, I would find the rational basis of our Soviet existence. One could hardly have a more suitable spot for that than Berlin.

,11 feel sure you will justify the trust the fatherland is placing in you, in sending you to the most important sector of the post-war front. The work to be done there is more important and more responsible than in war-time," he ended, as he shook my hand. 111 wish you every success' Major!"

"Thank you, Comrade General!" I replied, looking him straight in the eyes and responding to his vigorous handshake. After all, wasn't I going to Berlin in order to come back to Moscow a better Soviet citizen than I could be today?

During the winter I had solved a riddle. that puzzled me in regard to Genia. Her mother had returned to Moscow in January; all through the war she had worked as a doctor in front-line hospitals,

in order to be near her husband. Now she had been demobilized. Anna Petrovna was the exact opposite of her daughter Genia. Her greatest interest in life was to talk about her husband. I needed no little patience and endurance to listen to the same story and display the same interest for the umpteenth time: how they had got remarried, how he was never at home because he devoted all his time to his service, how hard it was to be the wife of a professional officer. She gave me long descriptions of her and his parents, simple people; of his gradual advancement, and then his breathtaking career during the war. Anna Petrovna was extremely pleasant and frank. Though she was the wife of a well-known general, she was not at all conceited about his position; on the contrary, she had a partiality for telling stories about the lack of culture and the ignorance of the new aristocracy. She had a clear realization of the responsibility her husband's high position placed on her, and she tried her utmost to keep up with the times and with him. Both outwardly and in her character she fully justified the place she held in society. There was a general tendency among Soviet people to regard the new aristocracy very sceptically, as a lot of upstarts. To a large extent

this was because quite unknown people had come to the top during the revolution. That had been perfectly natural. Later on these same people were appointed to leading State positions, for which they were often fitted neither by their knowledge nor by their capacity for the particular job. One thing has to be granted to the leading Soviet officials, they had a restless energy and inexhaustible perseverance. As time passed the revolutionary old guard grew still older, they outlived their day, and their incapacity for the new tasks showed up more and more obviously.

Meanwhile new cadres of specialists were being developed in all branches of activity. They came from the masses of the people, but they had the requisite education and special professional training and they acquired practical experience in responsible activity. The bureaucratic ulcer burst at the beginning of the war, and it became necessary to replace the tarnished heroes of the revolutionary period by younger leaders of the Soviet school. Inevitably during the war years, and especially in the army, new and talented military leaders who had been vegetating unrecognized came to the forefront.

The pre-war Party and bureaucratic aristocracy spent their days in the same luxury and magnificence that the tsarist aristocracy had formerly been reproached with. During the war, in order to save the situation, they were replaced, perhaps only temporarily, by the finest members of the nation. Genia's father belonged to this elite. And

Anna Petrovna was unusually proud of her husband's career. Her only regret was that it had practically put an end to their family life. I had not seen Genia while I was taking my State examination, and had only phoned her occasionally. But now I had my assignment to Berlin in my pocket, and I could call on her again: I hardly expected the affectionate reception she gave me; it was so demonstrative that even Anna Petrovna shook her head disapprovingly. "Don't forget that I'm here too," she remarked.

"Grisha!" Genia said as she whirled me like a top round the room.

"Daddy's been home two whole weeks Just imagine: two whole weeks! Come and see what he's brought me."

Full of pride, she showed me quite a number of presents her father had given her. Even before this, whole cases of trophies had collected in their apartment. Each time one of the staff officers traveled from the front to Moscow he brought with him presents from the general. That was common in all the officers' families during the

Red Army's advance into East Prussia. The junior officers sent only small articles, but the seniors even sent back solid items like furniture and pianos. From the legal aspect, robbery; in the wartime language they were called trophies. And besides, everybody considered that this was only taking back from the Germans what they had taken from us.

About this time there was a story running through Moscow about a front-line officer who sent a case of soap home to his wife. She did not stop to think about it but sold the whole lot at once in the market. A few days later she received a letter from her husband, in which he mentioned that one of the cakes of soap had a gold watch concealed in it. The story had various endings: one, that the woman hanged herself; another, that she took to drink; a third, that she drank poison. A massive radio set was standing in the General's living room. At first glance I could not decide whether it was a receiver or a transmitter. In fact he had got hold of a set perfectly fitted to his rank: it was a super-receiver, the latest model. I was about to plug it in and switch it on when Anna Petrovna raised her finger admonitorily: 'Grisha! For goodness' sake don't switch it in. Kolia [her husband] has strictly forbidden it."

"But what are you afraid of?" I asked.

"It mustn't be touched. Not for anything, not till the ban's raised. Even Kolia hasn't switched it on yet."

What do you make of that? A month after the war had ended a

victorious Soviet general did not dare to listen to the radio until the Kremlin had expressly given him permission.

"Grisha, look at this!" Genia broke in. "A golden pistol!" She excitedly threw me something heavy in a yellow leather case. Thinking to find some original design of cigarette-lighter, or some feminine trinket, I opened the case and took out a gleaming gilded Pistol of the German 'Walter' pattern. I noticed two lightning flashes, the sign of the S.S. And an inscription:

"To S.S. General Adreas von Schonau, in the name of the Great German Reich. The Fuhrer."

"Now you'd better behave yourself !" Genia said as she produced a clip of cartridges. "It's all ready for use."

As she threw it down, the clip slithered like a snake over the sofa cushion. I noticed the small red heads of the cartridges.

"What an idea, to give anyone a pistol!" I said. "And you above all."

"Don't get the wind up. If you behave yourself nothing will happen to you," she reassured me. "And he brought two Opel cars back with him," she chattered on. "The 'Admiral' he'll drive himself, and the 'Captain's' for me. So see that you turn up tomorrow morning. You must teach me to drive."

"But listen, Grisha, what are your plans for the future?" she asked playfully, her new toys already forgotten. With the same unconstraint with which she had handled her gold pistol she laid my head on her breast and described a large questionmark with her finger on my forehead.

I hated to spoil her cheerful spirits. In my heart I began to feel regret that I would have to leave all this world behind the very next morning. But it had to be, and, anyway, it was not for ever. "Tomorrow I'm flying to Berlin.. ." I said slowly, staring up at the ceiling. I spoke very quietly, as though I were somehow in the wrong. "What?" she said incredulously. "Is this another of your silly jokes?"

"It isn't a joke. .

"You're not flying anywhere. Forget it! Get that?"

"It doesn't depend on me." I shrugged my shoulders helplessly.

"My goodness! I'd like to skin you alive !" she exclaimed. "If you

simply must see what it's like abroad, go and spend an evening at the operetta. Don't you feel any regret at going away again and leaving me behind here, with my everlasting, boring lessons?" She looked almost with entreaty into my eyes; they revealed more than a mere request or whim.

"It isn't what I want, Genia. Duty. .

"Duty, duty!" she echoed. "I'm sick of that word."

All her carefree, joyful spirits were gone. Her voice was sad and earnest as she said:

"I was so happy to think you were not a professional officer. I suppose you think I've had a happy home life. If you want to know the truth, I'm an orphan !"

She suddenly sat straight up. Her face was pale, her slender fingers played nervously with the silk fringe of the cushion. "All my life I've only seen my father once a week, so to speak. We're almost strangers to each other. Have you ever stopped to wonder why he overwhelms me with presents? He felt just as I do. First it was China, then it was Spain, then something else. And so all my life."

Her voice shook, her eyes filled with tears. She lost her self-control, the words poured from her lips like a passionate complaint, like a reproach against fate.

"My friends say I'm lucky; my father's chest is loaded with orders . . . But I hate those orders . . . They've taken my father from me . . . Every one of them means years of separation. Look at mother! Hardly has she got over her tears of joy for father being home again, alive and well, when there are more tears over something new. Often we go a whole year without a letter from him . . . And, he, too, always says: 'Duty! Duty!' And now you . . . I don't want to live a life like my mother's . . . I don't want to live only on your letters . . ." She covered her face with her hands, her shoulders shook spasmodically. Then she buried her face in the cushion and wept bitterly, like a sick child.

I silently stroked her hair and gazed at the sunlit roofs of the house opposite, at the blue vault of the summer sky, as though it might prompt me to an answer. What was I to do? Here at my side was the woman I loved and who loved me; and somewhere, a long way off, was duty.

I spent the evening with Anna Petrovna in the living room. Genia had spread out her books on the dining-room table, and sat chewing her pencil; she was preparing for her finals. Anna Petrovna complained as usual about her lonely life.

"He was offered a post in the Artillery Department; but, no, he must go and stick his nose in hell again. At Konigsberg he was wounded in the head, but that isn't enough for him. You'd think he'd got enough orders and decorations, and a high enough rank. But now he declares he's going to be a marshal. Stalin himself told him so at the reception. And now he's continually repeating it like a parrot." The general had been urgently recalled to Moscow a few days before the capitulation of Germany. On 10 May 1945 he was present, with other high-ranking officers of the Red Army, at the Kremlin reception which the Politbureau gave in celebration of the victory. Now another Lenin order decorated his broad chest, another star was added to his gold epaulettes. But Anna Petrovna was not destined to enjoy her husband's company for long. He had been entrusted with a new, secret commission; he spent all his days in the General Staff, and whenever she asked him where he was going this time he only answered: "You'll see when you get a letter with the field-post address."

She discovered where he had been sent only months later, when the war with Japan broke out. And even then she learnt it from the newspapers, which announced that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet had awarded him a further distinction for special services in the struggle against Japan.

"How can he become a marshal now the war's over?" I asked her.

"Whom will he be fighting next?"

"I don't know," she sighed. "He avoids talking politics with me."

He's grown so cock-a-hoop since his last visit to the Kremlin. They're obviously thinking something up, if they're talking on those lines. Stalin's the be-all and end-all of existence for him. If Stalin tells him: 'You'll become a marshal,' he'll drag the marshal's star down from heaven if necessary."

'What new devilry is afoot now?' I thought to myself 'The Kremlin doesn't talk idly.' But I saw all the import of Anna Petrovna's words only later, when sitting at the conference table in the Berlin Control Commission.

That was my last day in Moscow. Next morning I went to the central aerodrome. It was early, a mist hung over the earth; every thing was very still and quiet. Innumerable transport machines,

all of them 'Douglases', stretched their great wings over the out fields. My heart was as light as the fresh morning air, as calm and still as the hoarfrosted field of the landing ground. I would be returning to Moscow in twelve months. And then the city would be even more dear to me than it was now.

Two officers came up; evidently they were traveling with me.

"Well, how's things, Major?" One of them greeted me. "Off to Europe?"

"Not a bad idea to see for yourself what old mother Europe really looks like," the second added.

The aerodrome came to life. Several other officers arrived, all of them assigned to the staff of the Soviet Military Administration. The S.M.A. had its own machines servicing the Berlin-Moscow route. On their return journey from Berlin to Moscow they were so heavily laden with important and urgent freight that they could hardly gain height. But from Moscow to Berlin they flew only half loaded. Our pilot waited a little longer, then shrugged his shoulders and signaled for permission to take off.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Berlin Kremlin

The Douglas S. 47 described a spiral. Below, as far as the eye could see, extended a cemetery of ruins. We must be over Berlin. The prospect beneath resembled a relief map rather than a city. In the slanting rays of the sinking sun the burnt-out skeletons of the walls threw sharply cut shadows.

During the fighting in the streets of Berlin it had not been possible to see all the immensity of the destruction. But now, from above, Berlin looked like some dead city, the excavations of some prehistoric Assyrian town. Neither human beings nor automobiles in the streets. Only endless burnt-out stone chests; gaping, empty window-holes.

I had gained all my knowledge of Berlin from books. I had thought of it as a city in which the trains were more reliable in their punctuality than a clock, and all the human beings went like clockwork. I thought of Paris as a city of continual joy, of Vienna as one long carefree song; but I thought of Berlin as everlastingly grim, a city without smiles, a city whose inhabitants had no knowledge of the art of living.

I had first come to know Berlin in April 1945, at a season when the blood pulses faster through the veins, as the poets say. But it was not love that sent it coursing faster, but hate. And it flowed not only in the veins, but over the roadways of the Berlin streets. Our first encounter reminded me rather of an American wild west story. All means of killing one another were justified. A dead soldier lying in the street flew into the air at the least touch, thus taking revenge on the victors even in death. Individual soldiers were shot down with anti-tank guns intended for tank battles. And

the Russian tanks stormed down the stairs into the underworld of the Berlin Underground and danced madly in the darkness, spurting fire in all directions. War till 'five minutes past twelve'. Now I was returning to Berlin for the purpose, in the language of official documents, of demilitarizing Germany in accordance with the agreement between the victorious powers.

A major in the Army Medical Service stared through the round window at the picture of Berlin slowly flowing beneath us. His face was thoughtful, expressive of regret. He turned to me and remarked: "After all, these people didn't have such a bad life. So you can't help asking yourself what else they wanted."

The Adler airport. All round the edges of the flying field were Junkers with their tails up, like gigantic grasshoppers. Above the administration building rose a bare flagpole. In the control room the officer on duty, an air force captain, was answering three telephones at once and trying to reassure an artillery colonel whose wartime wife had got lost in the air between Moscow and Berlin.

A lieutenant-colonel walked up to an air force lieutenant standing close by me---evidently the colonel had more faith in junior officers. Five paces earlier than necessary he saluted, and asked with an artificial, hopeful smile: "Comrade Lieutenant, could you be so kind as to tell me where the Bugrov household is to be found?"

(At this time most of the troop formations were familiarly called 'households', being distinguished by the name of the formation's commander.)

He spoke in a whisper, as though betraying a secret. The lieutenant stared in amazement at the lieutenant-colonel's tabs, and was obviously unable to decide whether he was suffering from an acoustical or an optical illusion. Then he ran his eyes blankly over the lieutenant-colonel, from head to foot. The senior officer was still more embarrassed, and added in the tone of a help less intellectual: "You see, we've got our orders, but we don't know where it is they order us to." The lieutenant gaped like a fish, then snapped his mouth shut.

What was this 'lieutenant-colonel', really? A diversionist? I, too, began to take an interest in the lieutenant-colonel. He was wearing a new uniform, new military boots and a rank-and-file waist-strap. Any real officer would rather have put on a looted German officer's belt than a private's strap. On his shoulders were brand-new green front-line tabs. Normally, real officers even at the front preferred to wear gold tabs, and since the end of the war it was rare to find a front-line officer wearing the front-line tabs. A pack hung over his back, and he was clearly not used to it. But officers generally aren't fond of packs and get rid of them at the first opportunity. His belt was stranded well below his hips, a challenge to every sergeant in the Red Army. All his uniform hung on him like a saddle on a cow. At his side was an imposing, Nagant-type pistol in a canvas holster. No doubt about it, he'd come out to fight all right ! But why did he use such a tone in speaking to a lieutenant? A real army lieutenant-colonel would strictly observe regulations and never speak to a lieutenant first; if he wanted him, he would beckon the junior officer across. And without any 'would you be so kind'! A little distance off there was a group of fellows looking equally

comical, hung about with packs and trunks, and clinging to them as tightly as if they were on a Moscow railway station. I turned to the flying officer and asked, with a glance at the lieutenant-colonel and his companions: "What sort of fish are they?"

The officer smiled, and answered: "Dismantlers. They've been so intimidated at home that they're afraid to stir hand or foot now they're here. They take their trunks around with them, even to the toilet. What are they afraid of, the dolts? Here in Germany nothing's ever stolen, it's simply taken. That's what they themselves have come here for. They're all dressed up as colonels and lieutenant colonels, but they've never been in the army in their life. However, they're pretty harmless. They'll strip Germany of her last pair of pants. Those colleagues of theirs who have been here for some time have settled down so well that they're not only sending home dismantled installations, but even cows, by air. Not to mention gas-fires and pianos. I'm on the Moscow-Berlin route myself, so I know !"

Our talk was interrupted by a furious roar from an automobile engine. A little way off a small tourer automobile stood puffing out blue exhaust gas, and trembling all over. Red pennons were fluttering at the front mudguards. A thickset major was at the wheel, working the gear lever and pedals determinedly. His neck was crimson with the unaccustomed exertions. He was attempting to drive the car away, but each time he engaged either the fourth or the reverse gear. Unfortunate gears! Against human stupidity not even Krupp steel would be of avail! At last the poor victim started off and vanished in clouds of smoke and dust, just missing a concrete post at the gate.

I turned to the flying officer again: "Who is that ass?" He was silent for a moment, as though the subject did not deserve an answer. Then he replied with the contempt that the men of the air always have for infantry:

"Some riffraff from the commandatura. They're introducing cleanliness and order here! Before the war that man was digging up potatoes in some collective farm. But he's struck lucky, he's a major, and he's out to make up for all his past dog's life. Strip him of his epaulettes and he'll mind cows again."

After a while we managed to get through on the telephone to the staff of the Soviet Military Administration, and to order a car. In the evening twilight we drove to the S.M.A. headquarters. The staff of the Soviet Military Administration had taken up quarters in the buildings of the former pioneer school at Karlshorst,

a suburb of Berlin. In this place, a month earlier, one of the most remarkable historical documents of our times had been signed. On 8 May 1945 the representatives of the Allied Supreme Command, Marshal Zhukov and Air-Marshal Tedder for the one part, and representatives of the German Supreme Command for the other part, had signed the document of the unconditional capitulation of the German armed forces on land, on sea, and in the air. The headquarters consisted of several three-storeyed buildings, rather like barracks, unequally distributed round a courtyard, and surrounded by a cast-iron railing, in a typical quiet suburb of Eastern Berlin. From this place we were to re-educate Germany.

The day after my arrival in Karlshorst I reported to the head of the S.M.A. Personnel Department, Colonel Utkin. In the colonel's office I clicked my heels according to regulations, raised my hand to my cap, and reported: "Major Klimov, under orders from the Central Personnel Department of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, reports for duty. May I present my documents, Comrade Colonel?"

"Hand over whatever you've got." He stretched out his hand. I took out my documents and gave them to him. He opened the carefully scaled packet and began to glance through my numerous testimonials and questionnaires.

"So you were in the Military-Diplomatic College too? We've already got some men from there," he said half aloud. Then he asked: "Which course did you attend?"

"I graduated with the State examination," I replied.

"Hm ... hm ... How did you do that so quickly?"

"I was posted straight to the last course, Comrade Colonel."

"I see . . . 'Awarded the rank of rapporteur in the diplomatic service,'" he read. "In that case we'll have plenty of work for you. Where would you prefer to work?"

"Wherever I can be of most service."

"How about the Juridical Department, for example? Issuing new laws for Germany. Or the Political Adviser's Department? But that would be rather boring," he added without waiting for my reply.

"What would you say to the State Security Service?"

To turn down such a complimentary suggestion outright would

have been tantamount to admitting my own disloyalty, it would have been an act of suicide. Yet I did not find the idea of working in the secret police very attractive; I had passed the age of enthusiasm for detective novels. I attempted to sound the ground for an unostentatious retreat: "What would my work there consist of, Comrade Colonel?"

"Fundamentally it's the same as in the Soviet Union. You won't be kicking your heels. Rather the reverse,"

"Comrade Colonel, if you ask me my opinion, I think I'd be of most use in the industrial field. I was an engineer in civilian life."

"That's useful too. We'll soon see what we can find for you."

He picked up a telephone. "Comrade General? Pardon me for disturbing you." He drew himself up in his chair as if he were in the general's presence, and read the details of my personal documents over the phone. "You'd like to see him at once? Very good!" He turned to me. "Well, come along. I'll introduce you to the supreme commander's deputy for economic questions."

Thus, on the second day of my arrival in Karlshorst I went to General Shabalin's office.

An enormous carpeted room. Before the window was a desk the size of a football field! Forming a T with it was another, longer desk, covered with red cloth: the conference table, the invariable appurtenance of higher officials' offices.

Behind the desk was a grizzled head, a square, energetic face, deeply sunken grey eyes. A typical energetic executive, but not

an intellectual. General's epaulettes, and only a few ribbons and decorations on his dark-green tunic; but on the right hand breast was a red and gold badge in the shape of a small banner: 'member of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U.' So he was not a front-line general, but an old party official.

The general leisurely studied my documents, rubbing his nose occasionally, and puffing at his cigarette as if I were not there.

"Well ... Are you reliable?" he asked unexpectedly, pushing his spectacles up on to his forehead in order to see me better.

"As Caesar's wife," I replied.

"Talk Russian! I don't like riddles." He drew the spectacles back on to his nose and made a further examination of my documents.

"Then why haven't you joined the Party?" he asked without raising his eyes.

'So the badge is talking now!' I thought. "I don't feel that I'm quite ready for it yet, Comrade General," was my reply.

"The old excuse of the intelligentsia! And when will you feel you're ready?"

I answered in the customary Party jargon: "I'm a non-party bolshevik, Comrade General." In ticklish cases it is always wise to fall back on one of Stalin's winged words. Such formulae are not open to discussion; they stop all further questions.

"Have you any idea of your future work?"

"I know it will be concerned with industry, Comrade General."

"Here knowledge of the industrial sphere is not sufficient in itself. Have you permission to work on secret matters?"

"All the graduates of our college receive permission automatically."

"Where was it issued to you?"

"In the State Personnel Department [G.U.K.] of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, and in the Foreign Department of the C.P.S.U. Central Committee."

This reply made an impression on him. He compared the documents, asked about my previous work in industry, and my service in the army. Evidently satisfied with the result, he said: "You'll be working with me in the Control Commission. It's excellent that you know languages. My technical experts are duffers at languages, and my interpreters are duffers at technical matters. Have you ever worked abroad before?"

"No."

"You must understand now, once for all, that all your future co-workers in the Control Commission are agents of the capitalist espionage. So you must have no personal acquaintance with them whatever, and no private conversations. I take it you know that already, but I may as well remind you of it. Talk as little as you can.

But listen all the more. If anyone talks too much, we cut out his tongue by the roots. All our walls have ears. Bear that in mind. It is quite possible that attempts will be made to enlist you in a foreign secret service. What will you do in that case?"

"I shall agree, but making my terms as stiff as possible, and establishing really practical conditions for the work."

"Good, and then?"

"Then I report the matter to my superior authorities. In this

instance, to you."

"Do you play cards?"

"No. 9\$

"Do you drink?"

"Within the permitted limits."

"Hm, that's an elastic conception. And what about women?"

"I'm a bachelor."

He took a deep draw at his cigarette, and blew out the smoke thoughtfully. "It's a pity you're not married, major."

I knew what he meant better than he thought. The college had a strict law that bachelors were never sent to work abroad. This, however, did not apply to the occupied countries. It was quite common for an officer to be summoned in the middle of the school year to the head of the college, to be notified that he had been assigned to a post abroad, and at the same time to be told to find a wife. It was so common that men who anticipated being sent abroad looked about them betimes for a suitable partner and ... hostage.

"One thing more, Major," he said in conclusion. "Be on your guard with those people on the Control Commission. Here in Berlin you're in the most advanced line of the post-war front. Now go and make the acquaintance of my chief adjutant."

I went into the outer office, where a man in major's uniform was sitting. By my look the adjutant realized that the interview had had a favourable outcome, and he held out his hand as he introduced himself: "Major Kuznetsov". After a brief talk I asked him about the kind of work that was done in the general's department.

"My work consists of sitting in this seat until three in the morning as adjutant to the general. As for your work ... you'll soon see for yourself," he answered with a smile.

I did see, quite quickly. And I was reminded of the general's advice to be careful in my contacts with the Allies. A morning or two later the door of the general's room flew open violently and a brisk little man in major's uniform shot out. "Comrade Klimov?

The general wishes to see you for a moment." I did not know who this major was, but I followed him into the general's office. Shabalin took a file of documents from him and handed it to me:

"Examine those papers. Take a typist who has permission to handle secret matters and dictate to her the contents of the material you will find in them. The work must be done in the Secret Department. You may not throw anything away, but hand it all back to me, together with your report, as soon as you've finished."

As I went past the adjutant sitting in the outer room I asked him:

"Who is that major?"

"Major Filin. He works in the Tagliche Rundschau," he answered. I shut myself into the Secret Department room and began to study the contents of the file. Some of the documents were in English, others in German. There were lots of tables, columns of figures. At the top was a sheet of paper stamped 'Secret' in red in one corner. An anonymous rapporteur stated:

'The intelligence service has established the following details of the abduction of two workers in the Reich Institute for Economic Statistics, Professor D. and Dr. N., by agents of the American intelligence service. The Americans sent agents to call on the above named German economists, and to demand that they should make certain statements to the American authorities. The two Germans, who live in the Soviet sector of Berlin, both refused. They were forcibly abducted, and returned home only several days later. On their return Professor D. and Dr. N. were examined by our intelligence service and made the following statement:

' "During the night of July - we were forcibly abducted by officers of the American espionage and taken by plane to the American economic espionage headquarters in Wiesbaden. There we were examined for three days by officers of the espionage service ... The data in which the American officials were interested are cited in the appendix." '

The appendix consisted of further statistics taken from the Reich Institute Economic Statistics- This material had obviously duplicated

run off in many copies, and it contained no profound secrets.

Evidently, it had been issued before the capitulation, to serve internal German requirements. Despite their 'forcible abduction' the two Germans thoughtfully abstracted the material from the Institute archives and had given one copy to the Americans.

Then with the same forethought they had given another to the Russians. The documents in English were more interesting. Or rather, it was not the documents that were so interesting, but the very fact of their existence. They were copies of the American reports on the examination of the German professors made in Wiesbaden together with copies of the same Institute material, only now in English. Clearly our intelligence service did not entirely trust the Germans' statements, and had followed the usual procedure of counter-check.

The American documents had no official stamps, nor serial numbers, nor addresses. They had come from the American files, but not through official channels. So it was clear that our intelligence service had an invisible hand inside the American headquarters of economic intelligence. Evidently Major Filin was used to working with unusual accuracy, and the Tagliche Rundschau was engaged in a decidedly queer line of journalism.

A few days later a bulky Packet addressed to General Shabalin arrived from the American headquarters in Berlin-Zehlendorf. The Control Commission was not yet functioning Properly, and the Allies were only now beginning to make contact with one another. In a covering letter the Americans courteously informed us that as the terms of establishment of the Control Commission provided for the exchange of economic information they wished to bring certain material relating to German economic affairs to Soviet notice. Enclosed I found the same statistical tables that Major Filizi had already supplied by resort to 'forcible abduction'. This time the material was furnished with all the requisite seals, stamps, addresses, and even a list of recipients. It was much more complete than the file Filin had provided. It was interesting to note that whereas we would stamp such material 'secret' the Americans obviously did not regard it as in the least secret, and readily shared their information with the Soviet member of the Commission.

I went to the general, and showed him the covering letter with the sender's address: 'Economic Intelligence Division'. He looked through the familiar material, scratched himself thoughtfully behind the ear

with his pencil, and remarked: "Are they trying to force their friend

ship on us? It certainly is the same material." Then he muttered through his teeth: "It's obviously a trick. Anyhow, they're all spies."

The Administration for Economy of the Soviet Military Administration was established in the former German hospital of St Antonius. The hospital had been built to conform with the latest technical requirements; it stood in the green of a small park, shielded from inquisitive eyes and the roar of traffic. The park gave the impression of being uncultivated; last year's leaves rustled underfoot; opposite the entrance to the building the boughs of crab-apple trees were loaded to the ground with fruit.

The main building of the administration accommodated the Departments for Industry, for Commerce and Supplies, for Economic Planning, Agriculture, Transport, and Scientific and Technical. The Department for Reparations, headed by General Zorin, and the Administrative Department under General Demidov were in two adjacent buildings. The Reparations Department, the largest of all those in the administration, enjoyed a degree of autonomy, and maintained direct relations with Moscow over Shabalin's head. General Zorin had held a high economic post in Moscow before the war.

The Administration for Economy of the Soviet Military Administration was really the Ministry for Economics of the Soviet zone, the supreme organ controlling all the economic life in the zone. At the moment it was chiefly concerned with the economic 'assimilation' of Germany. In those days it was by no means clear that its real function was to turn Germany's economy, the most highly developed economy in Europe, completely upside down. When I arrived in Karlshorst General Shabalin's personal staff consisted of two: the adjutant, Major Kuznetsov, and the head of the private chancellery, Vinogradov. The plans made provision for a staff of close on fifty persons.

According to those plans I was to be the expert on economic questions. But as the staff was only now beginning to develop, I had quite other tasks to perform. I accompanied the general on all his journeys as his adjutant, while the official adjutant, Kuznetsov, remained in the office as his deputy, since he had worked for many years with the general and was well acquainted with his duties.

Kuznetsov was very dissatisfied at this arrangement, and grumbled: "You go traveling around with the general and drinking schnapps, and I stay at home and do all your work !" Many of the departmental

heads preferred to deal with Kuznetsov, and waited for the general to go out. The major's signature was sufficient to enable a draft order to be put through to Marshal Zhukov for ratification. I once asked Kuznetsov what sort of fellow Vinogradov really was. He answered curtly: "A T.U. official." "What do you mean?" I queried. "He's a T.U. official, that's all." I soon realized what he meant. To start with, Vinogradov was a civilian. He had a habit of running up and down the corridors as though he hadn't a moment to lose, brandishing documents as he went. One day I caught a glimpse of one of these documents, and saw that it was a list of people who were assigned a special civilian outfit for their work in the Control Commission. Vinogradov's own name headed the list, though he had nothing whatever to do with the Control Commission.

Outwardly he was not a man, but a volcano. But on closer acquaintance one realized that all his exuberant activity was concerned with pieces of cloth, food rations, drink, apartments, and such things. In distributing all these benefits he was governed by the law of compensation, what he could extract from those on whom he bestowed them. He kept the personnel files, occupied himself with Party and administrative work, and stuck his nose in every body's business. There was only one thing he was afraid of, and that was hard work.

Once I saw his personal documents. Kuznetsov was right; he was nothing but a T.U. official. He had spent all his life organizing: labour brigades, working gangs, enthusiasm, Stakhanovism. He had had no education, but he had an excess of energy, impudence, and conceit. Such people play no small part in the Soviet state machinery, functioning as a kind of grease to the clumsy works, organizing the song and dance round such fictitious conceptions as trade unions, shock labour, socialist competition, and enthusiasm.

Soon after my arrival a Captain Bystrov was inducted as head of the Secret Department. He spent the first few nights after his appointment sleeping on the table in the Secret Department room, using his greatcoat as a blanket. Later we learned the reason for this extraordinary behaviour. There was no safe in the Secret Department and, in order to foil the plans of the international spies, General Shabalin ordered the captain to make a pillow of the secret documents entrusted to him. Captain Bystrov treated Vinogradov with undisguised contempt, though the latter held the higher position. One evening Bystrov met me in the street and proposed:

"Let's go and drop in on Vinogradov."

"What on earth for?" I asked in astonishment.

"Come along ! You'll laugh your head off! Haven't you ever run across him at night?"

"No."

"He prowls around Karlshorst like a jackal all night, looking for loot in the empty houses. Yesterday I met him just as dawn was coming: he was dragging some rags across the yard to his apartment. His place is just like a museum."

I didn't want to give offense to my new colleague, so I went with him. Vinogradov opened the door half an inch and asked:

"Well, what do you expect to see here this time?"

"Open the door," Bystrov said, pushing at it. "Show us some of the treasures you've collected."

"Go to the devil !" Vinogradov protested. "I was just off to bed."

"Going to bed? I don't believe it ! You haven't ransacked all Karlshorst yet, surely?"

At last Vinogradov let us in. As Bystrov had said, his apartment was a remarkable sight, more a warehouse than a living-place. It contained enough furniture for at least three apartments. The captain looked about him for things he hadn't seen on previous occasions. A buffet attracted his notice. "What's that?" He asked.

"Open it up !"

"It's empty."

"Open it, or I will!" Bystrov raised his boot to kick in the polished doors.

Vinogradov knew that the captain would not hesitate to do as he had said. He reluctantly took out a key. The buffet was full of crockery. Crockery of all kinds, obviously taken from abandoned German houses.

"Would you like me to smash the lot?" the captain asked. "You can always lodge a complaint. Shall I?"

"You're mad ! Valuable articles like them, and you talk about smashing them !" Vinogradov protested.

I looked round the room. This man talked more than anybody else about culture, our regard for the human being, our exalted tasks. And yet he was nothing but a looter, with all his thought and activity concentrated on personal enrichment. Bystrov thrust his hand into an open chest and took out several packages in blue paper wrappings. He tore one of them open, and roared with laughter. I, too, could not help laughing.

"What are you going to use these for?" He thrust a bundle of ladies' sanitary towels under Vinogradov's nose. "For emergencies?" Only after much persuasion did I succeed in getting him to leave Vinogradov's apartment.

During the early days of my stay in Karlshorst I had not time to look about me. But as the weeks passed I learned more and more about our relations with the rest of Berlin. For security reasons Karlshorst lived in a state of semi-siege. The whole district was ringed with guard posts. All street traffic was forbidden after 9 p.m., even for the military. The password was issued only in cases of strict necessity, and it was changed every evening. I frequently had to be out with General Shabalin on service affairs until two or three in the morning. As we went home, at every fifty yards an invisible sentry called through the darkness: "Halt! The password !"

The general lived in a small one-family house opposite the staff headquarters; most of the S.M.A. generals lived in the vicinity. The guards posted here were still stronger, and special passes were required.

Later, as we grew more familiar with conditions in Karlshorst, we often laughed at the blend of incredible strictness and vigilance and equally incredible negligence and indolence which characterized the place. The front of the S.M.A. staff headquarters, where Marshal Zhukov's private office was situated, was guarded in full accordance with regulations. But behind the building there was sandy wasteland with dense forest, quite close up, beyond it. But here no guard was posted at all. Anybody acquainted with conditions in Karlshorst could have brought a whole enemy division right up to the marshal's back door, without giving one password or showing one pass.

Major Kuznetsov and Shabalin's chauffeur, Misha, had their quarters in a small house next to the general's. The general had a sergeant, Nikolai, an invariably morose fellow, in his house to act as batman, though batmen are not recognized in the Soviet army. There was also a maidservant, Dusia, a girl twenty-three years old,

who had been brought from Russia by the Germans for forced labour.

I asked her once how she had got on under the Germans. She answered with unusual reserve: "Bad, of course, Comrade Major." Her words conveyed something that she left unexpressed. Without doubt, like all the Russians waiting for repatriation, she was glad of our victory; but there was something that took the edge off her joy for her.

From time to time groups of young lads under armed escort marched through Karlshorst. They wore Soviet military uniforms, dyed black. These lads were former forced labourers brought from the east, whom we had organized into labour battalions to do reconstruction work. They looked pretty miserable. They knew that they could not expect anything pleasant on their return to the Soviet Union.

Apart from the buildings on Treskow-Aflee, and certain other large buildings occupied by various offices of the S.M.A., the Karlshorst district consisted mainly of small one-family residences, standing amid gardens and trees, behind fences. Most of them had been occupied by the German middle class. They were plain and tasteless outside, built of smooth concrete blocks and surmounted by red tiles. But the internal arrangements, all the domestic fittings and equipment, greatly surpassed anything Soviet people were accustomed to. The doors often showed traces of bayonets and rifle-butts, but the handles were not loose, the hinges did not squeak, the locks were effective. Even the stairs and the railings shone with fresh paint, as if they had been newly decorated for our arrival. No wonder we were struck by their apparent newness. In the Soviet Union many of the houses haven't been redecorated since 1917.

During my first few days in Karlshorst I was accommodated in the guest-house for newly arrived S.M.A. officials. But after I had settled down and familiarized myself with conditions, I simply took over an empty house standing surrounded with trees and flowering shrubs. Everything was just as its former inhabitants had left it. Evidently Vinogradov hadn't been there yet. I made this house my private residence.

CHAPTER SIX

Occupation Authorities at Work

"Go and wait for me in the auto," the general told me when I reported to him one day. He had a habit of not revealing where we were going. We might be visiting the Control Commission, or we might be going to the flying-ground to fly to Moscow or Paris.

Either he considered that his subordinates should guess his thoughts, or he kept the route secret, in the manner of prominent personages, to prevent attempts on his life. His secrecy did not prevent his grumbling at his fellow-travellers for not making preparations for the journey and arming themselves with the requisite materials, or even for traveling with him at all. Before the war he had been the first secretary of the Party District Committee in Sverdlovsk.

During the war he was a member of the War Council and commander of the rear behind the Volkhov front-line army group; he was the Party's eyes and ears in the army organization. These Party generals never directly intervened in the planning or execution of military operations, but no order was valid until they had countersigned it.

I found Major Kuznetsov sitting in the auto. "Where are we going?" I asked.

"Somewhere or other," the adjutant replied unconcernedly. He was used to the general's ways and did not worry his head about the object of the journey.

We took the autobahn and drove to Dresden, where we drew up outside the Luisenhof. It was surrounded by innumerable red-pennoned automobiles. On the steps of the hotel a group of generals was standing, among them the double hero of the Soviet Union, Colonel-General of the Tank Army and military governor of Saxony, Bogdanov. These generals were the various military

commanders of Saxony, and they had been summoned to Dresden to report to the high command of the S.M.A. Dresden and Berlin. The S.M.A. had received a mass of complaints and accusations concerning the activities of the local commandaturas. The various military commanders had received no instructions whatever after the capitulation, and each was pursuing whatever policy he thought fit. The majority of them were half-educated men who had come to

the forefront during the war, and they were completely unfitted for the tasks arising from peacetime occupation.

Before General Shabalin went off with General Bogdanov to have a consultation prior to the conference he whispered something into his adjutant's ear. Major Kuznetsov turned away and took me with him. "Come and help me look for an automobile," he said.

"What sort of automobile?" I asked in surprise.

"One for the general," he said briefly. "You'll see how it's done." With the air of people objectively interested in car models we walked along the row of cars in which the commandants of the Saxony towns had come to the conference. As soon as a commander took over a city after the capitulation, thus becoming its absolute ruler, his first concern had been to requisition the finest car available. So now we were attending an exhibition of the finest models of the German automobile industry, from the rather conservative Maybach to the most modern creations of Mercedes-Benz. The new owners were already gone to the hotel, leaving the drivers, ordinary soldiers, in the cars.

Major Kuznetsov made a leisurely examination of the various cars, kicking the tires with his toe, testing the springs, and even looking at the speedometers to see what mileage had been covered. Finally his choice fell on a Horch cabriolet.

"Whose car is this?" he asked the soldier lolling comfortably behind the wheel.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Zakharov's," the soldier answered in a tone suggesting that the name was world-famous.

"Not a bad little bus," Kuznetsov decided. He ran his fingers over the buttons of the instrument-panel, took another look at the car, and said: "Tell your lieutenant-colonel he's to send this car to Karlshorst, for General Shabalin."

The man gave the major a sidelong glance, but only asked distrustfully: "And who is General Shabalin?"

"After the conference your lieutenant-colonel will know exactly who he is," Kuznetsov answered. "And report to him that he's to punish you for not saluting General Shabalin's adjutant." Looting activities were organized strictly in relation to rank and merit. The ordinary soldiers acquired watches and other small items. Junior officers picked up accordions; senior officers... The classification was complicated, but it was closely observed. If fate put a lieutenant in the way of acquiring a double-barreled sporting

gun of the Dreiring mark, it was no use his hoping to keep it. It was better for him to relinquish it voluntarily rather than have it taken from him. Sooner or later it would find its way into a major's possession. But it would not remain with him long, unless it was well concealed. This general principle was applied with particular severity to cars. You couldn't hide a car.

The Saxony commandants had lost their sense of proportion through their exercise of local plenipotentiary powers and had committed a tactical error in bringing such a large number of attractive cars to their superiors' notice. They paid for this by losing half the cars that were parked outside the hotel. When a second conference was held some months later many of the commandants arrived almost in carts. Of course they had got hold of quite good cars again by then, but they had left them behind.

Some three hundred officers, ranking from major upward, were assembled for the conference. They included several generals, the commandants of Dresden, Leipzig and other large cities, who also were to take part in the exchange of experiences. The heads of the Dresden S.M.A. were seated at the presidium table, which was covered with red cloth. General Shabalin sat with them as the representative of the S.M.A. supreme authorities at Karlshorst.

General Bogdanov opened the conference by stating that certain things had come to the ears of the S.M.A. which suggested that the commandaturas had a warped idea of their tasks. He called on the officers present to 'exchange their experiences' and to submit the defects in the commandaturas' work to pitiless criticism. He gave it to be understood that the S.M.A. was much better informed than they realized. So it would be better to discuss these defects themselves rather than wait for the S.M.A. to attack. In other words, if any one of them felt guilty he should expose as many of his neighbours' sins as possible in order to obscure his own. A lieutenant-colonel was the first to speak:

"Of course there are certain defects in the work of the commandaturas, but they're chiefly due to the lack of control from above. The military commandaturas are left to their own devices, and that leads to" The officer who had undertaken the task of self-castigation began very uncertainly and looked round at his comrades as though seeking their support. But they all had their eyes fixed attentively on their toe-caps. General Bogdanov tapped his pencil expectantly on the table. The lieutenant-colonel went on: "Many

commandants are losing sight of their duty; some of them have been demoralized and bourgeoisified. So far as they're concerned the moral cleanliness of the Soviet officers is ... er ... er" He felt that he had flown too high, and resolved to bring the question down to earth. "Take Major So-and-so, head of the commandatura in the town of X, for example"

"No pseudonyms, please," General Bogdanov interrupted. "We're all friends here."

"Well then, take Major Astafiev, for example," the lieutenant colonel corrected himself. "Since his appointment as commandant of the town of X it's notorious that he's gone to pieces. A little way outside the town there's a castle, formerly belonging to a prince, which he's made his residence. And there he lives in a style that not even the tsarist courtiers and boyars knew. He keeps more servants in the castle today than its former owners had. Every morning, when Major Astafiev deigns to open his eyes, he hasn't got the least idea where he is until he's drunk half a bucket of pickled-cucumber liquor to clear his head after the previous night's drinking bout. And then, as befits a real gentleman, the major sticks out his dainty feet and one German woman draws the stocking on to his, left foot and another German woman draws on the right. A third stands ready with his silk dressing-gown. And he can't even put on his trousers without help from abroad."

There was a ripple of laughter in the hall. The gallant major's style of living obviously impressed the conference.

"But these are only the flowers; the fruits are still to come," the lieutenant-colonel exclaimed. "Major Astafiev has reduced cohabitation with German women to a system. He has a special commando squad whose one task is to scour the district to get hold of women for him. They're locked up for days in the commandatura cellars before they arrive at the major's bed."

"Recently, after one of his regular orgies, the major felt quite a longing for some fish soup. Without thinking twice about it he ordered the sluices of the castle lake to be opened so that the fish could be caught for him. He had a few small fishes for his supper, but many hundredweight of fish perished. Surely, comrades and officers, such behavior must arouse your indignation?"

His words provoked amusement rather than indignation. Each of the officers recalled similar incidents within his own experience, and shared his impressions with his neighbors.

"Major Astafiev's case," the speaker ended, "is of interest simply

because it is typical. The situation is fundamentally the same in commandatura after commandatura. It is our duty to show up and brand such shameful activities, to call the fools to order and make them realize the existence of proletarian legality."

The look of amusement vanished from the other officers' faces, their eyes again studied their boots. With the mention of responsibility and legality the affair had taken an unpleasant turn. The Soviet officers were well acquainted with Soviet law. It is based on the principle of the psychological education of the collective, and so it often resorts to the use of 'scapegoats' who have to atone for the collective sins. In such cases the law is applied with unusual severity, as a deterrent. ,

Soviet law turns a blind eye to peccadilloes. A man is not run in for simply knocking out someone's tooth or breaking a window. There are more important matters to be attended to; for instance, a man can be given ten years for gleaning socialist ears of corn from the fields, or five years for stealing a piece of socialist sugar in a factory. Teeth and window-panes are still private property, and so do not merit the protection of socialistic law. The result is that all feeling for legality is lost, and if this process goes too far, steps are taken to find a 'scapegoat'. It is highly unpleasant to be a scapegoat. One can get away with a great deal, only to find one is in danger of death for some really trifling offense. If the higher authorities of the S.M.A. had decided to put salutary measures into force under the pretext of harmless self-criticism, the situation must be pretty bad. And then some of the town commandants would be going before a military tribunal. Who would be the scapegoat? There was a distinct feeling of strain and nervousness in the hall.

General Bogdanov's calculation was sound. The lieutenant colonel's opening speech, which quite possibly had been arranged in

the S.M.A., was followed by a succession of recriminations. The commandants devotedly flung muck at one another, while the secretaries took down every word in shorthand. Finally it came to the generals' turn; the commandants of Dresden and Leipzig added their say. It was a rare sight to see a general standing like a schoolkid in the centre of the hall and making confession of his sins. And if he referred to his general's epaulettes and tried to justify his conduct a voice shot at him derisively from the presidium: "No mock, modesty, General. We're all friends here."

It revealed the mentality of a mass trained in absolute obedience.

If the order comes from above to confess their sins, they all confess. Those who cannot boast of past sins confess their future ones. The commandants expose their 'deficiencies' and swear to be good children in future, and pay attention to papa. For the papa in the Kremlin is always right.

Someone in the hall rose and addressed the presidium: "May I ask a question, Comrade General? It isn't quite to the point, but I'd like to have advice.'⁷

"Well, out with it. What's troubling you?" Bogdanov said in a friendly tone.

"My commandatura is right on the Czech frontier," the speaker began. "Every day a horde of naked people are driven over the frontier into my area. I've put them all into cellars for the t.,me being, we can't have them running about the streets like that, and I've nothing I can dress them in."

"How do you mean, 'naked'?" General Bogdanov asked.

"Just naked," the commandant replied. "Like newborn babes. It's shameful to see them."

"I don't understand. Where do these naked people come from?"
"They're Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia. The Czechs first strip them, and then send them across the frontier to me. They tell them: 'You came here naked, and you can go back naked.'
They're being transferred to Germany under the Potsdam Agreement. It's a joke for the Czechs, but it's a headache for me. What am I to dress them in, when my own men are going about in rags?"

"There's a bank in my town," another commandant added his bit. "The bank director and I have inspected the private safes in the strongroom. They contain a large quantity of gold and diamonds, a real mountain of valuables. I've ordered it all to be sealed up. But what'am I to do with it?"

It was characteristic that not one of the commandants complained of difficulties with the German population. They had no diversionist activities to report, or unrest. They were given much more trouble by their own men.

"The occupation machinery must be in control of the tasks set by our occupation policy," General Bogdanov told the assembly.

"We must maintain the prestige of our army and our country in

the eyes of the people of the occupied country. The commandaturas are the lowest link in our contacts with the German population."

After the conference there was a banquet for all who had been present. Major Kuznetsov, an officer of the S.M.A. Dresden, and I had a table in a window niche. The commandants had recovered a little from the unpleasant experiences of the conference and were trying to restore their lost self-confidence by relating their heroic deeds of wartime. In this they had much assistance from the unlimited amount of drink available. The officer of the Dresden S.M.A. looked round the hall and remarked to me:

"This reminds me of the Moscow Underground. The Underground's wonderful, but the people using it don't match it. Marble all round you, and hunger clothed in rags."

I asked Major Ruznetsov, who because of his position as adjutant was familiar with the general, procedure: "What do you think will happen to Major Astafiev and the others who have been censured?"

"Nothing !" he answered with a smile. "In the worst case, they'll be transferred to other commandaturas. Even professional rogues are needed. Besides, these dolts are genuinely devoted to the Party, and to such men much is forgiven."

I was surprised to hear the major and the other officer expressing their opinions so frankly. But the frankness was due to the remarkable atmosphere that prevailed in the Party and all over the Soviet Union after the war. Everybody had the feeling that they had won their freedom, they had come out victorious. The feeling was general, but it was strengthened in those who had contacts with the west and could observe the striking contrasts between the two worlds.

During our stay in Dresden General Shabalin was a guest of General Dubrovsky, head of the Administration for Economy of S.M.A. Saxony. Dubrovsky's villa had formerly been the residence of some big German business-man. It had a beautiful garden, and after the conference Major Kuznetsov and I walked about the garden for a time. While we were out there Misha, the general's chauffeur,

brought us an order that we were to go at once to General Dubrovsky's room.

There we found a rather different kind of meeting in progress. The two Soviet generals were sitting on one side of the desk, and opposite them were the German city fathers, the head of the German administration for Saxony, and the burgomaster of Dresden.

The burgomaster spoke perfect Russian, and until recently he had been a lieutenant-colonel in the Red Army. They were discussing Saxony's economic tasks under the occupation regime. This subject was disposed of with amazing ease. The burgomaster was not only an obedient executive, but a valuable adviser as to local conditions. We made no orders or demands; the burgomaster recommended efficacious measures, and we confirmed them.

Only once did the burgomaster clearly reveal any consciousness of his German origin. When the great shortage of pitprops came up for discussion General Shabalin proposed:

"There's plenty of forest around here, cut it down."

The burgomaster, the former lieutenant-colonel in the Red Army, clapped his hands in horror. "If we cut down the forests, in five years our flourishing land of Saxony will be a desert" he exclaimed. A compromise decision was come to, to look for other resources, and meanwhile to exploit the local forests.

The head of the German Saxony administration was only a figure-head; a member of some democratic party, he was a feeble creature, ready to sign any document without looking at it. At his back was our man, a German who yesterday had been wearing Soviet uniform, but today a hundred per cent German, a burgomaster. He shrank from no effort to extract as large an amount of reparations as possible. The 'class-enemy' had been displaced overnight, the other members of the population were paralyzed with terror, and our people worked under the guise of a 'new democracy'. Next day we drove to Halle, the capital of the province of Saxony. Here Shabalin met his old friend General Kotikov, head of the S.M.A. Administration for Economy at Halle. Later, General Kotikov acquired wider fame as the Soviet commandant of Berlin.

He was a very pleasant man, and a hospitable host.

At Halle there were similar- conferences to those at Dresden. First an intermezzo with the town commandants, and then General Shabalin checked up on the work of the new democracy. The local German leader had lived for fifteen years in Pokrovsky Street, in Moscow, so he and I were almost neighbors. He was even more assiduous in his task than his colleague at Dresden. General Shabalin had to dampen his ardor as he presented a long list of measures to be taken in the direction of socialization.

"Not so fast!" Shabalin said. "You must take the special features of the German economy and the transition stage into account. Put

your proposals before General Kotikov for consideration."
On our way back to Berlin there was an unforeseen delay: one of our rear tires burst. Our driver had neither a spare cover nor a spare inner tube, and not even repair materials. The general raged. Whatever happened he wanted to be in Berlin before nightfall. Apparently he had no great trust in the efficiency of the city commandatura.

Kuznetsov and I exchanged glances: we would have to do something to get hold of a tire, for in his fear Misha had lost all the powers of invention for which Soviet drivers are renowned. There was only one possibility: we would have to 'organize' a tire from a passing auto. Nowadays that was an everyday incident on the German country roads. We blocked the road according to all the rules of the military art, held up cars and submitted them to a thorough inspection. We found not one tire to fit our 'Admiral's' wheel. To the amazement of the people we held up, they were allowed to continue their journey. Our control post must have been an imposing sight: the general himself stood at our side, displaying his badges of rank.

After some time a remarkable procession of automobiles came slowly along: several covered lorries, painted in rainbow colours, and plastered with garish playbills. A traveling circus. Only a black haired Carmen was lacking to complete the scene. The picturesque column was closed by a jeep with an American captain at the wheel.

I tried to discover who was in charge of this show. But while I was wondering what language I would need to use in order to make myself understood, a modern Carmen jumped out of the jeep and addressed us in the genuine washerwoman's lingo of the Berlin district of Wedding. For a moment Major Kuznetsov and I forgot what we had halted all these lorries for. That flower from Wedding was devilishly beautiful. No wonder the American captain was risking the dangerous journey along the roads of the Soviet zone. For such a woman one would forget all Eisenhower's and Zhukov's regulations taken together.

We tore ourselves with difficulty from the enchanting view and began to examine the tires. Finally we came to the jeep.
"What about the jeep? Will its wheels fit?" Kuznetsov asked Misha.

"The holes fit. We'll limp a bit, but they'll get us home."
So the problem was solved. Soon we would have a supplementary

delivery on lend-lease account. In any case the jeep had a spare wheel: an unnecessary luxury.

I told Carmen what we wanted, and pointed to the jeep's spare wheel. The general mentally recalled the Potsdam agreement and the technique of intimidation. "Ask the American if he has a pass for the Soviet zone. And what he's driving in these parts for?"

But both the artiste and her patron were glad to get away so cheaply without any psychological pressure: a car wheel in exchange for violating the Potsdam Agreement and a journey through the Soviet zone! I made a note of the captain's Berlin address, so that we could return the expropriated wheel to its owner. Later I told Misha more than once to do so, but I fear the wheel got transformed into a bottle of vodka and found its way into his stomach. If the American captain should ever chance to read these lines, I express my thanks to him again and my apologies for the incident. Night was falling as we approached Berlin. The general grew fidgety and told Misha he was not to drive through the American sector on any account. He was to find a road through Rudow. That was easier said than done. Whichever way we turned, we found ourselves on roads running through the American sector, and so in the end we had to pass through it. The general flatly refused to take the normal route along the Potsdamerstrasse, and ordered Misha to wind his way through the southern suburbs until we reached the Soviet sector. Misha only shook his head. To have to travel through Berlin at night in the summer of 1945, and through unknown suburbs, was a difficult task.

The general was pulling the wool over our eyes. He could not have been seriously afraid of an attempt on our lives or some under hand design. There was no ban on Allies traveling through one another's Berlin sectors at that time. We had no secret documents with us. So, obviously, even on this occasion he was putting across some ideological bluff. Our auto crept slowly through the back streets. From time to time our headlamps picked out the figure of an American sentry. Or rather, figures, for they were always in pairs!

The gallant soldier blinked angrily in the powerful beam, but his lady-friend quickly got over her alarm and smiled. Needless to say, they had no suspicion that a Soviet general was gazing at them from the darkness of the car. Shabalin snorted; it was all further evidence of the moral degeneration of the American army. After long wanderings among the ruins and allotments of the Berlin suburbs, in the light of our headlamps we saw a yellow arrow with the inscription: Karlshorst.

The first post-war conference of the Big Three was held in Potsdam from 17 July to 2 August; it has gone down in history as the Potsdam Conference.

In thinking of the Big Three at the Potsdam Conference one is inevitably struck by a gap: the familiar name of President Roosevelt was missing. He had died only a few days before the victory to which he had devoted so much strength and energy. One may find some consolation in the circumstance that he did not have to witness the crumbling of his illusions, on which he had based all his plans for a new ordering of the post-war world.

During the conference Stalin went with the supreme representatives of the Western Allies on a car-tour of Berlin. One consequence of this trip was an order to the experts of the S.M.A. Air Administration to make a report to Stalin himself on the details of the Allied attacks on the city. The ruins of Berlin spoke more clearly than the newspaper reports and the statistics of bomb tonnage. As one drove through Berlin and saw the endless ruins, one might have thought that someone had shattered the enormous city with an equally enormous hammer. A comparison of the effects of the German air attacks on Moscow with the state of Berlin after the Allied attacks was provocative of thought. It was no casual interest that prompted Stalin to call for a special report.

While the Big Three were negotiating, the S.M.A. was going on with its work. One of the first Soviet measures to have a radical influence on the internal structure of German economy was Marshal Zhukov's Order No. 124. In this he decreed the confiscation of the vast wealth of former National Socialists and further, apparently quite incidentally, issued directions that preparations were to be made for the State to take over basic industries and for a plan of land

reform to be drawn up. The German authorities were not yet used to Soviet methods, and could not read between the lines. Order No. 124 contained no precise figures. It was packed with demagogic phrases and it conferred comprehensive powers on the German authorities. The German 'people', in the persons of their 'finest representatives', were themselves to draft the plan and present it to the S.M.A. for consideration and confirmation. Simultaneously with the issue of Order No. 124, General Shabalin was given secret instructions on how it was to be put into force. These instructions laid down the precise nature of the reforms whose formulation was ostensibly to be left to the German autonomous authorities.

I had more than one opportunity to see how the process of creating a land reform was carried through in General Shabalin's private office. A solid-looking Maybach auto drove up to the entrance of the Administration, and a colourless individual in civilian clothes got out irresolutely. He was the Landrat, by favour of the S.M.A. the head of a district administration, and one of the 'finest representatives' of the German people. In the general's waiting room he stood in a cringing attitude, his coat over his arm, a shabby document-case gripped under his elbow, his hat pressed against his belly as though to defend him against a blow. With an ingratiating smile he cautiously lowered himself into a chair and waited patiently for an audience.

At last he was summoned into the general's room. An interpreter explained to Shabalin the Germans' plan for land reform in the federal State of Saxony.

"What do they propose as the upper limits of land-holdings this time?" the general asked.

"One hundred to two hundred morgens, according to the individual case, Comrade General," the interpreter answered after a glance at the land-reform draft in his hand.

"Idiots! The third draft and still no good whatever! Tell him we can't agree to it."

The interpreter translated. The Landrat kneaded his document case helplessly between his hands, and began to explain that the proposed draft had been drawn up to secure the greatest possible economic advantages from the land, in view of the conditions of the State. He tried to explain the specific conditions of Saxony's agriculture, and said that under the hard conditions imposed by nature it was absolutely vital to observe a close constructive relationship between cattle-breeding, forestry, and agriculture. Then he dealt with the peculiar features of the thorough mechanization of German agriculture, a mechanization based on small farm conditions. He expressed a genuine desire to find the best solution to the problem raised by Order No. 124.

Even when it was not absolutely necessary that I should attend, I always tried to be present at discussions of this kind. On closer inspection, Germany's apparently planless economy proved to be organically so interlocked that it afforded a very interesting study for a Soviet expert. It was an exceptionally precise and complicated piece of mechanism, in which there was very restricted scope for

experiment. Frequently I saw the German experts throw up their hands in despair when the general gave them advice or submitted demands which would have perfectly fitted Soviet conditions in new planning or reconstruction. They exclaimed with one voice:

"That's equal to suicide."

And so it happened this time. The general played with his pencil, puffed thoughtfully at his cigarette, blew out the smoke in rings. He did not even ask for the German's arguments to be translated to him. He regarded it all as empty noise. When he considered he had given enough time to the matter he knitted his brows and turned to the interpreter:

"Tell him the plan has got to be revised. We must look after the interests of the German peasantry, not those of the large landlords." The general was a classic example of the Soviet 'official, who, being only an automatic executive organ, is incapable of considering argument put forward by the other side or of subjecting an issue to independent criticism. Yet he was deciding the whole economic future of the Soviet zone.

The German rose to his feet in consternation. All his arguments had been useless. The draft of the land reform would be subjected to many further revisions, until the 'independent' German proposal corresponded in every detail with the secret instructions which the general kept in his safe.

The land reform was not so much an economic as a political measure. Its object was the destruction of one of the strongest groups in German society, above all economically, and to create a new group in sympathy with the new regime. In the next phase, i.e., after the consolidation of the new regime, the first group would be physically destroyed, while the second would make acquaintance

with the formula so well known in the Soviet Union: 'The land to you, the fruits to us.'

I often felt sympathy for the Germans I met in General Shabalin's office. The majority were communists. In one way or another they had fought the Hitler regime, and many of them had suffered for their convictions. After the German collapse they welcomed us joyfully, some regarding us as their liberators, others as their ideological allies. Many came to see us because they wanted to work for the benefit of a future Germany. It goes without saying that

among them were the inevitable opportunists. Before any German was entrusted with any responsible position the S.M.A. subjected him to a thorough test of his political reliability.

As they regarded us as their ideological allies, they did not hesitate to express their views frankly. And then one saw all too clearly what a great conflict there was between the convictions and desires many of them possessed and the instructions they received from the S.M.A. The S.M.A. wanted silent executives, not equal partners. The time was bound to come when these men would be faced with a choice: either to carry out orders without protest and become obedient tools, or clear out and make room for others.

We had other visitors to the administration besides the German official authorities. The Scientific and Technical Department had some particularly interesting callers. Before the war the head of the department, Colonel Kondakov, had been head of the Department for Higher Military-Educational Institutions, a sub-section of the All-Union Committee for Higher School Affairs. He was an elderly and very cultivated man who knew his job and had much human understanding. One day Kondakov came up to me in the corridor. He had a look of despair on his face. "Gregory Petrovich," he said to me, "be a good sort and give me a hand."

"Why, what's wrong, Comrade Colonel?" I asked.

"Some German in my room's reducing me to despair. He's invented some devilish device and is offering it to us. He won't tell us the details, and we can't make any sense of what he's saying." In the colonel's room I found a fairhaired German; he introduced first himself then his young, doll-like wife to me.

"Well, what is it you've got?" I asked.

"First of all, Major, I must draw your attention to the fact that I am greatly interested in offering my invention to the great Soviet Union, where it will be used for the benefit of the toilers. . .

"Good, but what is it?" I interrupted as he paused for breath.

"I don't want my invention to fall into the hands of the Americans, though I know they'd pay me more. I don't like the imperialists. I'm a convinced communist and . . ."

"All right! We'll take that for granted," I interrupted again.

"What exactly is your invention?"

After an hour I was still no more able to make any sense of his

remarks than the colonel had been. He had invented some very mysterious motor with an incredible performance and many other attractive features. He gave us to understand that it would bring about a revolution in warfare, and assured us he had kept it secret for years at the risk of his life, because he didn't want the 'fascists' to use it to the detriment of humanity. He asked to be given the opportunity to carry on his work and prepare models. The trouble was that all his calculations, plans and models had been destroyed during the American bombing attacks. In exchange for our assistance he bound himself to place the patent at the service of the Soviet government.

I asked him to supply me with a list of the things he needed for his work. As though that was all he had been waiting for, he opened his case and handed me a statement which included all the desires of the heart: money, means of existence, even cigarettes, but none of the things which were necessary to an inventor of such a machine. He asked for a period of six months in which to carry it all through. I felt a strong desire to kick him out, and was sure he was trying the same trick on all the four occupation authorities. The colonel decided to give him a chance to justify his claims. But he muttered to himself: "You wait ! If you're trying to make a fool of me you'll find yourself in a cell."

Such characters were regular visitors to all our departments. But it goes without saying that the Scientific and Technical Department was chiefly occupied with more important work. The people it was interested in did not come to the S.M.A. of their own accord. Usually they had to be sought for and brought in.

The Scientific and Technical Department was really only a collecting and clearing point for the similarly named department attached to the Narcomvnudel. Colonel Kondakov sifted the incoming material, assessed its value, and passed it on to the cognate department of the Narcomvnudel in Potsdam, where highly qualified Soviet experts in all branches of science and technique were installed.

From which one can assume that Moscow had more faith in the Narcomvnudel than in the S.R.A.

The chief task of the S.M.A. Department was to search for brains. Moscow had a high estimation of German brains. So, for that matter, had the Western Allies, and consequently from the very first day of the occupation a bitter struggle went on between the western and eastern allies. At the capitulation, Thuringia and a large part of Saxony were in the hands of the Americans. Two months later, in accordance with agreements, this area was handed over to the

Soviet occupying authorities. During his inspection tours General Shabalin asked the military governors how far the S.M.A. order to seek out and register German experts had been carried through. U. was astonished and indignant at the rapid and thorough work which the 'damned Allies' had put in. During their brief stay in Thuringia and Saxony the Americans had mopped up all the cream of the German scientific and technical spheres. Outstanding scientists, valuable research laboratories, technical archives, were all carried off. Scientists who received instructions to be evacuated could take with them not only all the material they needed for their work, but whole establishments together with their scientific collaborators, . they thought fit. In this province the Soviet authorities found only comparatively unimportant lecturers and assistants. The Zeiss works at Jena were regarded as particularly valuable booty. But from Jena, too, the Americans had been able to withdraw all the leading technical staff. Zeiss could manage to carry on with the staff that remained, but it could not advance. The same applied to the research institutes in Dresden and Leipzig.

Another circumstance of great importance was the fact that the, majority of the leading German scientists had fled westward while the Red Army was advancing. And so the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, one of the greatest scientific institutions in the world, and of especial interest to Moscow, proved to be as useful to us as the ruin's Of the Colosseum.

To put up a good show to Moscow, the SMA. did its best to represent that the third-rate scientists who fell into. their hands were men of the utmost importance. Assistants in Messerschmitt's laboratory were declared to be his closest collaborators, The usual methods of Soviet leadership: the plan descended from above and sand was flung up from below.

On the plea that it was a necessary step to secure the peace, the S.M.A. sought all over Germany for military experts. Its representatives hunted assiduously for constructors of V2's, jet planes, and heavy tanks. And swarms of petty swindlers haunted the S.M.A. offices, offering their services in the perfection of deadly weapons.

Colonel Kondakov's assistant in the Scientific and Technical Department was a Major Popov. One day he and I were discussing the latest technical achievements of the air-arm, with particular reference to the Luftwaffe and the American Flying Fortresses, the B.29's. "We've got them now," he said casually. "You remember the papers reporting in 1948 that several Flying Fortresses went off their

course after a bombing attack on Japan, and were interned in the Soviet Union?"

"Yes, I remember," I answered.

"That was a really delicate affair," he commented. "And rather different from how the papers reported it. When the Forts were discovered over our territory a squadron of specially fast Soviet fighters was sent up after them. They overtook the Americans and signaled to them to land. The Americans had been ordered that they were not to land in any unknown area with Flying Fortresses.

The Forts were the latest achievement of American aviation technique, and they were a dead secret. In the event of a forced landing being necessary, the crews had orders to take to their parachutes and blow up their machines in mid-air. So the Forts continued to fly over the Siberian taiga without taking notice of our pursuit. The Soviet fighters fired a warning salvo with their rocket-guns, broke up the bomber formation and forced one to land on the landing ground at Khabarovsk. The crew was given a right hearty reception. But despite all attempts to persuade them, the Americans refused to leave their machine until an American consul had arrived. A consul wasn't to be found all that easily, but in the presence of the crew the whole machine was sealed up, from nose to tail. Our people solemnly stuck the seal in the American commander's pocket, and assured them that everything was in order, they could spend a couple of hours quietly in the Intourist hotel until the consul arrived. But while Intourist was entertaining the crew with all the pleasures of earth the cables between Moscow and Khabarovsk hummed with secret requests and answering secret orders. Planes loaded with the finest Soviet experts were hurriedly dispatched from Moscow. The Americans were persuaded, and where necessary forced, to spend the night in the

hotel, and meanwhile a feverish activity set in on the landing ground. The seals were removed, and the Soviet engineers, technicians, and constructors swarmed over the machine by the light of searchlights. I was one of the technicians sent to carry out the Kremlin's order 'to commit everything to paper'. We spent several days studying the bomber, while the American crew were kept interned."

The fact that a B.29 had landed in the Far East of Soviet Russia was reported at the time by Tass, and one could take it for granted that everything went as Major Popov declared. But, after discussing the difficulties of the job and the services he personally had rendered, he gave the story a more romantic ending:

"One of the members of the crew, who suspected that there

was something wrong somewhere, managed to get out of the hotel at night and make his way to the landing ground. There he saw what was happening to the 'sealed' machine. He returned and told his comrades. They had a short-wave transmitter which was to be used in emergencies, and they at once sent a code message to American headquarters. Meanwhile Washington and Moscow were engaged in a lively exchange of notes over the interned aircraft. By the time the crew's report reached Washington the Soviet technical brigade had done its job. The crew was escorted to the landing ground, and the commander was solemnly invited to convince himself that the seals had not been broken. Stalin sent an extremely cordial cable to President Roosevelt, informing him personally of the machine's release. A few minutes before the B.29 was due to leave, Stalin received a cable from the President: 'Accept the B.29 as a present from me.'

"When the Soviet pilots took over the gift in order to fly it to Moscow, they came up against unexpected difficulties. It was far from easy to get the gigantic craft airborne. So one of our best test pilots for heavy machines was specially sent from Moscow. After studying it for two weeks he managed to get it up and flew it safely to Moscow. For which he was awarded the title of 'Hero of the Soviet Union'.

"Several of the Central Construction Bureau attached to the People's Commissariat for Aviation In Industry were assigned the task of preparing the manufacture of this type of machine. The first test machines were ready by the last year of the war. A little later a number of aviation works in the Urals began serial production. Tupolev and the gifted designer Petliakov were entrusted with the creation of the Soviet 'Flying Fortresses'."

As time passed more people arrived to work in the S.M.A. On entering General Shabalin's outer office one day I saw a young woman leaning back in an armchair. She had one leg crossed over the other, a cigarette in one hand, and was conversing gaily with Major Kuznetsov. She left brilliant crimson traces of lipstick on her cigarette when she took it out of her mouth. She threw me a swift, appraising glance, then turned back to the major. There was something distinctive about her behavior, the exaggeratedly slovenly attitude, the way she took deep draws at her cigarette, the twist of her carmined lips. She was waiting to see the general. When she had gone in I asked Kuznetsov:

"Who is that beauty?"

"She's been an interpreter to one of the dismantling generals.

Now he's gone back to Moscow and the chief of staff has recommended her to our boss. Apparently she's to be his interpreter." And so Lisa Stenina became General Shabalin's interpreter, his private interpreter, as she always emphasized. She spoke German perfectly, was well educated, well read, and clever. And she had several other unusual qualities.

She used make-up far too much. Although she looked at least twenty-five, she maintained that she was not more than seventeen. And although all her documents referred to her as Elizaveta Yefimovna, she always introduced herself as Elizaveta Pavlovna. Yefimovna was plebeian, but Pavlovna sounded like a Pushkin heroine.

Lisa was not in the army, but she always wore an officer's coat with lieutenant's insignia over her silk dress, declaring she had nothing else to wear. Of course, that was sheer imagination: she wore the coat only for show. She had an unbridled tongue. And she was fond of discussing very delicate political questions. But above all she liked to impress. At every opportunity she mentioned that her sister was married to General Rudenko. If her audience failed to show any sign of interest, she added that General Rudenko was head of the Soviet Purchasing Commission in America. And if that didn't do the trick, she confided that he wasn't simply our trade representative in America, he was head of Soviet intelligence there.

Once she was absent from the office a whole day without

permission. She turned up in the interpreters' room late in the evening, but in a shocking state: terribly scratched, her clothes torn, her head bound up.

I was informed by phone of her arrival ten minutes before the close of office hours. I went to find out what had happened.

"Where have you been?" I asked her anxiously.

"A colonel invited me to go for a ride and took me into the forest. Well, and then"

"And then I suppose you made a fool of him," I surmised.

"Where's your cap?" someone asked.

"Lost," she answered, to convey all the seriousness of the situation from which she had emerged victorious.

"And have you lost nothing else, my dear Lisa?" I asked, in an assumed anxious tone. She gave me a devastating look.

"Now what are we to do with you?" I asked commiseratingly.

"As you're a lieutenant, you should be put under arrest for arbitrary absence from duty. What will the general say?"

"That's my concern;. you needn't worry about that, Comrade Major.

"Poor Lisa !" I sighed.

A day or two later Major Kuznetsov remarked to me casually:

"I hear you're always teasing Lisa. You want to be careful with her."

"But why?"

"Take my advice. Even the general's afraid of her. Give it a moment's thought. She hasn't been assigned to the general by chance. Understand?" He lowered his tone. "I tell you as a friend: don't play with fire."

Later on I learned rather more about Lisa Stenina and her past.

CHAPTER SEVEN

In The Control Commission

One afternoon General Shabalin sent for me. When I reported he handed me an invitation from American headquarters, asking him and his co-workers to take part in a conference at Frankfurt-on-Main to discuss the liquidation of the I.G. Farben Industry. "Take my car," he said, "and drive to Zehlendorf. Hand in the list of our delegation, and find out when the plane leaves. If there isn't a plane, obtain passes for us to use our cars for the journey."

It was five-fifteen when I arrived outside the American headquarters. 'Well, now I shall have to wait an hour for an interview,' I pondered. 'And I've got to see Eisenhower's economic adviser, but I haven't any letter of introduction, only my personal documents.'

I stopped the car at the gate and took out my documents. The American guard, in white helmet, white canvas belt, and white gaiters, raised his white-gloved hand in salute and seemed to be completely uninterested in my documents. To give some excuse for stopping the car, I asked him some meaningless question. Without speaking, he pointed to a board with an arrow and the one word: 'Information'. I drove past the Information Bureau slowly, and glanced back casually to see whether anybody was watching me. 'I'll find what I want, myself; it's a good opportunity to have a look round without trouble. I'll see what sort of fellows these Americans are. They may not pull me up at once. And if necessary I'll simply say I took the wrong way.'

I strictly ordered Misha to remain in the car and not stir a step. Who knows whether he might be kidnapped, and then I'd lose my head!

I went along a corridor. All the doors were wide open, the rooms were empty. Here and there German women cleaners were sweeping the floors. On each door was an ordinary tablet: 'Major So-and-so' or 'Colonel So-and-so', and the name of the department. What on earth did it all mean? Not a sign of security precautions. We Soviet authorities did not hang out name-boards on the doors to inform our internal and external enemies who was inside.

I felt a little uncomfortable, almost queer, with anxiety. As though I had got into a secret department by accident and was afraid of being caught. In search of the right room I looked at one

name plate after another and felt as though I was a spy going through the card index of an enemy General Staff. And I was in full Soviet uniform, too!

One of our officers had once told me there was no point in visiting an American office after five p.m. "After that they're all out with German girls," he explained, and I couldn't be sure whether his words expressed contempt or simply envy of American methods.

"They think anyone who sits in an office after office-hours doesn't know how to work or arrange his time."

'He was right,' I thought now. 'The Americans obviously don't intend to work themselves to death.' General Shabalin's working day really begins at seven in the evening. I suppose I must apply to "Information" after all.'

In the Information Bureau I found two negroes extended in easy chairs, their feet on the desk. They were chewing gum. I had some difficulty in getting them to understand that I wanted to speak to General Clay. Without stopping his chewing one of them called something incomprehensible through a small window into the next room. Even if I had been President Truman, Marshal Stalin, or a horned devil, I doubt whether he would have removed his feet from the desk or shifted the gum from his right to his left cheek. And yet 'Information' functioned perfectly: a sergeant behind the window said something into a telephone, and a few minutes later an American lieutenant arrived and courteously asked me to follow him.

In General Clay's outer office a woman secretary was turning over the pages of a glossy magazine. 'She'll probably put her feet on the typewriter too,' I thought, and prudently sat down at a safe distance. While I was wondering whether to remain silent or enter into conversation with the 'Allies', a long-nosed little soldier burst through the door leading to the general's room. He tore through the outer office and snatched his cap down from a nail, saying a few hurried words to the secretary.

'The general must be a bit of a martinet, if his men rush about like that,' I thought.

At that moment the soldier held out his hand to me and let loose a flood of words which overwhelmed my weak knowledge of English. "General Clay," the secretary said in an explanatory tone behind my back. Before I could recover my wits the general had vanished again. He wasn't a general, he was an atom bomb! All I had understood was 'Okay'; and that the necessary order had already been issued. And in addition, that here it wasn't at all easy to tell the

difference between a general and a G.I. The privates stretched themselves out with their feet on the desk while the generals tore around like messenger boys.

Another officer appeared at the same door, and invited me into his room. This time I prudently glanced at his tabs. Another general! Without offering me a chair, but not sitting down himself, the general listened to me with cool efficiency. Then he nodded and went out.

I looked round the room. A modest writing desk. Modest ink stands. A thick wad of newspapers. A number of pencils. Nothing unnecessary. A room to work in, not to catch flies in. When a writing desk adequate for General Shabalin's rank was required, all Karlshorst and all the booty warehouses were turned upside down. The inkstands were obtained specially from Dresden for him.

A little later the American general returned and told me, apparently on the basis of a telephone conversation, when the aeroplane would be ready. I had plenty of opportunities to see later on that where we Soviet authorities would demand a 'document' signed by three generals and duly stamped, the Americans found a telephone conversation sufficient.

I did not have to present the list of the Soviet delegation at all.

Here everything was done without resort to a liaison service, and without any counter-check by the Ministry of Internal Affairs ! The general handed me a packet of materials on the I.G. Farben Industry, so that we could familiarize ourselves with the tasks of the conference.

Next morning the Soviet delegation, consisting of General Shabalin, Lieutenant-Colonel Orlov, Major Kuznetsov, myself, and two interpreters, went to the Tempelhof landing ground. There
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the sergeant on duty explained that he had been fully informed concerning us, and spent a little time in phoning to various offices. Then he asked us to wait, as our plane would be starting rather later than arranged. I had the feeling that the Americans were holding up our departure for some reason. Machines rolled slowly on to the tarmac in the distance, but not one of them showed the least intention of taking us with it. The general swore, and, as he did not know whom to vent his anger upon, he turned to me. "What did they really say to you yesterday? Why didn't you get it in

writing?"

"I was quite clearly informed," I answered; "this morning at ten, the Tempelhof airground. A special machine would be waiting for us, and the airport commandant was notified."

The general clasped his hands behind his back, drew his head down between his shoulders, and marched up and down the concrete road outside the building without deigning to give us another glance.

To pass the time, Major Kuznetsov and I began to make a closer inspection of the landing ground. Not far away an American soldier in overalls was hanging about, giving us inquisitively friendly glances, and obviously seeking an excuse to speak to us. Now a blunt-nosed Douglas rolled up to the start. During the war these transport machines had reached the Soviet Union in wholesale quantities as part of the lend4ease deliveries; every Russian knew them. The American soldier smiled, said:

"S.47."

I looked to where he was pointing, and corrected him: "Douglas." He shook his head and said: "No ... no. S.47. Sikorsky ... Russian constructor

'Was it really one of Igor Sikorsky's designs?' I wondered. Sikorsky had been the pioneer of Russian aviation in the first world war, and the constructor of the first multi-engined machine, Ilya Mourometz. I knew that, like Boris Seversky, he was working in the field of American aviation, but I had not known that the Douglas was his job. It was interesting that Pravda hadn't taken the opportunity to make a big song of it.

The soldier pointed his finger first at the clock, then into the sky. he imitated a plane landing, and explained as he pointed to the ground: "General Eisenhower." pointed to the machine, and With his hand

'Well, if General Eisenhower's arriving,' I thought, 'that probably explains why we couldn't start.'

While we were talking to the soldier a machine grounded just behind us, and a group of cheerful old gentlemen poured out of it. Like a horde of children just out of school they surrounded General Shabahn and began to shake his hand so heartily- that you would

have thought it was the one thing they had flown from America for.

The general was carried away by their exuberance- and shook their hands in turn. Later it transpired that they had mistaken Shabalin for General Zhukov. Meanwhile, Lieutenant-Colonel Orlov had found out somewhere that these gay old boys were American senators, who were on their way to Moscow. He whispered this news into the general's ear, but it was too late. Shalbalin had already exchanged cordial handshakes with these sworn enemies of the communist order.

All around them, camera shutters were clicking. The senators seemed to get a great kick out of posing with General Shabalin, holding his hands. The general had little wish to be photographed in such compromising company, but he had to put a good face on it. He was quite convinced that all these photos would find their way into the archives of some foreign secret service, and thence into the archives of the Narcomvnuvel. And then the fat would be in the fire.

Major Kuznetsov asked Lieutenant-Colonel Orlov incredulously:

"But are they really senators?"

"Yes, and the very worst of them all, the Senate Political Commission," Orlov replied.

"But they don't look at all like capitalists." Kuznetsov still felt dubious.

"Yes, they look quite harmless; but they've got millions in their pockets. They're cold-blooded sharks," Orlov retorted. Evidently he regarded it as a mortal sin to have money in one's pocket. But then, he was a dyed-in-the-wool party man.

"So they're the lords of America, and they behave like that. Now if one of our ministers" Kuznetsov's reflections, were interrupted by the arrival of a column of closed cars which drove straight on to the landing ground. A group of Soviet officers stepped out. The gold braid on their caps and the red piping on their coats showed that they were generals.

"Now we're in for a parade !" Kuznetsov muttered. "That's

Marshal Zhukov and all his staff. We'd better take cover in the bushes."

General Shabalin seemed to be of the same opinion. He had not been invited to this meeting, and to be an uninvited guest of Marshal Zhukov was rather a ticklish matter. But his general's uniform made it impossible for him to hide behind others' backs.

In this hour of need the lively old gentlemen from America came to the rescue. With unreserved 'Hallos', friendly handshakes and back slappings, an unstrained, friendly atmosphere was created. "I like these senators !" Kuznetsov enthused. "They slap hands together like a lot of horse-dealers at a market. Great old boys !" He licked his lips as though he had just drunk to brotherhood with the American senators.

Marshal Zhukov, a medium-sized, thickset man with a prominent chin, always dressed and behaved with unusual simplicity. He took hardly any notice of the bustle all around him, but seemed to be waiting for the moment when they would come at last to business. Unlike many other generals who owed their career to the war, by all his bearing he clearly showed that he was only a soldier. It was characteristic of the man that, without any encouragement from official Kremlin propaganda, he had become known all over Russia as the second Kutuzov, as the savior of the fatherland in the second great patriotic war.

The airground grew more and more animated. Forces of military police in parade uniforms marched on. The servicing personnel hurried to and fro. A guard of honor took up its position not far from us.

A four-engined machine landed quietly. The swarm of autograph hunters suffered disillusionment: a double row of guards swiftly and thoroughly cut them off from the landing spot.

Major Kuznetzov looked at the guards and remarked: "Clean work! Look at those cut-throats. They must have been taken into the army straight from gangsterdom."

The first line of military police were certainly an impressive lot. They looked pretty sinister, even though they were cleanshaven. The second line might well have been pugilists and cowboys, mounted not on horses but on motor-cycles that made more noise than aeroplanes.

Meanwhile the guard of honour had begun to perform some extraordinary exercise. The men raised their arms shouldering and spread out as though about to do Swedish gymnastics. Decidedly inept and unmilitary by our standards. "It reminds me of operetta," Kuznetsov said to the lieutenant-general. "What are they doing

that for?"

Orlov waved his hand contemptuously. "Like senators, like soldiers! They're chocolate soldiers. Give them black bread to eat and they'd be ill."

"Are you so fond of black bread then?" Kuznetsov sneered. "Or are you simply concerned for the well being of your fellowmen, as usual?"

Orlov ignored the questions. He was attached to our delegation as a legal expert. Also, he was public prosecutor to the military court, and knew well enough what might be the consequences of talking too frankly.

General Eisenhower stepped out of the plane, wearing a soldier's greatcoat, the usual broad grin on his face. He greeted Marshal Zhukov. Then he signed a few autographs, asked where they could have breakfast, and took Zhukov off with him.

Hardly had the distinguished guests departed when the dispatcher announced that our plane was ready to start. Now we knew why we had had to wait so long.

A man in the uniform of an American brigadier-general addressed General Shabalin in the purest of Russian. Apparently he had learnt that we were flying to Frankfurt, and now he offered us his services. He spoke better Russian than we did, if I may put it so. He had left Russia thirty or more years before, and spoke the kind of Russian common in the old aristocratic circles. Our speech had been modified by the new conditions, it was contaminated with jargon and included a mess of new words.

I had no idea why Eisenhower and Zhukov were flying to Russia. The Soviet papers carried no official communique on the subject. A week later, as I was making my usual report to General Shabalin, he asked me., "Do you know why Eisenhower flew to Moscow?"

"Probably to be a guest of honour at the recent parade," I answered.

"We know how to be hospitable," the general said. "They entertained him with such excellent vodka that he sang songs all night. Arm in arm with Budionny. They always bring out Budionny as an ornament on such occasions." Apparently that was all the

general knew about Eisenhower's visit to Moscow; but he put his finger to his lips, then wagged it admonitorily.

Such small incidents clearly revealed the true position of the man who was deputy head of the S.M.A. He was really nothing but an errand-boy, and only by accident knew what was happening 'above'.

An American officer stepped into Major Kuznetsov's room. He thrust his cap in the hip-pocket of his trousers, then swung his hand up to his uncovered head in salute. After which he introduced himself in the purest of Russian: "John Yablokov, captain of the American Army."

Kuznetsov was a very intelligent man, but he was also a humorist and a bit of a wag. He replied to the American with: "Greetings, Ivan Ivanovich ! How do you do !"

The American Ivan Ivanovich seemed to be no greenhorn, and he did not allow the major's sneering smile to put him out. In fact, it transpired later that John Yablokov was one of those men who are the life and soul of the party. Either to please us or to show that, although American, he was a progressive, he rejoiced our ears with a flood of Russian oaths that would have brought down the Empire State Building. But that was later. At the moment Captain Yablokov had arrived on an official visit to invite General Shabalin to the first organizational conference of the Control Commission Economic Directorate. The general twisted the invitation and the agenda paper (both were in English) between his fingers. Trying not to reveal that English was all Greek to him, he asked: "Well, what's the news your way?"

A second American officer who had accompanied Captain Yablokov answered also in Russian: "Our chief, General Draper, has the honour to invite you to a . . ." He did not seem very well acquainted with the terminology of Red conferences, and was forced to fall back on the wording of the invitation: ". . . to a meeting, General." Now the general was seated comfortably in the saddle. He did not know English, but he knew the Stalinist terminology thoroughly. He gave the American the sort of look he had given subordinate Party officers in his capacity as secretary of the Sverdlovsk District Party Committee, and explained in a hortatory tone:

"We have to work, not attend meetings."

That was a standing Stalinist phrase, which all party officials used as a lash. But at this juncture it sounded rather rude. However, the general held to the principle that too much butter can't spoil any bread, and that Stalin's words can never be repeated enough.

I sat in a corner and enjoyed myself immensely. The general would be starting to give the Americans a lecture on party training next.

As was his habit in intercourse with foreigners, he observed the unwritten law never to trust one interpreter and always to apply the method of cross-examination, especially when the interpreter belonged to the other camp. While the Americans did their best to explain what they meant by a 'meeting', I, too, attempted to help. The general never liked being prompted, but he always snorted afterwards: "Why didn't you say so before?" So I tactfully observed:

"It's not really important, Comrade General. Let them hold their meeting and we'll work."

After we had settled a number of minor questions the Americans went back to their Chevrolet and drove home. Major Kuznetsov remarked: "But they could talk excellent Russian. The one with the little moustache looked like Douglas Fairbanks." The general pulled him up: "You can see at once what sort of birds they are. That fellow strikes me as Chinese. They're spies."

The general appeared to fathom the true nature of his future colleagues extraordinarily well! A few days later, during a talk, Captain Yablokov informed me quite frankly that he had formerly worked in the American secret service in China. He did not appear to think he was in any way betraying service secrets. If a Soviet officer had mentioned such a fact he would have been committing a serious breach of his duty.

Some days later we drove to the first meeting of the Control Commission; we went with the firm intention of working and not holding meetings. The Allied Control Commission had taken over the former Palace of Justice in Elsholzstrasse. The conference hall was almost empty, the delegations were only just beginning to assemble. I felt genuinely afraid that I would be exposed to ridicule: we had no interpreter with us, and I didn't know English too well.

When I mentioned this to the general he told me curtly: "You should know !" Another Party slogan, but it didn't make things any easier for me. Until the meeting was officially opened we relied on German, for all the Allies without exception could speak German more or less well.

When the general noticed that I was talking to French and English colleagues he barked at me as he passed: "You wait, Major, I'll cure you of your mock modesty! You and your 'don't know English'! Now you're talking away, even to the French, nineteen

to the dozen, but you never told me you knew French." It was hopeless to think of explaining. And the general would probably stick me in a corner to exercise control over the French interpreters too, as he had done with the Americans.

That, too, was due to the general's Party experience. It is a common thing in the Soviet Union for specialists and experts to dodge responsible posts. Gifted engineers, or former directors of large trusts and combines, get appointments as 'technical managers' to some small factory or a co-operative of war-wounded, which employs only five or six workmen. In such positions they are less exposed to the risk of being flung behind the bars as 'saboteurs', and so they keep quiet about their abilities and their diplomas. The Party officials are aware of this trick, and do their utmost to round up the 'pretenders'. And so even if you try to escape responsibility you're in the wrong: you're a 'passive saboteur'.

I breathed a sigh of relief when I discovered that the American and British delegations had first-class Russian interpreters. Another difficult problem for me was my uniform. I looked as though I had covered all the journey from Stalingrad to Berlin crawling on my belly. My uniform had been washed in all the rivers of Russia and Eastern Europe, the colour had faded from it completely; in addition, I was wearing ordinary military boots. Before we drove to the conference General Shabalin gave me a critical look up and down and snarled: "Haven't you got any shabbier clothes you can wear?" He knew quite well that I had left my good uniforms in Moscow as an iron reserve. Many of us took the view that, after all, the army wasn't a puppet-show, and in any case children -were running about naked at home. Onemanhadalittle sister, another a young nephew. Warm clothes or breeches could be made for them out of a uniform, and the kids would be hugely delighted:

"Uncle Gregory has fought in this uniform," the child would say, pointing proudly to the holes left by the pins of orders. I, too, had left several complete outfits in Moscow. In any case I would be getting the so-called 'Foreign Equipment' when I reached Berlin. Only I had overlooked the possibility that I would have to take part in meetings of the Control Commission before the new equipment arrived.

As our Administration for Economy developed its organization and activities, more and more men arrived from Moscow to work with us. Usually, deputies of the People's Commissars for the corresponding Moscow commissariats were appointed heads of the S.M.A. departments, which in practice were functioning as the ministries of the Soviet zone. One and all, these men were old

Party officials, specialists in the running of Soviet economic affairs. When they took over their new posts one could hardly avoid laughing: they were pure crusaders of communism.

In due course we were rejoiced at the sight of the newly appointed head of the Industrial Department, Alexandrov, and his deputy, Smirnov. They both wore squeaking, highlegged boots of Stalin pattern, which its creator had himself long since discarded. Above the boots they had riding-breeches of heavy overcoating material, and to crown this rigout they had dark blue military tunics dating from the period of revolutionary communism. At one time such attire was very fashionable among Party officials, from the local chairmen of Machinery-Tractor Stations right up to People's Commissars, for it was symbolical not only of outward, but of inward devotion to the leader. For a long time now the People's Commissars had been wearing ordinary European clothes, and one came across antiquated garb chiefly in remote collective farms. I can imagine what sort of impression these scarecrows made on the Germans; they were exact copies of the Hitlerite caricatures of bolsheviks.

It was not long before these over-zealous Party crusaders themselves felt -that their historical costumes were hardly suited to the changed conditions, and gradually began to adapt themselves to their surroundings. Later still, all the civilian personnel of the S.M.A. were dressed in accordance with the latest European fashions, and even with a touch of elegance. All the leading officials, especially those occupied in the Control Commission, received coupons entitling them to 'foreign equipment' corresponding with their position.

I stood at a window, talking to the head of the French delegation, General Sergeant. Our conversation was on quite unimportant subjects, and I prudently tried to keep it concentrated on the weather. Prudence was always advisable; this Frenchman might be a communist at heart, or in all innocence he might repeat our conversation to someone, and in the end it would find its way ... I knew too well

from my own experience how thoroughly our secret service was informed of all that went on among the Allies. When we Soviet officers working in the Control Commission discussed our impressions some time later I realized why we were all cautioned against talking with foreigners. A captain remarked:

"All these stories about spies are only in order to make us keep our mouths shut. It's to prevent our giving away other secrets." He said

no more; we didn't talk about those secrets even to each other.

The Control Commission session began punctually at ten o'clock. After settling the details of the agenda relating to the work of the Economic Directorate, the times of meeting, and the rotation of chairmanship, we turned to drawing up the agenda for the next meeting. The head of the American delegation, who was chairman at this first meeting, proposed that the first item on the agenda should be: 'Working out of basic policy for the economic demilitarization of Germany.'

The Potsdam Conference had ended the previous week; at the conference it had been decided to demilitarize Germany economically, so that restoration of German military power would be impossible, and to draw up a peacetime economic potential for the country. The decision was remitted to the Allied Control Commission to be put into effect.

The interpreters now translated the chairman's phrase into Russian as: '.Working out the policy of economic demobilization.' Another of those borderline cases in linguistics! The English formula had used the word 'policy'. The interpreters translated this literally into the Russian word 'politik', although the English word had a much wider meaning, and the Russian phrase for 'guiding principles' would have been a more satisfactory translation. At the word 'politik' General Shabalin sprang up as though stung.

"What 'politik'? All the political questions were settled at the Potsdam Conference!"

The American chairman, General Draper, agreed: "Quite correct, they were. Our task is simply to translate the decision into action, and so we have to lay down the guiding policy . . ."

The interpreters, both American and English, again translated with one accord: ". . . 'politik'."

General Shabalin stuck to his guns: "There must be nothing about politics. That's all settled. Please don't try to exert pressure on me.

"But it's got nothing to do with politics," the interpreters tried to reassure him. "The word is 'policy'."

"I see no difference," the general objected. "I have no intention of revising the Potsdam Conference. We're here to work, not to hold meetings."

That was the beginning of the first hour-long battle round the

oval table. Solely and simply over the awkward word 'policy', which General Shabalin was not prepared to see in the agenda or in the minutes of the meeting.

It was often said in the economic spheres of the S.M.A. head quarters that the Kremlin regarded the decisions of the Potsdam Conference as a great victory for Soviet diplomacy. The Moscow instructions emphasized this aspect at every opportunity. At the Potsdam Conference the Soviet diplomats won concessions from the Western Allies to an extent that the diplomats themselves had not expected. Perhaps this was due to the intoxication of victory and an honourable desire to recompense Russia for her heroic exertions and incredible sacrifices. And perhaps it was due to the circumstance that two new Allied representatives took part in the conference, and that President Truman and Mr. Attlee had not yet got to the bottom of the methods of Soviet diplomacy.

The Potsdam Agreement practically gave the Soviet Union the right of disposal of Germany. Its terms were expressed in very subtle language, and they were open to various constructions later on, whenever it seemed desirable. The task of the S.M.A. now was to extract full value from the advantages won by Soviet diplomacy.

"Nothing of politik ! " General Shabahn defended himself like a bear threatened with a javelin. And in all probability he was thinking: 'Do you want to send me to Siberia?' Once more the old reaction of even the highest of Soviet officials, not to do anything on their own responsibility and risk. One reason why all decisions are made from above.

Subsequently I myself saw that the American or the British delegation could change its decisions in the actual course of negotiations. But the Soviet delegation always came and went with previously formulated decisions, or else with red question marks on the appropriate document, which the general kept in a red document case always under his hand. At the Control Council he acted more like a messenger than an active partner. A question that arose in the course of discussion was never decided the same day, it was only

discussed. Then the general would return to his office and make direct telephonic contact that night with Moscow. Usually Mikoyan, a member of the Politbureau and plenipotentiary extraordinary for Germany under the Ministerial Council of the U.S.S.R., was at the Moscow end of the line. He was in effect the Kremlin's viceroy for Germany. And during those telephone conversations the decisions were taken, or rather the orders were issued, on which the Allied

delegations later broke their teeth.

Even at that first meeting with the Allies one could not help noticing a great difference between them and us. They welcomed us as joint victors and sincere allies in war and peace. Each of their delegations approached questions from the national aspect. And they considered that there could be no conflict of national interests or antagonisms among us victor powers, neither then nor in the immediate future, They assumed that this was a simple fact that must be as clear to us as it was to them.

We, on the other hand, regarded the 'Allies' as the opposing party, as enemies with whom we had to sit at the one table only for tactical reasons. We decided questions from the ideological aspect. The Allies believed that Marx and Lenin were dead. But now the shades of these two men stood behind us in the Control Commission conference hall. The Allies could not understand that? So much the worse for them! Generally speaking, the members of the delegations not only represented their state interests, but were also unusually typical representatives of their respective nations. Of course this doesn't mean that Dimitry Shabalin smoked the coarse Russian Mahorka tobacco or that William Draper chewed gum. Not, at any rate, during the sessions.

The American delegation was headed by the American director in the Economic Directorate, General William Draper: a thin, athletic figure, with angular, swarthy features—a lively and energetic man. When he laughed, he revealed the spotless white of strong, wolfish teeth beneath his black moustache. Better not put your finger between those teeth! He set the tone at the sessions, even when he was not in the chair. He had an abundance of the healthy energy peculiar to young, self-confident nations. I don't know how many millions General Draper really had in his pocket, I know only that General Shabalin remarked more than once: "Ah! A millionaire! A shark!" It would have been interesting to know what he based his remark on: his communist beliefs or the reports of our secret service.

The head of the British delegation and the British director of the Economic Directorate was Sir Percy Mills. A typical Briton. He gave off the smell of fog and Trafalgar Square. He wore a military uniform of thick cloth, with no insignia of rank. From the way everybody deferred to his opinion it was obvious that he was a recognized authority in the economic field. According to General Shabalin he was a director of the large British firm of Metro-Vickers. He was painfully cleanshaven; if he ever thought it necessary to smile, only the folds around his mouth came into action, while his eyes remained

fixed on his documents and his ears listened closely to his numerous advisers.

In the person of Sir Percy Mills, Great Britain worked hard, but always paid attention to the voice of its young ally and victorious rival, America.

At the conference table of the Control Commission the historical changes that had occurred in the world influence of the various great powers were very perceptible. Great Britain had played out her role, and now, with a pride born of self-confidence, was surrendering her place to the younger and stronger. As befitted a gentleman !

France was the reflection of all the greatness to be found in European culture. But only the reflection. Her representatives were the successors to Bonaparte and Voltaire, the contemporaries of Pierre Petain and Jean-Paul Sartre. Existentialism. How to keep one's head above water. The French director of the Economic Directorate, General Sergent, had nothing better to do than to maneuver as tactfully as possible, and not agree too completely with the West, nor be too much in opposition to the East.

The great Eastern Ally was represented by General Shabalin, a man who had a mortal terror of the word 'politik', and by Major Klimov, who simultaneously performed the duties of secretary, interpreter, and general adviser. The Soviet side could have been represented just as successfully by one man to act as a postman.

However, in those days I still naively believed that something was really being decided in those meetings. And, although we were armed to the teeth with communist theory, I felt really uncomfortable when I noted the large size of the other delegations and the sort of men who composed them.

'Nothing new in the West.' The Allies, as one man, clung to the word 'policy', while for three hours General Shabalin repeated:

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"Nothing of politik ... At the Potsdam Conference " In confirmation of his views he took a newspaper from his document-case and pointed to a passage underlined in red. Then his fellow-members in the commission also brought out newspapers and began to compare the texts. Truly, it was very interesting to take part in one session of the Control Commission; it was more interesting than the operetta. But to take part in them week after week was dangerous: one might easily have a nervous breakdown. Half a day spent in fighting over one word in the agenda for the next meeting!

The members of the other delegations looked more and more frequently at their watches. The Western European stomach is used to punctuality. At last even General Shabalin lost his patience and he officially demanded: "What is it you really want to do to me: violate me? Yes?" The interpreters wondered whether they had heard aright, and asked irresolutely, not knowing whether to regard his remark as a joke: "Are we to translate that literally?"

"Of course, literally," the general obstinately replied. Sir Percy Mills tried to indicate that he found it highly amusing, and twisted his lips into a smile. The chairman for the session, General Draper, rose and said: "I propose that we adjourn the meeting. Let's go and have some eats." It was difficult to tell whether he really was hungry or whether he was fed up with Soviet diplomacy. Everybody breathed more easily, and the sitting ended.

We departed as victors. We had won a whole week. The same night General Shabalin would be able to ask Comrade Mikoyan whether the word 'politik could be included on the agenda or not. While we were holding our meeting, the Special Committee for Dismantling, and the Reparations Department, with General Zorin at its head, were hard at work. The Allies would be faced with an accomplished fact. Okay! In the last resort each defends his own interests.

The Control Commission gave in, my first opportunity to get to know our Western Allies personally. During the war I had come across, or rather seen, many Americans and British in Gorky, and later in Moscow. But I had then had no official excuse for personal contact with them, and without the special permission of the Commissariat for Internal Affairs even the most harmless acquaintance, even a conversation with a foreigner, is sheer lunacy in the Soviet Union. True, there is no open interdiction, but every Soviet citizen knows exactly what unfortunate consequences are entailed by such thoughtless behavior. Give a foreigner a light for his cigarette in the street and you are hauled immediately before the Ministry for internal Affairs and subjected to strict interrogation. best. At the worst, one disappears into a Minvnudel camp, for 'spying', and thus one helps to fill out the labour reserve.

To stop all contact between Soviet people and foreigners, the Kremlin spreads the story that all foreigners are spies. So anybody who has a contact with a foreigner is also a spy. It's as simple as that.

One of the Soviet government's greatest achievements has been to raise lawlessness to a law, with all the paralyzing fear of 'authority' that follows from it. Every individual lives in a state of anxiety. The Kremlin exploits this mood as a highly effective means of training and guiding the masses. Not even the members of the Politbureau are free from it.

Once, after one of the usual fruitless debates in the Control Commission, Sir Percy Mills proposed that we adjourn, and then invited the members of the other delegations to lunch with him. General Shabalin went and rode with his British colleague. I had received no instructions whatever, so I got into the general's seat in our car and ordered Misha to drive immediately behind the one in which our chief was travelling. I entered Sir Percy's house with decidedly mixed feelings. All the guests left their hats and document cases on a small table or on the hallstand. The maid-servant took my cap from me, and held out her hand to take my document-case. I was at a loss to know what to do; it was the general's red case that

I was carrying. It had nothing of importance in it: just the minutes of the last sitting, which on this occasion had been sent to us by the British. I couldn't leave the case in the car, but to leave it on the hall table with the others would have been a crime against the State. Yet to take it with me looked rather silly.
awkward situation

General Shabalin himself, rescued me from my awkward situation.

He came across to me and said quietly:

'What are you doing here, Major? Go and wait for me in the car.'

I felt relieved, went out, got into our car, and lit a cigarette. A few minutes later a British captain, Sir Percy Mills' adjutant, came to the door and invited me in again. I tried to get out of it by saying I wasn't hungry, but he stared at me in such bewilderment that there was nothing to be done but follow him. As I entered the hall where the guests were waiting the general gave me a sidelong look, but said nothing. Later it transpired that our host had asked his permission to send the adjutant for me. The British are justly famous as the most tactful people in the world. I gave the document-case to the general. Of all the idiotic possibilities that seemed the most harmless. Let him feel a fool!

I stood at a great venetian window looking out on to the garden, and talked to Brigadier Bader. The brigadier was a real colonial wolf. Sandy, sunbleached hair and eyebrows, grey, lively eyes.

behind bleached eyelashes, a complexion dry with the tropical sun. According to General Shabalin's amiable description he was nothing less than one of the cleverest of international spies. And now I had the honour of chatting with this distinguished person. We talked in a mixture of English and German.

"How do you like being in Germany?" he asked.

"Oh, not bad!" I answered.

"Everything's kaput," he went on.

"Oh yes, ganz kaput," I agreed.

After disposing of German problems we turned to others. The summer of 1945 was unusually hot, and I asked:

"After the English climate, don't you find it very hot here?"

"Oh no, I'm used to the heat," he smiled. "I've spent many years in the colonies, in Africa and India."

I carefully avoided addressing my companion directly. What form of address was I to use? 'Herr'? That was rather awkward. To our ears 'mister' sounds contemptuous. 'Comrade'? No, for the time being I kept off that word.

Just then I noticed General Shabalin's eyes fixed on me. In all probability my chief was afraid the brigadier was already enrolling me as his agent. At that very moment a maid came up to us with a tray. Bader took one of the small glasses of colourless fluid, raised it to eye-level, and invited me to help myself. I put the glass to my lips, then set it down on the window-sill. While the brigadier had his eyes turned away for a second I threw the whiskey out of the window. Stupid, I know, but it was the only thing to be done. And the worst of it was that the general would never believe I had performed such a patriotic act. Whether flung down my throat or out of the window, that whiskey would be put to the debit side of my personal account.

An air of open cordiality and hospitality reigned in the room where we were waiting for Sir Percy Mills to take us to lunch. This international assembly felt no constraint in face of that variety of uniforms and babel of tongues. Only the Soviet delegate Kurmashev, head of the S.M.A. Fuel and Power Department, sat alone in his easy chair, one leg crossed over the other, and apparently suffering torments. He felt more uncomfortable than a missionary among

cannibals; he wiped the sweat from his forehead and looked again and again at the clock. When we were invited to the dining room he clearly heaved a sigh of relief. I am sure he would have been only too glad to talk to his neighbor, even if he had had to resort to sign language; he would have been delighted to laugh and toss off a couple of whiskies. But he was not a man like other men. He was the representative, and the slave, of communist philosophy.

At table General Shabalin sat on the right hand of his host, who conversed with him through an interpreter. His uniform gave him confidence and certainly more sureness than was possessed by Kurmashev, who was a civilian. But in his civilian clothes Kurmashev tried to show that he was completely indifferent to all that went on around him, and tackled his food with the utmost ferocity. It was no easy task to fill your mouth so full that you couldn't talk with your neighbors.

My chief smiled formally and forced out a laugh at Sir Percy's jokes. But for his part he made no attempt to keep the conversation going. No wonder the British think it difficult to talk to Russians not only at the conference, but even at the dining table. At one time we contemptuously called the English narrow-minded; now the boot is on the other foot.

I was sitting at the far end of the table, between Brigadier Bader and the British adjutant. As I chanced to look up from my plate I met General Shabalin's eyes gazing at me keenly. The longer the lunch continued the more the general eased his bolshevik armour plate, and finally he went so far as to propose a toast to our host.

But meanwhile he gave me frequent interrogative glances. Of course I knew the general was in duty bound to keep an eye on me. But I noticed that he was not so much watching me as attempting to decide whether I was watching him. He was firmly convinced that I had been set to watch over him. Kurmashev was afraid of the general, the general was on his guard against me, I distrusted myself. The higher one climbs in the Soviet hierarchy, the more one is gripped by this constant fear and distrust. And the one who suffers most of all from this remarkable system is its creator. When one observed how Soviet higher officials suffered from fear and distrust one lost all desire to make a Soviet career. General Shabalin had been unquestionably a much happier man when he was minding sheep or tilling the soil.

After lunch we all gathered again in the hall. Brigadier Bader offered me a thick cigar with a gold band, and wrapped in cellophane.

I turned it over curiously in my fingers. A real Havana Hitherto I had known them only from caricatures, in which millionaires always had them stuck between their teeth. With the air of an experienced cigar-smoker I tried to bite off the tip, but that damned cigar was tough. I got a mouthful of bitter leaf, and to make matters worse I couldn't spit it out.

"How did you like the food?" the brigadier asked genially.

"Oh, very good!" I answered as genially, carefully blowing the bluish smoke through my nose.

At that moment General Shabalin beckoned to me. I asked the brigadier's pardon, prudently stuck the cigar in a flower-pot, and followed my chief. We went out into the garden, as though we wanted a breath of fresh air.

"What have you been talking about with that...?" the general muttered, avoiding mention of any name.

"About the weather, Comrade General."

"Hm ... hm. . . ." Shabalin rubbed his nose with the knuckle of his forefinger, a trick of his during conversations of a semi-official nature. Then he unexpectedly changed his tone:

"I think there's nothing more for you to do here. Take a day off. Have my car and go for a drive through Berlin. Take a look at the girls"

He made a very frivolous remark, and smiled forcedly. I listened closely as I walked with him about the garden. What did all this condescension and thought for me mean?

"Call up Kuznetsov this evening and tell him I shall go straight home," was the general's final word as he went up the verandah steps.

So he had no intention of returning to the office today. There an the ordinary routine was waiting for him, to keep him as a rule in three in the morning. That was not compulsory, it was his duty as a bolshevik. He must be around in case the 'master' called him up in

the middle of the night. But now, after a very good lunch and a few glasses of wine, he felt the need to be a man like other men for a few hours at least. The comfort of the villa and the open cordiality of the company had had its effect even on the old Party wolf Just

for once he felt impelled to throw off the mask of an iron bolshevik, to laugh aloud and smack his colleagues on the shoulders, to be a man, not a Party ticket. And he thought of me as the eye and ear of the Party. So he was dismissing me on the pretext of being kind to me.

I returned to the house, picked up my cap as unobtrusively as possible, and went out. Misha was dozing at the wheel.

"Ah, Comrade Major!" He gave a deep sigh as I opened the door. "After a lunch like that, what man wouldn't like to stretch himself out on the grass and sleep for an hour or two !"

"Why, have you had some lunch too?" I asked in surprise.

"What do you think? I've eaten like a prince."

"Where?"

"Why, here. A special table was laid for us. Like in the fairy story.

And do you know what, Comrade Major?" He looked sidelong at me, with all the air of a conspirator. "Even our general doesn't have such good grub as I've had today."

After seeing Sir Percy Mills' house, I could not help comparing it with General Shabalin's flat. In the Control Commission the habit developed for the directors to take turns in inviting their colleagues home. The first time it was Shabalin's turn to issue the invitations he ignored the habit, as though he had forgotten it. The real reason was that he had no place to which he could invite the foreigners.

Of course he could have requisitioned and furnished a house in conformity with his rank. But he could not bring himself to do this on his own responsibility, while the head of the Administrative Department, General Devidov, simply would not do it for him, since under the army regulations such luxury was incompatible with the position of Soviet generals. The authorities had got to the point of providing special 'foreign equipment', but nobody had yet thought of suitable residences. Shabalin had exchanged his small house for a five-roomed apartment in the house where most of the workers in the Administration for Economy were accommodated. Nikolai, his orderly, and Misha, the chauffeur, had collected furniture and all sorts of lumber from all over the district for the apartment, but it

looked more like a thieves' kitchen than a general's home. It was impossible to receive foreign guests there: even Shabalin was conscious of that.

Once more, the contradiction between bolshevik theory and bolshevik practice. The Kremlin aristocracy had long since discarded the proletarian morals they still preached, and lived in a luxury that not every capitalist could afford. They could do so without embarrassment because their personal lives were secured from the people's eyes by several walls. The smaller leaders tended to follow the same course. The Party aristocracy, men like Shabalin, lived a double life; in words they were ideal bolsheviks, but in reality they trampled on the ideals they themselves preached. It was not easy to reconcile these two things. It all had to be done secretly, prudently, one had continually to be on guard. Here in Germany there was no Kremlin and no area forbidden to the public, here everything was comparatively open. And supposing the lords of the Kremlin started to shout!

At first General Shabalin had taken his meals in the canteen of the Soviet Military Council-in other words, in the generals' casino. But now Dusia, his illegal maidservant, was taking the car to the canteen three times a day and bringing the food home. Yet even in such circumstances the general could not invite any guests to his apartment, and visitors, especially foreigners, were not allowed in the canteen.

Even here, in occupied Germany, where we were not restricted by problems of living space or rationing, and where we could literally pick up everything we liked, even here we kept to our Soviet way of life.

A little later the S.M.A. staff accommodated itself to circumstances and solved the problem in the old Potiomkin fashion.' A special club was set up, in which the leading officials of the S.M.A. could hold receptions for their western colleagues. In each separate case an exact list of the proposed guests had to be sent in advance to the S.M.A. liaison service, to be carefully checked by the Narcom vnuvel, and to be countersigned by the S.M.A. chief of staff. Of course such a simple form of invitation as that of Sir Percy Mills-"come and have lunch with me, gentlemen", and including even the chauffeurs-was quite impossible in such circumstances.

11 Prince Gregory Potiomkin, favorite of Empress Catharine, who organized show-places and even 'model villages' to impress the Empress.-Tr.

During those early meetings with the Western Allies I was

seriously afraid that I would be asked too many questions that I could not, or rather that I dared not, answer. But the longer I worked in the Control Commission the less was I able to understand their behavior. The representatives of the democratic world not only made no attempt to ask us political questions, as I had thought was simply bound to happen when representatives of completely opposed state systems came together, but they displayed a perfectly in comprehensible indifference to the subject.

At first I thought this was out of tactfulness. But then I felt sure it must be due to something else. The average western man was far less interested in politics and all that goes with it than the average Soviet man. The men of the West were much more interested in the number of -bottles of champagne that had been drunk at a diplomatic reception in the Kremlin, and in the evening gown Madame Molotov had worn on the occasion. This was in the best case, but usually they confined their interests to sport and the beautiful girls on the covers of magazines. To any man living in normal conditions this seemed perfectly natural. If the Soviet men could have chosen they would have done the same.

At that stage the West had no idea of the extraordinary dichotomy of Soviet existence. In thirty years we have changed fundamentally, to a certain extent we are Sovietized. But while becoming Sovietized we have simultaneously become immunized against communism.

The West has no suspicion of this. It is with good reason that the Politbureau has begun to underpin the Soviet edifice with the old national foundations, which proved themselves so well during the war. After the war the process of giving the rotting state organism a blood transfusion was continued. The method will doubtless meet with success for a time; it will confuse some and arouse illusory hopes in others. But the Kremlin's plans will not be modified to any extent.

A small but characteristic example: in occupied Germany all the Russian soldiers and officers suddenly began to use the word 'Rossiia'-'Russia'. The movement was quite spontaneous. Sometimes out of habit one would let 'U.S.S.R.' slip out; but it was corrected to 'Rossiia' at once. We ourselves were surprised at this

fact, but it was so. Yet for twenty-five years anyone who used the word 'Rossiia' was liable to be accused of chauvinism, and quite possibly to be charged under the corresponding article of the Narcomvnudel code. One could not help noticing this seemingly small detail when one found the word 'Rossiia' coming to every soldier's

lips. Unconsciously he was emphasizing the difference between the concepts 'Soviet' and 'Russian'. As though in spite, the foreign press confused these concepts. What we ourselves couldn't stand they called 'Russian'; all that was dear and precious to us they described as 'Soviet'. The Soviet people neither wish to nor do they need to teach foreigners their political ABC. Why risk one's head simply to satisfy a stranger's idle curiosity

How constrained Soviet people feel in intercourse with 'foreigners' is shown by the following incident.

One day, during an interval in the sittings of the Control Commission, several members of various delegations were discussing what they would like to do on the following Sunday. Kozlov, the chairman of the Soviet delegation in the Industrial Committee, let slip the unwise admission that he was going hunting with a group of colleagues. Kozlov's foreign colleagues were enthusiastic at the idea of spending a Sunday all together, and said they would gladly join the party. Kozlov had to behave as though he were delighted beyond measure.

On the Sunday the hunters set out in several cars. During the journey the Soviet members of the party racked their brains over the problem of how to give their Allies the slip. But the need to show some courtesy, plus the excellence of the western cars, gave Kozlov no chance of getting away from his unwanted friends. At the rendezvous the Allies got out and lay about on the grass, with the idea of having a little snack and a little chat. To avoid this, Kozlov and the other Russians slipped off through the bushes, and wandered about the forest all day, cursing Fate for pushing such politically unreliable companions on to them.

In order to secure himself against the possibility of being reprimanded, Kozlov spent all the following week cursing and swearing to other members of the Administration for Economy about his bad luck, and carefully emphasizing his own 'vigilant' conduct.

We could not enter freely into intercourse with the West. But what was the West doing to obtain information on Soviet problems?

I had several opportunities of observing how the West obtained knowledge of Soviet Russia from 'reliable and competent' sources.

Those sources were usually journalists. The Americans and British journalists went to great trouble to get together with their Soviet

colleagues, for they were convinced that these colleagues could and would answer their questions exhaustively and truthfully. Naive fellows ! One can no more expect truth from a Soviet journalist than chastity from a prostitute. The American journalists in Berlin tried hard to get together with their Soviet brothers, free of constraint. But the Soviet journalists did their best to avoid any such meeting. Finally it had to be arranged: they had to invite the foreigners to their Press Club. It was at least a step forward that the Americans took the opportunity to ask questions which even the very adroit Soviet journalists could not easily answer. All they could do was keep their mouths shut. It was also very good that the Americans gradually realized the true meaning of 'Narcomvjaudel'; they thought their Soviet colleagues were victims of the Na-rcomvnudel and were ringed about with spies, and that a dictaphone was built into every desk. Of course it would have been even more sound to assume that their hosts were themselves Narcomvnudel agents. My experiences in the college had taught me that all the Soviet Union's foreign correspondents were co-worker,⁴ of that organization. The Americans took their Soviet colleagues' silent reserve as indicating their anxiety. This was pretty near, but not quite, the truth. Once the Americans even raised the subject of the 'Soul of the Soviet Man', but they made the mistake of discussing the soul as such. The Soviet soul is a function of the Soviet reality, it cannot be analysed in isolation from its milieu.

Our work in the Control Commission was very instructive. From the very first sittings I realized that the widely held view that a diplomat's life is easy and carefree was false. In reality it is a devilishly hard, or rather a tedious, occupation. One needs to have the hide of a hippopotamus, the sensitiveness of an antelope, nerves of manila rope and the endurance of a hunter. An English saying has it that it is the highest achievement of good manners to be bored to death without showing it. Now General Shabalin gave his colleagues extensive opportunities to demonstrate the truth of this remark. It was astonishing to see how earnestly earnest people could struggle for hours and days on end with an insoluble problem before they would admit that it was insoluble !

In selecting their diplomats the British act on the principle that the least suitable of all candidates is one who is energetic and stupid; one who is energetic and clever is not very suitable, and the most suitable of all is a man who is clever and passive. The British prefer to be slow in drawing the right conclusion, and they fear nothing more than precipitate, unsound decisions.

This same rule applies to Soviet diplomats, only in reverse. The

ideal Soviet diplomat must be exceptionally energetic and exceptionally stupid. He needs no intelligence, as he may not take any independent decisions in any case. On the other hand, energy is a quality needed by every commercial traveler, whether it is razor blades he is trying to sell, or his master's policy. General Shabalin was an outstanding example of this type of Soviet diplomat. For that matter, all Soviet diplomats are distinguished by their enormous activity. The Kremlin can be charged with anything rather than passivity.

Our first encounters in the Control Commission were quite educative. Despite my sceptical attitude to the policy of the western powers, I could not help reaching the conviction that they were genuinely anxious to work together with us for the solution of post-war problems. The creation of the United Nations Organization testified to the western democracies' desire to secure peace to the world. Outwardly, we, too, gave out that we were interested in the same thing and wanted to take the same road. But the very first practical measures proposed indicated that the opposite was the truth. Our readiness for collaboration on the problem of world peace was nothing but a tactical maneuver with the object of maintaining the democratic mask, winning time for the reorganization of our forces, and exploiting the democratic platforms in order to sabotage world public opinion. The very first sittings of the Control Commission opened my eyes to all this.

I recalled Anna Petrovna's remark which had so astounded me when I was in Moscow. From her words I could only deduce that the Kremlin was thinking of active operations for the Soviet fighting forces in the post-war period. Yet it seemed absurd to think of any kind of war plans when we had only just ended terrible battles, and all the world wished for nothing more urgently and passionately than peace. Now, after those first sittings of the Control Commission it was clear, to me at least, who was neither diplomat nor politician, that the Kremlin had not the slightest desire to collaborate with the democratic West.

The representatives of the western democracies racked their brains to find an explanation for their eastern ally's extraordinary conduct. They sought persistently for a modus vivendi with the Kremlin. They sought a key to the enigma of the soul of the East, they turned over the pages of the historical tomes; but it never occurred to them to study the million-copy editions of Lenin's and Stalin's works. They attached too much importance to the dissolution of the Comintern. They are not acquainted with the winged words by which the Soviet leaders justify their every deviation from the Party general line: "A temporary deviation is completely

justified if it is necessary for reorganization and the accumulation of new strength for the next advance." The inflexible general line can wind like an adder.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Fruits of Victory

The B.M.W. car works in Eisenach was one of the first large industrial plants in the Soviet zone to receive the S.M.A.'s permission to start up production again. It at once began to work at high pressure, turning out cars for reparations deliveries and for the internal needs of the S.M.A. The new car park at Karlshorst consisted exclusively of B.M.W. machines. In addition, heavy motor-cycles were supplied for the Soviet occupation forces.

The Potsdam Conference had made a number of decisions concerning the demilitarization of Germany, and, with the active participation of General Shabalin, the Allied Control Commission drew up regulations strictly forbidding German industry to produce any kind of military or para-military material. Meanwhile, the same General Shabalin placed definite orders with the B.M.W. works for the delivery of military motor-cycles. But of course motor-cycles are only small items.

The representatives of B.M.W. Eisenach managed to get their agreement with the S.M.A. at Karlshorst settled unusually quickly; other firms offering their products against the reparations account hung about the place for days and weeks on end before they got any satisfactory answer. But the B.M.W. board were more than usually resourceful in their methods.

A few days after Shabalin had signed the licence for the Eisenach firm to start up, I was looking through his morning post. Among other items I noticed a B.M.W. account for some 7,400 marks, debited to Shabalin, and relating to payment for a car 'which you have received through our representative'. The account was stamped 'paid in full'. I threw Kuznetsov an interrogative glance, but he pretended to know nothing about the matter.

Next day, as I was crossing the yard of the house where Shabalin had his apartment, I saw Misha at the door of the garage. He was polishing a brand-new car, so new that it was not yet registered, shining in splendor in the dark garage.

"Whose car is that?" I asked in amazement, knowing that the general had no car like it.

"Ah, you'll see!" Misha answered evasively, quite unlike his usual garrulous self

When I noticed the checkered marque of the B.M.W. firm on the radiator I realized what had happened. The board had made the general a little 'present'. The 7,400 Reichsmarks were a fictitious purchase price. And the general had ordered his adjutant and chauffeur to keep their mouths shut, just in case.

Already during the advance into Germany General Shabalin had 'organized' two cars, and with Iffisha's help had sent them back home, together with three lorries loaded with 'trophies'. In Berlin he made use only of the two service cars at his disposal, and did not make a single journey with his new B.M.W. Shortly afterwards Misha dispatched the B.M.W. also to Russia, together with two more lorries. Naturally, not against reconstruction or reparations accounts, but strictly privately, to the general's home address. So now he had three private and two service cars. He exploited the service machines, and spared his own, shamefacedly keeping them quiet. In this respect the general was as thrifty as a usurer.

At first it did not occur to me to provide myself with a car. But later, when I saw how others were adapting themselves to local conditions, I thought it wouldn't be a bad idea. It was easy enough to buy one, but it was much more difficult to get 'permission to possess a private car'. Such permission was issued by the head of the S.M.A. Administrative Department, General Demidov. General Demidov was subordinate in rank to General Shabalin, so I decided to sound Shabalin first. If he agreed, all he had to do was to phone up Demidov and the matter would be settled. I wrote out the requisite application and laid it before the general at the close of my usual service report,

"Hm! What do you want a private car for?" the economic dictator of Germany asked, rubbing his nose with his finger knuckle, as was his habit.

The Soviet leaders take good care to see that the privileges they themselves enjoy should not be too easily acquired by others. Even if an American, even if General Draper himself, applied personally to Shabalin, he would decide that the applicant had 'No need whatever of a car'.

"Wait a little longer. At the moment I haven't time to deal with it," he said as he handed back the application.

I knew it would get more and more difficult to obtain the requisite permission. But I also knew that no situation is insoluble; at the worst it was simply that one did not find the solution. 'You must howl with the wolves' is one of the chief commandments of Soviet life.

I had a strong suspicion that the general's refusal was due only to his caution. He did not wish to run the risk of being charged with lack of bolshevik vigilance in allowing his subordinates to grow accustomed to 'capitalist toys'. He may have had that same feeling when he 'organized' his own trophies, but the un-communist vestiges of desire for personal gain had overcome his fear. I decided to approach the question from a different angle.

"Do you give me permission to apply to General Demidov, Comrade General?" I asked in a casual manner.

"Why not? Of course you can," he readily answered. So my assumption was confirmed. The general was not prepared to give his signature, but he had no objection to someone else taking the responsibility.

General Demidov knew quite well that I was one of General Shabalin's personal staff. In approaching him I could exploit the element of surprise. The next day, with a self-confident air I laid my application on the desk of the head of the Administrative Department. "By General Shabalin's permission," I said as I saluted.

Demidov read the application, assuming that it had already been sanctioned by Shabalin. In such circumstances a refusal would seem like opposition to a superior officer's order.

"But aren't four cylinders enough for you?" He knitted his brow as he looked through the car documents. "Six cylinders are forbidden to private individuals."

Demidov was well known as capable of haggling- all day with the utmost fervour over ten litres of petrol, though he had thousands of tons of it in store. In order to get the illegal extra two cylinders I invited him cheerfully: "Then ring up General Shabalin, Comrade

General." I knew Demidov would never do anything so stupid. And, in any case, Shabalin had gone out, and was unobtainable.

"Oh well" Demidov sighed as though he were committing a crime.

"As Shabalin's agreed . . ." He countersigned my application, stamped it, and handed it back to me with the words: "But don't break your neck."

This was a great achievement. Later on many officers spent months trying to get permission to own a private car, but had to go on being content with the trams.

Quite early on I was warned always to go on foot in Karlshorst, and to look in every direction before crossing a street. In fact, there were more traffic accidents in Karlshorst than in all the rest of Berlin. Normal traffic regulations were modified to quite an extent by the drivers themselves, or rather, by the men at the wheel. Lorries always had priority, because of their tonnage. The logic was unusually simple, and dictated by life itself: the one likely to suffer most damage in a collision should always give way. Not for nothing was Karlshorst called the 'Berlin Kremlin'. The rules of the game were the same.

However, generals' cars introduced a controversial note into this 'traffic regulation', and frequently the conflict between tonnage and prestige ended in crushed radiators. Then the glass of smashed headlamps scrunched underfoot at the street crossings, and the more inquisitive studied the nearest trees and fences in an attempt to reconstruct the details of the accident from the torn bark and twisted railings. The safest way of traveling through Karlshorst was in a tank.

The drivers generally, ordinary soldiers most of them, were genuinely annoyed at the fact that generals' cars bore no distinguishing marks. How were they to know who was sitting in the car: some snotty-nosed lieutenant or a high and mighty general? You see, there was an unwritten law, strictly observed, that nobody had the right to overtake a general's car.

I remember an incident that occurred once when I was driving with General Shabalin from Dresden to Berlin. We were traveling along a narrow country road lined with apple-trees when a speedy little D.K.W. flitted past right under the nose of our weighty Admiral. The officer driving it did not deign even to glance at us. Misha looked interrogatively at Shabalin, sitting beside him. Without turning his head the general curtly ordered: "After him and stop him!"

As a rule Misha was not allowed to drive fast because the general suffered from gastric trouble; now he did not need to be told twice. In anticipation of the pleasure that he could experience so seldom he stepped so violently on the gas that the general pulled a face. Not in the least suspecting the fate that threatened him, the unfortunate driver of the D.K.W. took up the challenge: he stepped on it too. After some minutes spent in furious pursuit the Admiral drew ahead and began to block its rival's path. To give the maneuver an impressive touch the general stuck his head with his gold-braided cap out of the window, and shook his fist. The effect was terrific: the

D.K.W. stopped with a jerk some thirty yards behind us, and remained at a standstill in expectation of the thunders and lightnings about to be let loose.

"Major, go and give that blockhead a good punch in the mug," the general ordered me.

I got out to execute the order. A lieutenant was standing beside the D.K.W., fidgeting nervously. In a state of consternation, he tried to make excuses for his behavior. I took a cautious glance back and saw the general watching me from our car, so I let fly a volley of curses at the unlucky officer. But I was astonished to observe that he was far more frightened than the incident justified. So, as I was running a keen eye over his papers, I glanced inside his car. From the depths of it a German girl stared back at me, her eyes filled with tears. That explained the officer's fright: this might cost him his tabs, for acquaintance with German girls was strictly forbidden. I gave him a searching look. He stood like a lamb awaiting the slaughter. I placed myself with my back to our car and said in a very different tone: "Hop it as quick as you can!"

When I returned to our car the general greeted my cheerful face with an irritable look and muttered: "Why didn't you knock out his teeth for him? And you're a front-fighter!" To appease his injured dignity I replied: "It really wasn't worth it, General. You'd already given him such a fright that he'd got his breeches full." "You've got a long tongue, Major. You're always finding excuses for getting round my orders," he grumbled, and nodded to Misha.

"Drive on. But not so fast!"

Accustomed as I was to traffic conditions in Karlshorst, and especially after I had repeatedly had to drive on to the sidewalk to avoid a pursuing lorry, I found driving through other parts of Berlin a queer experience. I was out of my element. Even along the main street you drove at a reasonable speed, and you stepped politely on the brake when a huge American truck shoved its nose out of a side street. A truck that size driven by a Russian would never have given way even to the marshal himself. But the stupid American shoved on his pneumatic brakes that groaned like an elephant, and waved his hand from his superior height: "Drive on." Wasting his gas like that! He didn't understand the simplest of traffic and other rules: 'If you're the stronger you have priority'.

The numbers of victims of car accidents rose threateningly. Marshal Zhukov was forced to resort to draconian measures. When a Mercedes in which General Kurassov, the first chief of staff of the S.M.A., was driving was smashed up at a Karlshorst crossing there was a furious

development of car inspections. Next day all the street crossings were decorated with red 'prohibited' signs, traffic lights, German traffic police and motor-patrols from the Soviet Military-Auto mobile Inspection. It was more confusing to drive through Karlshorst than through a virgin forest.

The problem of guarding the Soviet citizens against the corrupting influence of the capitalist West caused the Soviet authorities in Germany many a headache. Take cars again, as an example. According to Soviet dogma a private car is a bourgeois luxury. As a rule there were to be only service cars, put at the disposal of those whom the State deemed worthy of them because of rank and position. Exceptions were few and of no importance, being made chiefly for propaganda purposes. But the time of vulgar equality and brotherhood was long past. Now we had scientific socialism. He who learned his lesson well had had a service car for a long time already. But then a struggle set in between the 'capitalist vestiges in the communist consciousness' and the Soviet dogma. Despite thirty years of 're-education', those 'capitalist vestiges' proved to be extraordinarily tenacious and, when transferred to other conditions, flourished again in all their beauty.

In 1945 every Soviet officer in Germany could buy a car at the price of a month's pay. In this case the policy of 'control through the rouble' was ineffective. So the authorities had to resort to other methods. Patrols of the Military-Automobile Inspection, armed to the teeth, combed out all the yards in Karlshorst, and searched the garages and cellars for cars whose possession was not 'licensed'. Documents showing that they had been acquired quite legally made no difference whatever. Anyone could buy a car, but who would drive it

was another matter. By such radical methods officers were deprived of cars that they had purchased officially and quite regularly, but for which they had failed to obtain a licence. They had to deliver their cars to the State, or have them confiscated. Expropriation as a method of socialist education!

In 1945 any officer holding the rank of major or higher could venture to apply for permission to own a private car. From May 1946 onward only officers of colonel's or higher rank were allowed to apply, and this practically amounted to a ban on all officers. The Germans could come to Karlshorst in their cars and call on you. But the Soviet officers often had to use streetcars when visiting Germans. "I've left my bus round the corner" was the usual formula in such cases.

The golden days of 1945, when the Soviet western frontier was practically non-existent, were now part of the legendary past. The majority of the champions of private property, who had nursed the hope of showing off in their 'private' cars in their home towns, and of traveling on their own horse-power all the way from Berlin, through Poland, to the Soviet Union, had their secret wish-dreams shattered: on reaching the Soviet frontier they had to leave their cars behind, and to drag their heavy cases to the train. The import tax on a car greatly exceeded its purchase price. It might have cost 5,000 Reichsmarks, the equivalent of 2,500 roubles; but the customs authorities fixed the tax according to the purchase price of the corresponding Soviet machine, i.e., between 10,000 and 12,000 roubles, and then imposed a tax of 100 to 120 per cent of this hypothetical purchase price. Of course nobody had such a large sum in his pocket. His fellow-travellers in the train consoled the sinner thus being brought back to the Soviet fold: "Don't worry, Vania. It's better so.

It only saves you further trouble. You think it out. Supposing you arrive in Moscow. Before you can dare to register the car you've got to have a garage built of brick or stone, and you yourself will have to live in a timber house with accommodation of nine square yards per soul. And you'd never get a licence for purchasing petrol, and buying it on the side means either bankruptcy or the clink."

An obviously highly experienced individual poked his head down from the upper berth of the sleeper, and rubbed balm into the la ' te car-owner's soul: "You thank your lucky stars you've got out of it so easily. There was a demobilized captain in my town-he brought back a wonderful Mercedes with him. And what happened? He's likely to be a nervous wreck for the rest of his life. He was just an ordinary sort like you or me, not a district Soviet chairman, and not an active worker. And suddenly this quite ordinary sort of individual goes driving around in an elegant automobile. All the local leaders were peeved. And they put their heads together to think up a way of swindling the Mercedes out of him. And then he had had it. Somewhere in the district a cow was run over by a train, and he was summoned before the public prosecutor: 'Why did you kill that cow?' Somewhere a bridge collapsed with old age; he was called to the court again: 'What did you smash that bridge for?' Whenever some misfortune happened in the district he was charged with it:

'You did it with your auto!'

"At last this comedy began to get him down, so he decided to sell his car. But that wasn't so easy: nobody would buy it. After much worry and trouble he arranged with the head of the local

Machilie-Tractor Station to exchange the car against a calf and a few sacks of corn from the next harvest. But then the Party Central Committee issued a regulation 'Concerning the Squandering of the Property of Collective Farms and Machine-Tractor Stations'. The head of the Tractor Station was arrested for his past sins, and the captain didn't dare say a word about the calf and com he was owed. So you see how that sort of game ends? Of course you'd have been wiser to sell your car and get drunk on the proceeds. But you can't foresee everything."

After this story the car-owner felt greatly relieved, and began to think he'd been rather clever to leave it at the frontier. He even started to argue that under socialist conditions the non-existence of a car was an advantage. "Yes, you're right," he remarked. "It's only unnecessary trouble. In Germany, if your car goes wrong even on a country road, you've only got to whistle and a German jumps out of the nearest bush and puts it right for you. But in Russia you could have a breakdown in the middle of a town and you'd be as badly off as Robinson Crusoe."

When he arrived home that man felt he had been fortunate in ridding himself of the burden and becoming again a full member of Soviet society.

"The best thing to do with this tobacco is stuff a mattress with it." The captain with a bleached greatcoat and his cap pushed back on

his nape flung his half-smoked German ersatz Mixture Six furiously on the ground and contemptuously crushed it into the loose sand. A group of officers was sitting at the foot of the five-yard high obelisk, hurriedly knocked up from strips of veneer and painted all over with red paint, that stood outside the S.M.A. building. The socle of the obelisk was in the shape of a five-pointed star, and was made of red painted boards, the center being filled with sand. The officers were warming themselves in the slanting rays of the autumn sun. In Germany the sun is genial, and apparently it is accustomed to order. It never forces you to seek shade, it only warms you, pleasantly and affably.

The officers had made themselves comfortable on the veneer star while waiting to be summoned into the staff. The years of life at the front had taught them never to be in any unnecessary hurry, and to shorten the time of waiting with cigarettes and philosophical chats. "Thank goodness the war's over, at any rate," said a young artillery lieutenant dreamily. "You didn't think much in those days: today you were alive, tomorrow you were for the Land Department or the Health Department-who cared? Only when you had

a letter from your mother did it occur to you to take care of yourself. So as not to, worry the old people.

"Yesterday I was sitting in the little square opposite the 'Capitol'," he went on. "There's a marble woman stands there with a small mound at her feet, and on it is a little stick with a tricoloured flag. I asked some passing Germans: 'What's all that?' and they told me a Frenchman was buried there. Just where he fell, poor devil, there they buried him in the middle of the street. A rotten spot; I'd far rather be buried in a field, where there's grass growing and the wind blowing. But that Frenchman isn't allowed a moment's rest. On 7 November our Pioneers had a firework display on that very spot in honour of the revolution. They buried six-inch shell cases in the earth and began such a firing that half Berlin was stood on its head. The Germans thought war had broken out again and Karlshorst was being bombed."

The lieutenant enjoyed talking, and he went on:

"Yes, you can say what you like. It's better on top than under the earth. I'm sorry for those who have to lie underneath. They say there used to be a memorial to the Unknown Soldier somewhere in Berlin. Fire burned everlastingly in front of it, and in the roof above was a round hole and you could see the blue sky through it. And when you went inside you felt as though you were midway between this world and the next. That's where the Germans soothed their consciences over those who had fallen in the fields and forests. And any mother who went there could think the fire was burning for her son. They say they've got a similar idea in Paris. So they haven't forgotten the little Frenchman lying opposite the 'Capitol'."

An older captain, who had been only half listening, was interested in this theme and commented: "There are lots of strange things in this country. You'll find a memorial to fallen soldiers even in the smallest of villages. And none of your veneer rubbish, but a real memorial; as you look at it you feel you've got to take off your cap. Made of granite or unhewn stone, the soldiers' names carved in it, all overgrown with moss, and a spring with water gurgling just by it. Great people, these Germans! They even make the dead comfortable.

"There was a memorial in the little town where I worked in the commandatura," he continued. "It was in the shape of a large stone ball, probably to represent the earth, with a dying soldier spread out over it, with his face turned to the ball, his arms out stretched, his hands clawing into the ground as though he were trying to embrace all the world. Our political commissar wanted

the commandant to have it blown up, he said it was military propaganda. The commandant looked at him and said: 'Listen, commissar! You devote your attention to the living, and leave the dead in peace. Understand?'"

The lieutenant agreed: "Yes, the Germans know how to respect their dead. One day I happened to drive on my motor-bike into a cemetery, and I felt ashamed. It was so tidy, it suggested everlasting peace. But in Russia the only time I visited the cemetery was to strip zinc from the coffins. All the graves were opened, and the dead lay arse upward. And there were scoundrels fleecing the dead, because you could get more off the dead than the living, I had to go there to get hold of zinc for accumulators," he explained in self justification.

A third officer, who had a strong pair of spectacles with thick lenses on his nose, and a shock of curly hair on his head, joined in the conversation. You'll always find someone who must take the opposite side of a question. He smiled: "That's all bosh ! In my home town of Gorky the dead are cared for as well as anyone. Why, they've even made a dance floor."

"Whom for?" the lieutenant asked.

"For everybody, living and dead."

The others looked at him dubiously and expectantly. He explained:

"There was a cemetery in the center of the town. The Town Soviet ordered that it was to be turned into a park. And so it was done, in accordance with all the rules of science and technique. The cemetery was ploughed up and a Park of Culture and Recreation named after Sverdlov was made of the site, with a dance-floor and other amusements. And the whole town called the park 'The Club of the Living and the dead.' The daughters dance a fox-trot on their fathers' bones. But the old women cross themselves as they go by:

'O, Jesu ! Jesu!'"

"A similar sort of thing happened in Rostov, where I come from," said the lieutenant. "They built a new theatre there, the Maxim Gorky. The plans provided for the front of the building to be faced with white marble. They looked around to see where they could get the marble from, and decided to put a tax on the dead. All over the district of Rostov they took down the white marble monuments and lined the theatre front with marble plates."

"Yes, it's a fine theatre, but its acoustics are rotten. I was in it once," said the officer with the shock of hair.

"When it was finished everybody concerned with the building of it was arrested," the lieutenant explained. "It was an extraordinary thing, but you could hear better in the gallery than in the front row of the stalls. Of course they blamed the builders: sabotage. But the people whispered among themselves that it was the dead playing a trick."

The captain spat into the sand. The lieutenant thrust his next lot of Mixture Six into the sand, rose, stretched himself luxuriously, and tidied his tunic. The officers, thoughtfully, did not throw their cigarette ends and litter on the green grass, but thrust them into the sand of the star socle.

They would have been not a little shocked if the earth had opened in front of them and the indignant spirit of their former supreme commander, the hero of the drive into Berlin and the city's first Soviet commandant, Guards' Colonel-General Bersarin, had risen from his grave beneath the littered sand and the peeling veneer. Neither the Soviet officers, nor the German workers who hung hopelessly around the staff headquarters, suspected that the nameless red construction which disfigured the yard, offending the eye with its lack of taste, was a memorial raised over a grave, that it was intended to honour the memory of the Soviet hero who played a part only second to Marshal Zhukov in the battle for Berlin. There was an absurd turn of Fate for you! To go unscathed right through the war on the most dangerous sections of the front and at the head of an army breaking through all resistance, to survive to see the victorious end, to enter the conquered metropolis as a conqueror crowned with fame, and then literally the next day to be the victim of a stupid traffic accident !

General Bersarin had the habit of going for a motor-cycle ride every morning. In a sports shirt with short sleeves, coatless and hatless, he drove a powerful German motor-cycle out of a side street into the main Treptow-Allee, which runs to Karlshorst. A heavily loaded column of military Studebakers was driving along the Treptow-Allee at full speed. No one ever knew whether the general was affected by that sporting daring which possesses most motor cyclists, or whether it was just an accident. In any case, he tried to dash between two of the speeding lorries. The driver who went over him swore at first at the fool who had torn right under his wheels; then, when he saw the general's insignia, he drew his pistol and shot himself. It is not known where the driver is buried, but probably

he is resting more peacefully than General Bersarin.

During the early days after the victory we were reminded at every step of those who had won that victory. Once Major Dubov and I were taking a walk through side streets not far from the Kurfirstendam in the British sector. It was Sunday; the streets were deserted. We just felt like wandering around and plunging for a few moments into the real Germany as we had imagined it before the war: quiet, clean, and orderly.

The broad streets were lined with trees. Like archaeologists, we attempted to discover and reconstruct the pre-war Berlin in the ruins all about us. Not the 'dens of the fascist monsters', as it had been presented to us and thought of by us during the past few years. We wanted to see the city and the people who for many of us were a genuine symbol of culture before they began to be dominated by megalomania.

We came to a little shady island at the intersection of three streets. Under the spreading boughs of chestnut trees two mounds had found shelter in a fraternal community in the middle of this

chaotic ocean of the enormous city. Struck by the uncommon sight, we went closer. At the heads were two plaited crosses of birch bark. On one of them was a German steel helmet, on the other a Soviet helmet. A Soviet helmet ! All around the unbridled passions of the world were raging; but here The living should follow the example of the dead.

Apparently, when the street-fighting ended the people of the neighboring houses found the two bodies at the corner and buried them as best they could, in the shade of the chestnut trees. Respect for the dead was stronger than earthly hate.

Suddenly I noticed something which caused an inexplicable, almost painful feeling to rise in my breast. The major had noticed it too. Fresh flowers ! On both mounds lay fresh flowers, put there by a kindly hand. As though at a word of command we took off our caps, then we exchanged glances. The major's eyes went moist, heavy puckers gathered round his mouth. He took out his handkerchief and wiped his brow, which was suddenly damp with sweat.

"Our first thought was to raze all the German cemeteries to the ground," he said in a thick voice. "Damn this war and whoever invented it !" he added quietly, after a moment.

An old woman walking with a child not far from us stopped to stare inquisitively at the Russian officers, rare visitors to this part of

the city.

"Who put those flowers on the graves?" The major turned to her. His voice was sharp and cold, as though he were giving a battle order.

She pointed to a house; we went up its half-ruined steps. The elderly German woman who opened the door to us started back in alarm when she saw the crimson bands on our caps. A twilight corridor, a neglected home, with none of the usual comfort to be seen, and obviously lacking several of its former inhabitants.

The major waved his hand to reassure her. "We saw the flowers on the graves. Did you put them there?"

The woman had not recovered from her fright and she had no idea what the question was leading up to. She answered irresolutely:

"Yes I thought She nervously gripped her hands together under her apron.

The major took out his letter-case and laid all the money it contained. Several thousand marks - on the table without counting

"Go on laying flowers there," he said. Then he added: "On both graves."

He spread a sheet of notepaper with the Soviet crest and the S.M.A. address on the table and wrote: 'In the name of the Red Army I order all soldiers and officers to give Frau ...every help and support.' He signed it and gave it to the astonished woman. "I have anything to do with Russians, this paper will help you," he said. Then he looked round the empty room and asked, as though he had just thought of something else: "Tell me, have you a husband or a son?"

"My husband and one son fell at the front. My second son is a prisoner of war," she answered.

"Where?" he asked curtly.

She hesitated a moment, then whispered: "In Russia."

He looked at the standard prisoner-of-war postcard which she held out to him, and noted down the name and the field-post number of the prisoner-of-war camp.

"I shall write to the camp commandant and the higher authorities.

"I'll intercede for his earlier release," he turned and said to me.

I had come to know Major Dubov while still at the front. He had been head of the Reconnaissance Department of the divisional staff, and he had had to screen the prisoners. If he saw the S.S. death's head emblem on a prisoner's cap, he knew that the man had dozens of men's lives on his conscience, and did not hesitate to send him as one of a special group to the rear, though he knew their lives would end beyond the next turn in the road.

In the street, pigeons were strutting about the pavement; they politely made way for us, like equals with equals. The full September sun streamed down on the lindens and chestnuts of Berlin, the leaves rustled quietly. Life went on. Life is stronger than death. And life is particularly good when there is no hate in the heart, when a man feels minded to do some good to other men, whether living or dead.

During the first few months of my work in Karlshorst I was not greatly interested in the surrounding world. I had to work hard, and left Karlshorst only on duty. I forgot the very existence of the calendar on my desk, and when I did remember-it I turned over a whole week at a time.

One Sunday I awoke at the sound of the alarm clock and sprang out of bed as usual. The flowers and trees of the garden were brilliant through the wide-open window, purple plums showed ripely between green leaves. The morning sun streamed down, playing merrily on the walls of my bedroom. The quiet, inviolable peace of the Sunday morning filled all my small house. The clang of the neighboring church bell rolled through the air. The clear morning air poured into my room, and cooled my hot skin and refreshed my body. I felt like doing something. I wandered aimlessly from room to room. Today I had got entirely to myself. What should I do with it?

Suddenly I was overcome by a strange feeling: where was I in such a hurry to get to? A man goes on treading the treadmill all his life without stopping to think about it. But if he does stop to think, then he wonders why one is always in a hurry. Most men only recognize that when it is too late.

Recently I had got hold of a German propaganda pamphlet, 'In God's own Country', in which they poked fun at America and the Americans. They were particularly sarcastic about the rate at which the Americans lived, and their everlasting pursuit of the dollar, of success. 'Your luck's just round the corner.' The American tore at full pelt to the corner in the hope of finding his luck. But he found only a vacuum. On the other hand, there were plenty of other

corners. And so on all through life.
On this count I'm with the Germans. But how can one learn the art of enjoying life?

I took a cigarette from my bronze casket, lay down on my couch and stared at the ceiling. There wasn't a single fly on that ceiling.

What a queer country ! You never saw any flies.
I got up and fidgeted with the electric coffee pot, then went out on to the balcony, stretched myself in a deck-chair and lit another cigarette. But after a few minutes I was seized with a deadly boredom. In the end I seated myself at my desk and prepared to write letters. I thought with longing of Moscow, and imagined what the people there were doing at that particular moment.

Just then I heard noisy footsteps in the next room, behind my back. Without turning round I called:
"Who's there?"
"Ha-ha-hal" There was a roar of laughter behind me. "Just look at the way they live here !"

I turned round. Mikhail Belyavsky was standing at the double doors, and Valia Grinchuk's fair head appeared over his shoulder. They were both roaring with laughter at the sight of me: I was sitting in nothing but a pair of trunks, with shoes on my sockless feet. I hurried to my bedroom, returning fully dressed a minute or two later. "How did you get here, Misha?" I asked, still astonished at this unexpected visit.

"We arrived yesterday. A whole group of us from the college.

We've been sent here to help you out."

"Ho* are things in Moscow, and what's the latest news?" I asked.

"What news would you expect? Now Germany is all the rage. Everybody in the college dreams of being sent to Germany to work." He looked about the room. "Yes, you can live here ! You've already got used to it, so you no longer notice the difference."

"Do tell me something about Moscow,!" I pleaded.

"Oh, you read the papers !" he replied evasively. "I'm glad I've got away from it. I'd rather you told us how things are here."
"You'll soon see for yourselves. How would you like to go in to Berlin today. We'll plunge into the thick of its life."

"That's just what Valia and I were wanting to do. That's why we came to ha~l you out of it."

"Well, then, let's go !" I exclaimed.

We left Karlshorst just before midday and took the street-car for the city centre.

The Reichstag. At one time we Russians regarded this massive building rising against the background of the Brandenburg Gate as the symbol of Hitler's Reich. 'To the German people' was inscribed in gold letters above the entrance to this enormous grey mass. Today those words could only seem like a malicious sneer to the Germans.

The windows were walled up with bricks, with loopholes in between; the smoky traces of fire played over the walls. Inside, great heaps of scorched brick, puddles of stinking green water; the blue sky showed through the shattered dome. The wind blew about scraps of paper with black eagles printed on them. Half-used machine-gun belts, cartridge cases, gas-masks.

On the walls, innumerable inscriptions: 'Ivan Sidorchuk, of Kuchevka; 14.5.1945.' 'Simon Vaillant, Paris; 5.7.1945.' 'John D. Willis, Chicago; 23.7.1945.' Frequently one could not think how the writer had reached the inaccessible point on which he had written his name in order to leave his everlasting mark in history. The

inscriptions were written with coal, ash, pencil, chalk. One inscription, scratched with a bayonet point by one of the Reichstag defenders, read like the last cry of a drowning man: 'Heil Hitler !' On the opposite wall, carefully painted with oil paint, were the words: 'Here did Sergeant Kostya of Odessa shit.'

Truly, the atmosphere of the place reminded one of certain well known lines in Heine's poem: 'Germany'. Evidently the Reichstag was being used by quite a number of people as a public lavatory these days. Certainly an instructive historical memorial

Between the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate, among the ruins of past glories, a new life was seething. Here was the international black market. Looking about them anxiously, surreptitiously, Germans were selling umbrellas, shoes, old clothes. The Russians were interested mainly in watches, and offered cigarettes, bread, and occupation notes in exchange. An American jeep pulled up not far from us. Without getting out, the negro soldiers in it began a lively trade: in chocolates, cigarettes, soap. They emptied their packs, laughing all over their faces, and looked about them. One of them noticed us, and whispered something to his companion.

Then he turned to us with a lively gesture, apparently inviting me to buy something.

"What?" I asked.

He took an enormous army Colt from under his seat and raised two fingers: two thousand. I shook my head. So he pointed to the pistol hanging at my belt and asked the price. To the Allies' obvious surprise I explained that it was not for sale.

"What are you selling, then?" the negro asked in businesslike tones.

"Nothing," I replied.

"Then what are you buying? Would you like a jeep?" He slapped his hand on the seat of his car. I only laughed. .

A Soviet military patrol came along: two soldiers with red arm bands, carrying automatics. Not far away a feeble old man was selling newspapers. He had enormous shoes on his feet, and he had difficulty in moving, either because he was weak or because of those awkward shoes. As the patrol approached him he held out his hand to beg, and smacked his shriveled lips: "Comrade, papyros" (cigarette). One of the soldiers, who evidently thought he was beginning to be a nuisance, took the old man deliberately by the collar and pushed him aside. But he had overestimated the man's powers of resistance. The beggar went sprawling like a sack into the road, leaving his enormous shoes behind him, while his newspapers scattered fanwise on the stones.

Before Belyavsky could open his mouth to reprimand the soldier the man again seized the old fellow by the collar and hauled him up, to set him on his feet. He was rough, but there was no malice in his manner; rather was it a mixture of disgust and chagrin. He had not expected his push to have such an effect. The old man hung in his arms like a sack, lacking the strength to keep his feet.

"Let him be! Come along!" the second patrol said.

"Wait ! You bloody Fritz!" the man scolded roughly, to cover his own embarrassment. "You, Fritz, hungry?" The old man had sunk to the pavement again, and the patrol nudged him with his foot.

But the beggar made no answer. "He'll die anyway," the soldier grumbled, and looked around as though seeking something. A Russian girl in sergeant's uniform happened to come along,

carrying a satchel. It contained several dozen packets of cigarettes wrapped in cloth. Under her arm was a loaf of bread, also destined for exchange.

The patrol reached for the loaf, snarling: "Don't you know it's forbidden to trade here?"

The girl vanished in terror into the crowd, leaving the loaf in the soldier's hand. He turned back to the old man, who was still sitting on the sidewalk. People standing round had gathered up his papers and put them in a pile beside him.

"Here, Fritz!" The soldier held out the loaf to him. But the man only blinked, as though blind. The patrol swore at him again, stuck the loaf in the newspaper bag which was tied to the old fellow's waist, and went off.

We were amazed at the crowds of old men and women in the street cars and on the streets. They were neatly dressed, the passers-by treated them with respect, gave up their seats to them in the cars, helped them across the road.

"Ah, those godly women!" Belyavsky sighed as he noticed two old women in neat black dresses with white collars get out of a street-car. "In Russia they've given up all their souls to God long since. By way of natural selection."

What we were seeing was not any novelty to us. We knew a man should show respect for the aged. Not only did we know it, but we ourselves felt the need to behave like that. And yet we could not but

admit that we had grown rough, we had forgotten how to be courteous and obliging in our relations with others. Existence forms the consciousness, so dialectical materialism proclaims. Soviet existence has changed old people into a burden and has made the corresponding dialectical adjustments in our consciousness.

Later, as we came to know conditions in Germany more intimately, we realized that though the German social insurance seemed so small, it always assured a living minimum in the form of pensions and pay, it enabled the old people to live out their days in human conditions. In the Soviet Union old-age pensions are a completely fictitious concept. In practice a man can live only if he works, or if his children support him. And who can expect support from his children when they themselves have nothing?

We saw many convalescent Soviet soldiers from Berlin hospitals roving around. Many of them were engaged in speculative

activities, some of them did not stop at robbery in broad daylight.

One man snatched something and fled into the ruins, while his companions used their crutches and sticks to cover his retreat. The war-wounded were embittered and rancorous, many of them were tipsy and ready for a fight. The Germans feared them like the plague, and even Russians kept out of their way if possible.

What I have just said about old-age pensions in Russia is also true of war pensions. They are too much for death, too little for life. And yet in return we must show our gratitude. 'Our happiness is so boundless that one cannot describe it', as one of our songs puts it. In conquered Germany the war-wounded of a lost war get 'higher pensions than those of the victor country. Paradoxical, but true.

There are many children to be seen in the streets of Berlin. Even in the first world war, but still more in the second, the Germans attached great importance to the birth statistics. Ludendorff and Hitler did all they could to avoid any fall in the birth-rate during the wars, and that, and not humanity, is the main reason why the German soldiers were given regular home leave. The results strike the eye.

The sight seemed strange to us, for during the war years infants were an uncommon occurrence in the Soviet Union. The Red Army men never had leave during the war. In due course the Soviet leaders will be faced with a serious problem, for in the years 1941 to 1945 the birth statistics dropped almost to zero. That will have its effect when those years are called up for military service. Berlin lay in ruins. But out of the ruins new life was reaching up to the light. That new life is particularly striking when seen against that background of dead ruins. Man's will to live is stronger than the forces of destruction. We were astonished by the numerous florists' shops in the dead streets. The burnt-out carcass of a building rises to the sky, surrounded by a dead sea of ruin. And in the midst of this joyless world, the brilliant colours of innocent flowers smile at us from the ground-floor windows.

We returned to Karlshorst late in the evening; we were tired and dusty. During the following days I frequently met Belyavsky and Valia. He had been appointed to a post in the Air Force Directorate of the Control Commission, while she worked in the private office of Marshal Zhukov, the commander-in chief of the S.M.A. They were both very glad they had been able to remain in the capital and had not been posted to the provinces.

In Moscow I had known Valia only as a fellow student. But here, far from one's intimate circle of friends, she suddenly became dear and precious to me as a part of that for which I was yearning, as a part of Moscow and all it signified. In Valia I found an unusual quality which made me value her friendship highly: she was a true child of nature, untouched by the filth of life. She said what she thought, and she acted on what she said.

A Sunday or two later Belyavsky and Valia again called on me. As I looked at him I was not a little astonished. I saw a very elegant young man in irreproachable light coffee-coloured civilian dress. A dazzling tie and a brilliant felt hat completed the transformation. Hitherto I had seen him only in uniform. "What are you all togged up for?" I whistled and examined him from all sides.

"I want to go to the Opera, but Valia doesn't. So I've decided to entrust her to your care."

"Really, Misha, the more I get to know you the more convinced I am that you're a fine fellow! You've brought Valia along to me and now you're going to vanish. Have you ever known such a disinterested friend, Valia?"

I tried to persuade him to drive with us through the city, but he was as immovable as a rock. "My legs are still aching after last Sunday," he declared.

The day was unusually sunny and warm. We put Belyavsky down in Friedrichstrasse and decided to go for a drive out of the

city. To right and left of us historical relics of the past went by like museum pieces: Unter den Linden, a great name, now lined with ruins, and not a trace of green. The trees of the Tiergarten, shattered with shells and bombs, littered with the wrecked and rusting carcasses of aeroplanes. The Siegessaule, with the faded gold of its angel, the symbol of the victories and glories of 1871. Before us stretched the broad and straight East-West Axis.

Berlin had its own aspect. The aspect of the capital of the Reich.

The stones of Berlin are trodden with history. Germany gave the world dozens of men whose names are precious to every civilized being. The street name-plates testify to that: Mozartstrasse, Humboldtstrasse, Kantstrasse.

Before us rose the Grinewald. Valia looked about her, then she leaned her head against the leather back of the seat and looked up

into the sky, which hung over us like a blue dome, and remarked:

"D'you know what, Grisha?"

"Yes?"

"Somehow the sun shines differently here.

"How d'you mean?"

"I can't explain it myself. I feel strangely different here. Tell me, don't you feel it?"

"It's the feeling of the conqueror, Valia. That's why the sun seems different too. "

"It's beautiful here," she said dreamily. "I have such a longing for a peaceful life. I often feel I could throw off this uniform and simply live for the sake of living. . .

"What's preventing you?"

"I sometimes feel sorry I'm in. uniform. It had to be during the war; but now ... I want to be free How can I explain it to you?t\$

"Explain it to someone else !" I smiled. "And let me give you some good advice: don't forget that here is the S-M-A,. That forest is darker and more dangerous than your partisan forests. Otherwise you'll feed the grey wolves yet. Get that?"

She looked at me fixedly, was silent for a while, then said in a quiet, earnest tone:

"You see, Grisha, often I feel so lonely; I've got nobody I can talk to. I love everything that's good, and there's so little of it in our world."

Before us the grey arrow of the river Avus cut through the autumn glory of the Grilnewald. I took my foot off the accelerator, the car rolled slowly to a halt. The golden autumn extended all around us in a sluggish languor. The distance danced hazily in the sunlight, it slowly came to meet us.

"Tell me, what are you thinking of?" she whispered.

"I'm thinking which way to take, left or right. The Wannsee must be somewhere around here."

The Wannsee is one of the largest lakes in the vicinity of Berlin.

Its banks are lined with fine, large villas, the former residences of the most wealthy inhabitants of the capital. And here, too, was the largest and most modern of Berlin's bathing beaches.

We drove round the lake. It was quiet, almost deserted. The stones of the road were all but hidden under a thickly strewn carpet of leaves. To right and left, fences overgrown with green, gates standing wide open, empty villas, abandoned by their owners. Some had fled to the West before the Red Army's advance, others had been transferred to other dwellings in the neighborhood, former wooden barracks for foreign workers. I turned the car in through the open gate of a particularly fine villa. Antlers that once had adorned the master's room lay on the gravelled drive; on the steps of the main entrance the wind was turning over papers bleached with rain.

Below, by the waterside, was a small platform paved with square tiles, bridges from which to fish, and moorings for boats. Close by was the rusting shell of a boat-house.

We got out and wandered through the garden. High above us century-old trees were murmuring. In between were trenches with caving walls, entangled rolls of barbed wire, cartridge cases. Higher up was a villa with a red-tiled roof, and draped with the colorful autumn attire of a wild vine.

"Let's have a look at the house," I suggested.

The wind was blowing through the rooms. The boards creaked underfoot. Gas-masks, remnants of furniture, cans of conserves were littered about. Upstairs we found the former master's study. Faded heaps of photographs were lying on the floor, among them the features of be-whiskered men in high, stiff collars. These people could never have suspected that some day Russian officers' boots would tread on their portraits.

"Let's get out, Grisha!" Valia tugged at my arm. "It isn't good to walk in a strange house."

After the twilight indoors the sun streaming on to the balcony dazzled more than usual. Below us extended the lightly crinkled surface of the great lake. Stirred by a gentle breeze, the reeds swayed and nodded down to the water. The wind sighed through the crowns of the trees. A dead picture of the collapse of human hopes behind us and everlasting, inextinguishable life at our feet.

Valia and I stood silent on the balcony. After the stony chaos of Berlin the peace and stillness of the Grilnewald made a deep

impression on her. Her face was overcast, as though she had a headache. Her breast rose and fell spasmodically, as though she lacked air. .

"Tell me, Grisha, what is happiness?" she asked without turning to me.

"Happiness? Happiness is man's ability to be content with what he has."

"But when he has nothing at all?"

She turned her face to me. Her eyes were serious, they looked at me searchingly, they demanded an answer. A furrow clove her forehead between her eyebrows.

I was silent; I didn't know what to answer.

A man who is released after a long spell of prison cannot get used to freedom at first, he has a fear of space. There is even a special term for this: acrophobia. We, too, had that same sort of feeling during the early days of our stay in occupied Germany. In 1945 we had unrestricted freedom, we could openly visit the sectors held by our Western Allies. Twelve months later we had only the memory of those days. But meanwhile all the allied soldiers' and officers' clubs in the western sectors were open to us, we were always treated as welcome guests. To our shame it must be admitted that the guests often behaved in such a way that the hosts were forced to be more prudent.

The following story was often told in Karlshorst. One day, a Soviet soldier traveling through Berlin got lost, and wandered by mistake into an American barracks. The Americans were delighted at this rare visit and made the mortally terrified Ivan welcome, relieving him of his pack. What else can a Soviet soldier have in his pack but a loaf of black bread and a couple of leg-rags? So the Americans made Ivan sit down at the table, and gave him such a quantity of good things to eat and drink as he could never even have dreamed about, and persuaded him to spend the night in the barracks. Some versions add that they even provided him with a sleeping partner. Next morning they stuffed his pack full with all kinds of overseas delicacies and saw him to the barrack gates.

Many of the narrators say that he applied to be taken into the American army. They all swear by God and all the saints that they personally met this Ivan right outside the gate of the American barracks.

We were all struck by the fact that the Allies were far better equipped than the Soviet soldiers, and enjoyed much more personal freedom. Our officers who worked in the Control Commission used to remark with a smile that the American soldiers smoked the same cigarettes as their generals. In the Red Army, soldiers, non-commissioned officers, officers and generals are allotted various kinds of tobacco or cigarettes according to their rank. This is in token of their general equality and brotherhood.

At first we lived as though on a forgotten island. As we were all 'living abroad', we were not subject to any form of Soviet taxation, not once were we bothered with the voluntary state loans that one cannot avoid subscribing to in the Soviet Union. And something that was completely incomprehensible—we were even freed from political instruction and study of the great and wise book which feeds up every Soviet human being, the Short Course of History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks). Stalin committed the greatest of errors when he allowed Soviet citizens to see Europe, and on the other hand showed Europe Soviet conditions.

The Soviet personnel began to take a much more critical view of what was going on behind them in the Soviet Union. And as the West came to recognize the true features of Stalinist Communism, it lost a large part of its illusions and was cured of certain rosy intentions.

The first few months of the occupation were of great significance. In the midst of the chaos of shattered Germany, in the midst of ruined Berlin, in the life of the people who yesterday had been our enemies, we saw things that at first only amazed us. But then we gradually began to understand them aright and our views of things were modified in accordance.

We had to overcome the enmity we felt for everything connected with the name of Germany. We had to seek new standards of

measurement. But meanwhile, out of the dust and rubble left from the long years of the Hitler regime, the total war and the unconditional capitulation, we were able to reconstruct the normal life of the Germans, and of Europe generally, only with difficulty.

The Soviet personnel were amazed at the astonishingly high living standards of the average western man. The words uttered by a Soviet soldier when he saw the home of a European worker: "Are you a capitalist?", became proverbial among us. During the years of the occupation the Soviet soldier began to give these words an inverse application to his own life. Every Soviet citizen who has

seen Europe is lost to the Soviet regime. He continues, like a wound-up piece of clockwork, to perform his functions, but the poison of his recognition of the truth has not left him unscathed.

As the years pass the impressions of those early days will be erased. Everything will seem more ordinary, the contradictions will lose their sharpness, men will grow accustomed to them. The front line soldiers and officers who formed the backbone of the occupation forces will be replaced by others. And when they return to their homeland it will be difficult for them to share their impressions of Germany with others. Who wants ten years for 'anti-soviet agitation'?

Our first meeting with our conquered enemy opened our eyes to many things; we began to recognize our place in the world. We felt our strength and our weakness. In the light of subsequent experiences the impressions of the first post-war months are seen as a distinct phase in the life of the Soviet occupation troops. It was a kind of transient period of post-war democracy. Nobody else in the Soviet Union was as conscious of the victory as we, the men of the occupation forces. We looked victory in the face, we sunned our selves in its light.

Simultaneously the victory and our encounter with the West aroused old doubts and engendered new ones. In their turn these doubts strengthened our desire, our longing and hope for something different, for something that differed from what we had known before the war. In the rays of victory we lived in hope of a better future.

That short period of post-war democracy allowed us to have this hope. That can be understood only in retrospect.

CHAPTER NINE

The Soviet Supreme Staff

After a few months in Karlshorst I had a very good knowledge of the structure and the functions of the Supreme Staff of the Soviet Military Administration. My work in close association with the highest officers of the S.M.A. enabled me to see behind the scenes of the Supreme Staff machinery.

The head of the S.M.A., Marshal Zhukov, was also the supreme commander of the Soviet occupation forces. As such, at Potsdam he had a second staff headquarters, the Supreme Staff of those forces.

Marshal Zhukov rightly enjoyed great authority, and his appointment to the post of military governor in the Soviet zone was due to his great services as a brilliant field-commander who had played a decisive role during the war. Moreover, he was highly popular, as is shown by the many stories about him and his relations with his men.

Here is one:

On one occasion during the advance the marshal decided to investigate the state of affairs along the roads leading to the front. He put an old military greatcoat over his marshal's uniform, an old earflapped cap on his head, threw a ragged pack across his back and went to a road leading directly to the front line. He posted himself at the roadside, alone, leaning on a stick, posing as a wounded soldier. Whenever a car occupied by officers drove past he tried to stop it, but his requests for help were ignored, none of the cars stopped. But they found themselves held up at the next control point. They cursed at the unexpected delay, but could not discover who had issued the order. A little later Zhukov himself arrived in his old greatcoat.

"What idiot gave the order to stop us at this control point.?" he found the officers storming at the inflexible guard.

'41 did," the marshal answered calmly.

"Then who are you?" They turned on him roughly.

"Who am I? I'm a Russian soldier," Zhukov explained with the same threatening calm, and casually undid the froggings of his coat. "Relieve them of their documents and remit the cases to a

field court-martial," he ordered his adjutant, who had just arrived. In his memoirs, General Eisenhower frequently expresses his astonishment at Marshal Zhukov's disconcerting lack of independence; while they were working together Zhukov never dared to make a decision for himself. According to American ideas such a man would be forced to resign on the ground that he was not equal, to his responsible tasks. But according to Soviet conceptions Marshal Zhukov was too independent, and this was one of the reasons for his early recall from the post of S.M.A. supreme commander.

As a matter of fact, Marshal Zliukov never took any decision without a preliminary understanding with Moscow. His real fault was that even when he carried out the Kremlin's instructions exactly he had the audacity to express his own opinion. Quite often he tried to get his instructions revised when he considered them premature or inexpedient. In the Kremlin's eyes that was reason enough to suspect him of rebellious tendencies.

His recall to Moscow in March 1946 and appointment as commander of a military district in the Russian provinces was a further instance of the Kremlin's dictatorial methods. Zhukov enjoyed too great authority and popularity in the post-war Soviet Union, and that in itself would have been sufficient reason for depriving the war-hero of his important post. The Kremlin was afraid of such a great concentration of power in the hands of a man who was not one of its group.

Marshal Zhukov's successor, General Sokolovsky, who soon after his appointment was raised to the rank of marshal, was not quite so disturbing to the Kremlin's peace of mind. He was a gifted administrator, but had never been more than the executive of others' decisions. The Kremlin considered such a commander more fitted to deal with the changed conditions of the post-war period when, after getting through a critical period, the Politbureau again took the reins firmly into its hands. Side by side with the supreme commander's organization there is the office of the Political Adviser, who is the real representative of Soviet Party policy in Germany; his role far exceeds that of a normal counselor. He is responsible for seeing that the Kremlin's political line is followed, and as unofficial political commissar he simultaneously has oversight of all the supreme commander's decisions. When Molotov arrived in Berlin on his way to the London Conference or for the subsequent Foreign Ministers' Conferences in that city, he always saw the Political Adviser before the supreme commander. While the commander was the representative of the Soviet Government, the Political Adviser was the representative

of the Party. Their mutual relations corresponded: the first executed the second's will.

The Political Administration of the S.M.A. Staff has the same name as that of the Political Adviser, but it is an independent organization. The Political Adviser's Administration forms the link between the S.M.A. and Moscow, whereas the S.M.A. Political Administration is the link with below; in other words, it controls political activities inside the S.M.A. offices throughout the Soviet zone and directs all the political life of that zone. It issues instructions to and receives reports from the Party organizers who act as political commissars to the head of each office, department, and branch of the S.M.A. Although the position of political commissar has been officially abolished more than once, it still continues unofficially in the army under the designation: 'Deputy of the Commander in Political Affairs', and in civilian offices as the 'Party Organizer'.

The Political Administration supervises the activities of the political parties in the Soviet zone. It is from this department that the German communist leaders, Pieck, Grotewohl, and Ulbricht, receive their instructions. Among other tasks of the Administration is the propagation and spreading of Soviet ideology. One department is concerned with the instruction of and political work among the German youth. All the educational plans and primers for the German schools are drawn up in conformity with the directives of the S.M.A. Department for Education, but they have first to be examined and confirmed by the Political Administration.

Without the Administration's approval nobody can play any part in the public life of the Soviet zone. Even where the simulacrum of democracy is maintained-in the elections of representatives of German parties and trade unions, for instance-the Political Administration predetermines the outcome of those elections. The purely military branches of the S.M.A., divided into army air force, and naval departments, are occupied with studying and appraising the military experience of the German Wehrmacht and especially the German war technique. A large number of military scientific research institutes and experimental stations taken over from the former Wehrmacht are used for this purpose. In addition there are Departments for health and traffic, education, and a number of minor offices. The Administration for Economy has already been discussed.

There are provincial departments of the S.M.A. in all the chief cities of the five provinces in the Soviet zone, and their structure and organization correspond exactly with those of the Supreme Staff.

Together with the local commandaturas which exist in all the large towns, they form the link with the periphery.

The Soviet sector of Berlin is a separate administrative unit, and officially ranks as a sixth Province. The duties of the S.M.A. provincial administration of Berlin are largely performed by the Soviet central commandatura in Luisenstrasse.

Almost all the administrations and departments of the S.M.A. Supreme Staff have committees for working with the Control Commission, which function as the Soviet representatives in the corresponding directorate of the Allied Control Commission. The Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany-G.S.O.V. is a completely independent unit, having its headquarters in Potsdam; its only link with the S.M.A. is that the S.M.A. supreme commander is also in supreme command of the G.S.O.V. The G.S.O.V. keeps its own account of special deliveries from German industry, the deliveries being supervised by its own control officers in the respective works.

Conditions in the S.M.A. and the G.S.O.V. differ in many respects. The S.M.A. officers enjoy greater freedom and privileges, and are better cared for in respect of food and clothing. Assignment to a post in the S.M.A. ranks as an assignment abroad, so the S.M.A. officers receive double pay, one in 'currency' and the other in roubles, special foreign equipment of particularly good quality as well as the ordinary army equipment, higher rations, and other concessions. The officers in the occupation forces complain to their S.M.A. comrades about their incomparably harder conditions both of service and of private life.

The local Soviet commandaturas play an intermediary part between the S.M.A. and the G.S.O.V. They are small, armed units, necessary for the maintenance of the order guaranteed by the occupying power; but they also include economic departments and fulfil subsidiary administrative functions. Because of its wide variety of tasks and the special conditions arising from the division of the city into sectors, the Berlin Soviet commandatura occupies a special position.

Such, in broad outline, is the organizational structure of the Berlin Kremlin.

In December 1945 General Shabalin suddenly fell ill. It was explained that he had been overworking and must spend a time in bed. Meanwhile, there were persistent rumours that the Administration for Economy was to be reorganized. A little later I saw a code

order from Moscow instructing General Shabalin to hand over his duties and work immediately, and to return to Moscow to place himself at the disposition of the Party Central Committee Personnel Department. No reason was given for this recall.

When I visited the general in his apartment he looked not so much ill as harassed and depressed. His mysterious recall to Moscow provided an adequate explanation of his illness. Contrary to practice in the democratic countries, where highly placed officials are honorably pensioned off when they prove unequal to their jobs, the Soviet leaders either climb steadily higher or vanish without trace. So the general had every reason to feel agitated about his recall.

A few days later he was on his way back to Moscow, with Kuznetsov accompanying him. At our last meeting the former economic dictator of Germany made a wretched impression: he seemed more like a man awaiting severe and punitive sentence than a highly placed general honorably quitting a post in which he had served meritoriously. He was gripped by the feeling of impotence, of complete dependence on the will of his masters and anxiety for his future fate, which is common to all the new 'class' of Soviet leaders. On his return to Moscow he doffed his uniform and was appointed to quite a high post in the Party leadership, as secretary of a Party Regional Committee somewhere on the Volga. So his fears were unjustified. Although his services in the S.M.A. were not greatly valued, and some of his colleagues even considered him stupid, no

direct censure could ever be made of him. He was very hardworking and devoted to the Party, which was the main thing.

After the abolition of the Administration for Economy all its departments became separate administrations, subordinated to the supreme commander's deputy. Comrade Koval was sent from Moscow to take up this post; previously he had been a member of the Council of People's Commissars.

Some of the officers on General Shabalin's personal staff were taken over by Koval's office, others took the excellent opportunity afforded by the reorganization to look for new jobs in other departments. Those former officers of the Administration who had had no special training and possessed no expert knowledge or capacity for economic affairs were attracted to Koval's personal staff, in which the work was mainly on paper and where the Party ticket replaced diplomas and knowledge. Vinogradov took the lead in this post-hunting. He became head of Koval's private chancellery acquired a service car, and an office of his own. Nobody visiting him now would have believed that only a few months previously he had

been hunting night after night for trophies in the dust and muck of Karlshorst's empty houses.

The second group consisted of specialists who were depressed by the thought of conditions in the 'apparatus'. These took advantage of any opportunity to join the administration in which their professional knowledge would be of most service. After his return from Moscow, where he was raised to the rank of lieutenant colonel, Major Kuznetsov was transferred to the S.M.A. Saxony and was given the post of head of the Mines Department in Dresden. I, too, had to face a change of office. I could have waited passively for the Personnel Department to post me to a new job if I had not been afraid that, after checking my documents, Colonel Utkin might again offer me work in the Administration for State Security or some other, purely military administration. It would have been too risky to turn down such a flattering proposal a second time. I recalled what General Biyasi had said to me before I left the college: "Wherever you may find yourself, you will always belong to the General Staff." Now, faced by the forthcoming change of post, I was disturbed by these words. Only recently I had been proud of the military-diplomatic career which was opening before me. But now I was more and more understanding the meaning of Valia Grinchuk's artless remark: simply live for the sake of living." obviously the road we were traveling was not entirely in harmony with true living if we, two young pupils of Stalin, were both troubled by the same feeling.

The thoughts slipped vaguely through my mind: after all, I had collie to Germany to free myself of my pestering doubts and hesitations. After all, I had quite deliberately chosen to go to the most exposed part of the post-war front in order to return to Moscow a convinced and thorough-going communist. Instead, after six months, I was now trying to make up my mind to turn off that path. Nc)-w that I stood at the crossroads, one way taking the road of a military career, the other turning back to my profession as engineer, I felt . . . To avoid difficulties with Colonel Utkin, I decided not to wait to be called to the Personnel Department, but to talk to Alexandrov, head of the Administration for Industry. Alexandrov had come to know me quite well during my service with Shabalin. After he had gone through my papers he said he was willing to apply for my transfer to his department.

All went well. In those days there was a greater need of industrial specialists than of military men. A few days later I was officially appointed directing engineer in the Administration for Industry This meant that I was entrusted with the task -of directing, i.e.

controlling, a definite branch of German industry. So I had taken another step off the main road. But where was I going? In essence the S.M.A. Administration for Industry performed the functions of a ministry for industry in the Soviet zone. Its most important tasks were, first and foremost, to ensure reparations deliveries, which involved close co-operation with the S.M.A. Administration for Reparations and Deliveries; secondly, to ensure deliveries for the Soviet Occupation Force in Germany; and, thirdly, to ensure production for the needs of the German population. This last function was customarily exercised only on paper, especially when it could be exploited for starting a new undertaking. As soon as the works had begun production, that production went to reparations deliveries.

Shortly after the capitulation the S.M.A. set up a number of German central administrations to correspond with its own: a German Administration for Agriculture, one for Industry, etc. All these

administrations were accommodated in G6ring's former Air Ministry building and were obedient instruments in the hands of the S.M.A. Later, again on orders from Karlshorst, the German Economic Commission, D.W.K., was set up, on the basis of these German administrations, its task being to direct German economy in accordance with S.M.A. principles, but through German instruments.

The relations between the S.M.A. and the German central administrations can be shown by considering the interconnections between the S.M.A. Administration for Industry and the German Central Administration for Industry, since each was a highly important organ in its respective sphere. The duties of the two bodies can be stated in very simple terms: the first ordered and directed, the second obeyed implicitly and suffered the curses.

Alexandrov, the head of the S.M.A. Administration for Industry, had a very deceptive outward appearance. Of medium size, with a bloated, inscrutable visage, he always spoke in a - monotonous and dispassionate tone. But he had had great experience in the industrial field, and enjoyed the respect of his assistants. Until his appointment to Germany he had been deputy minister for the medium machinery industry in the U.S.S.R. It was very wearying to take part in conferences in Alexandrov's room, for one of his eyes stared continually out of the window, and the other at the ceiling. When he spoke it was impossible to tell which way he was looking and whom he was addressing.

Smirnov, the deputy head of the Administration, was a man with a pale, haggard face, thin, colourless lips and piercing eyes. He rather reminded one of the typical M.V.D. examining officer, and

that resemblance was not altogether deceptive, since he held his post in a somewhat similar capacity. Although he had not done anybody any harm in the Administration, the majority of the officers preferred to have contact with Alexandrov.

The Administration included an Industry Committee which had the task of co-ordinating the work of the S.M.A. Administration for Industry with the Industrial Directorate of the Control Commission. Its head was a gloomy and extremely unsociable man named Kozlov.

In the Administration for Industry there was a very different atmosphere from that which prevailed in the office of the Political Adviser, the Political Administration, or the purely military administrations. Although the majority of the staff wore uniform, they felt that they were really engineers or other technical experts, that they were all civilians. Here the first requirement was that a man should be a specialist; in the other administrations the Party ticket was the most important thing.

Ninety-five per cent of the engineers in the Administration were Party members. But that did not prevent their taking a more or less critical and independent attitude to their milieu. Though they did not always express their thoughts aloud, they thought and felt differently from the 'Party-men of the purest water'. Here the difference between the two concepts-Soviet intelligentsia and Party intelligentsia-was clearly revealed. The first group was just as much a product of the Stalin epoch as the second, but it was not by any means always sincerely sympathetic to the Party line. To a large extent it consisted of enforced camp-followers. It is very dangerous to be an engineer and not to belong to the Party, and

In practice it is impossible to continue so for any length of time. The second group, the so-called 'Party intelligentsia', whose only backing is the Party ticket, had undergone only a narrowly specialized Party training. So, willy-nilly, they had to be faithful to the Party, to which they owed their position.

One of my first jobs in the Administration for Industry was to help in fixing the peace potential for the industry of the Soviet zone. To get a real understanding of what this meant one must bear in mind the state of post-war industry in that zone. In brief outline it was as follows:

Immediately the war was over a number of dismantling forces swept over the country. In the Soviet zone they worked feverishly for several months under the stimulus of the slogan: 'Everything on to wheels.' They were governed by the one principle of dispatching

as much tonnage as possible to the Soviet Union, irrespective of whether it would be useful there or not. There were no plans, and no limitations. The only difficulty which the dismantlers came up against, and truly it was a very small one, was the sequestration of certain works by the occupation forces. If a factory was producing something the army needed, it was sequestered: a military unit commanded by an officer went to the works and refused the dismantlers access, with a show of armed force if necessary. But in general this sequestration was of little importance, since it chiefly affected branches of light industry. After their attack on Soviet zone industry the remnants of the dismantling parties were placed at the

disposition of the S.M.A. The first step of the S.M.A. was to form a Committee for Liquidation of the War Potential, which very quickly dealt with its task: that of blowing up the war industry with dynamite. The works which had already been stripped of their machinery were now razed to the ground by sappers. As the German industry had been adapted to war requirements long before its outbreak, frequently it was not easy to draw an exact line between peace and war industry-in the chemicals industry, for instance. And so in this 'liquidation of war potential' a part of basic industry, if not of peace industry, had to suffer. The effect was rather like cutting the roots of a tree.

Part of the dismantling process had been treated as a state secret, and so the details had no been revealed even to the S.M.A. Administration for Industry. As for the rest, no systematized records of operations were kept in any case, so Alexandrov and the directing engineers of the various branches of industry could not get any detailed picture of the state of industry in the Soviet zone. In addition, the M.V.D. had laid its hands on a large number of items, and these did not appear in any books at all. This related to firms in which Moscow was particularly interested, and which it disposed of without reference to the S.M.A. These included, for instance, the experimental stations and testing bases for the V2 at Peenemunde.

After the first wave of dismantling and destruction of the war industry had come to an end, the S.M.A. attacked its chief task be the economic front: the extraction of reparations. But it must not be overlooked that in various forms the dismantling process continued. Moscow set literally dozens of dates for the final completion of the process, only to suspend the date each time. As the S.M.A. has a special Administration for Reparations, with the largest staff of any department, it may seem strange that the Administration for Industry is in practice occupied with the

same task, namely, extraction of reparations. One may describe its role as that of 'gunlayer'.

At this stage one comes up against the idea of reparations out of current production. This formula was a stumbling-block-even if only formally perhaps-in all the negotiations of the various Foreign Ministers' Conferences held by the victor powers. Reparations out of current production are straightforward, naked reparations which can be supervised, and so taken into account. The works directors in the Soviet zone are familiar with the special forms issued for reparations orders. The S.M.A. keeps the original, one copy goes to the works instructed to execute the order, and the second copy goes to the local burgomaster, who has to pay.

As we S.M.A. engineers were constantly concerned with reparations deliveries, we often wondered whether the value of the installations dismantled and sent to the Soviet Union was to be deducted from the ten milliard dollars which we claimed in reparations. The question interested us purely academically, but the Germans must have a much more practical interest in it.

The question of German property in Austria is just as academic.

The Soviet authorities in Austria have confiscated a large part of the industry on the ground that it is German property. Assuming that it really is German-owned, the question necessarily arises: to which account is it to be entered? At one conference one of the leading officers in the Administration for Reparations asked the commander in-chief's deputy for economic questions, Koval, a question on this point. Koval only smiled and answered: "At the moment I have no knowledge that this property is to be credited to the German reparations account." Koval's words are authoritative enough.

The Potsdam Conference gave the Allied Control Commission the task of fixing the limits of German industry's peace potential, so as on the one hand to exclude any possibility of a revival of militarism, and on the other to ensure the German people a Central European living standard. At the Foreign Ministers' Conference to be held in Paris in the early summer of 1946 the German problem was to be the first item on the agenda, and so the Control Commission and the military administrations of the four Allied powers attacked the problem of the peace potential. To this end the directing engineers of the various branches of industry were called to a conference with the head of the Administration for Industry.

Alexandrov opened the conference with the words: "In the immediate

future the Control Commission will be fixing the definite limits of German industry's peace potential, on the basis of drafts supplied by all the four parties. The supreme commander has instructed us to present him with our views and a draft for a peace potential in the Soviet zone for his confirmation, when it will be submitted as the Soviet contribution to the solution of this problem.

The supreme commander draws your attention to the fact that this draft will also be presented directly to Comrade Molotov."
He made a significant pause. Then he murmured something

concerning the wisdom of the leaders, and the great confidence they had shown in us by entrusting us with such a responsible task. Indeed, one might well have believed that the fate of Germany had been placed in our hands, in the hands of a small group of Soviet engineers assembled in Alexandrov's private room.

At first glance the task seemed interesting and important. By fixing the industrial potential we would be practically establishing the Germans' living conditions. In their case the industrial potential was the equivalent of their standard of existence; it meant the amount of bread on the plate of every German in the country.

"What are our directives in regard to the method of working out the potential?" one of us asked.

"We must take as basis the average living conditions before 1938," Alexandrov answered. "We must calculate the average internal consumption per head of the population at that time, or equivalent units. With these data and the present population figures for the Soviet zone we shall arrive at the peace potential of the Soviet zone industry."

He had mentioned only the internal consumption. But every one of us knew quite well that in the German economic budget exports played a far more important part than the internal demand. If we left exports out of consideration when making our calculations, it would artificially reduce the volume of industrial production enormously by comparison with the 'thirties. "What about the industrial production that was formerly exported?" One raised the question which was interesting us all.

"Exports play no part in our calculations," Alexandrov answered in a monotonous tone. "During the occupation period the export quota will be replaced by reparations. If the occupation regime should be changed, something else will take the place of direct reparations."

He chose his words very carefully. He did not say: "The end of the occupation," but: "If the occupation regime should be changed." The first steps on the road to 'something else' in place of direct reparations were taken, in fact, much sooner than the change of the occupation regime itself, those steps consisted in the founding of Soviet joint-stock companies, which occurred six months later.

"What will happen to those industrial works which are still producing beyond the limit today?" another officer asked. But then apparently he recalled the dismantling operations and quickly corrected himself. "Anyway, after dismantling operations engineer at last are completed such a case is hardly likely to arise. But what happens in the opposite case; namely, if present production doesn't reach the limits of the future peace potential?"

"Such a case is purely hypothetical, so far as we're concerned. So far as it is necessary from the reparations aspect, we shall increase production," Alexandrov answered. "But generally speaking our job is simply to establish the limit figures. We're interested in the procedure only in so far as we need the figures for the Control Commission."

He had mastered his phlegm sufficiently to put emphasis on the word 'figures'. So far as we were concerned, the only guiding factor in regard to industrial production in the Soviet zone was simply and solely that we were to secure reparations deliveries. The establishing of any hypothetical peace potential for the future Germany was simply a courteous act of compliance with the Potsdam Agreement.

The task of drawing up a draft for Germany's peace potential was a simple matter, carried out almost literally to Alexandrov's instructions. The internal consumption for all Germany in 1980 was taken as the basis. The German population within the 1980 frontiers was taken as seventy millions. The population of the Soviet zone was some twenty millions, so it was easy to determine the peace potential by resort to the simplest of comparative calculations. So it seemed in theory. In practice it was, of course, much more complicated, especially, because Germany was divided into zones. For instance, a large part of the electro-technical industry was in the Soviet zone.

In this sphere the actual industrial capacity was frequently higher than the proposed potential. On the other hand, there were several branches of the metallurgical industry which presented exactly the contrary picture. From the beginning one thing was quite clear to all of us directing engineers: nobody was going to intensify

or stifle the industrial production of the Soviet zone to accord with the hypothetical figures of the peace, potential. Other, far more weighty factors were decisive. The only normal solution would be to treat Germany as a unity. But Molotov did not ask our advice on that point. The draft of the peace potential was drawn up and sent to the Control Commission. We engineers who had participated in giving it shape were probably the first to realize in advance that it was unrealistic and unrealizable.

The draft was subjected to much discussion and revised again and again in the conferences of the Control Commission. Of, course

the first prerequisite of the establishment of a peace potential was German unity. The concession of a free and unrestricted commodity exchange between the zones could have served as a temporary solution if necessary. But a free exchange of commodities could hardly be reconciled with the provision of reparations out of current production because of the danger that part of the reparations might flow away into other channels.

During his stay in Berlin in April 1946, on his way to the Foreign Ministers' Conference at Paris, the Soviet foreign minister, Molotov, checked the draft of the peace potential and took it with him, as a Proof of the Soviet Union's desire to establish a normal regime in Germany. At Paris he insisted just as vehemently on the necessity for establishing a peace potential as he did on the necessity -for reparations out of current production. It is not easy for the non-expert to get the hang of these theoretical questions and to grasp that the two points are mutually exclusive. Molotov's escapades at the Paris conference were nothing but propaganda maneuvers. While the S.M.A. seemed to be concentrating on abstract discussions of the German peace potential, it was also occupied with much more vital issues, with measures that pursued far-reaching ends: the socialization of industry, and the formation of the Socialist Unity Party, the S.E.D.

In the Administration for Industry I often had work arising out of Marshal Zhukov's Order No. 124. I had had experience of this order even earlier, while working with General Shabalin. At that time, day after day the marshal's private chancellery had sent us packets of letters and petitions in which he was asked to cancel the confiscations of German property which the S.M.A. was carrying out. Order No. 124, which was issued shortly after the German capitulation, contained the guiding principles governing the confiscation of real estate belonging to former members of the National-Socialist Party and speculators who had grown rich during the Hitler regime and the war, and its transference to local German authorities. As a rule the

Administrator for Economy endorsed these petitions. with the note: 'In accordance with Order No. 124 the issue is to be examined on the spot', without investigating them, and simply passed them to the local commandaturas of the districts in which the contested property was situated. In reality, the endorsement 'In accordance with Order No. 124 the issue is to be examined' meant that it was to be turned down. At that time I did not go into the question in any detail, and the confiscation of former Nazi property seemed absolutely justifiable.

Now, however, my work in the Administration for Industry brought me into very close contact with the undertakings that had been confiscated on the basis of Order No. 124. The order related chiefly to works in which the S.M.A. was not directly interested, i.e. works that were not likely to be dismantled nor could provide reparations deliveries: small factories, mills, repair shops, public utilities, and co-operatives.

From the S.M.A. aspect, industry in the Soviet zone can be divided into two categories: useful and useless. To the first category belong the basic industries, which the S.M.A. controls with the aid of special plenipotentiaries attached to all the larger works. These plenipotentiaries are cloaked under all kinds of titles: 'sequestration officers', 'dismantling plenipotentiaries' (who, however, after the dismantling is completed, remain as the S.M.A.'s agents of control), 'preparations plenipotentiaries', 'Soviet construction or scientific research offices', etc. No matter what they are called, their task is always the same, namely, to ensure that the particular works function in accordance with S.M.A. plans. In these cases the S.M.A. was quite unconcerned about the complexity of the legal rights bound up with the property, but in any event all the legal aspect of the problem was solved. very simply a little later, when the Soviet Joint stock Companies were organized.

The second category of German industry was of no direct interest to the S.M.A., so in practice it was left to its own devices for the time being. It was pointless to place an S.M.A. representative in every small works, yet it was contrary to Soviet tradition and custom to leave even unimportant works without supervision. So it was decided to extend Order No. 124, which originally applied only to the property of former Nazis, to all the group of 'useless' industries, in order to extract the most effective value from them. For this purpose the works were expropriated out of hand, provided with the label 'district-owned works' (Landeseigener Betrieb) and handed over to the local German authorities.

Practically speaking, this was nothing more nor less than the socialization of small industry. In this step the S.M.A. was governed by two considerations. In the first place, it was necessary to deprive the second independent stratum of the German community, namely, the entrepreneurs and industrialists, of their economic basis. This

operation had already been carried through in agriculture, with the aid of the land reform. Secondly, it lent itself to the presence that the new regime was progressive, and thus, if only transiently, it made political capital for the Soviets and their puppets.

The S.M.A. lost nothing by this development. Under the new conditions of planned economy the whole group of 'useless industries' was condemned to extinction in any case, as it could not carry on without credits and subsidies. So it was fully expedient to hand over the unprofitable concern into 'the hands of the German people'.

In due course these 'district-owned works' loyally and wholly fulfilled the orders of the firms engaged in making reparations deliveries. And so, although the 'district-owned works', received no reparations orders themselves, they worked none the less to the reparations account. Q.E.D.

The socialization thus begun was extended more and more into other spheres of the 'private capitalist' sector. For its part, the S.N.A. brought the German 'local authorities' more and more into subjection, while on the other hand the hitherto comparatively independent sectors of 'social and economic life in the Soviet zone' were brought more and more under the control of these same 'local authorities'. The total remained the same, but the various entries were rearranged.

One of the most subtle moves of the S.M.A. Political Administration in the struggle for political domination in Germany was the formation of the Socialist Unity Party.

In the early days after the capitulation the S.M.A. took various steps to strengthen the position of the German Communist Party (K.P.D.) and to establish its authority among the German people. It resorted to methods well tried in practice: on the one hand extending every conceivable kind of privilege to the Party members, and on the other exercising increasing pressure on persons who were reluctant to become Party members. These methods were successful for a time, but then there was a decline in the influx of new members, and finally it stopped altogether. And the German people's respect for the K.P.D. declined even more. Everybody saw that it existed only by virtue of the bayonets of the occupying power. Even people who previously had sympathized with Marxism realized that they had

taken a wrong road when they came to know Stalinism in practice.

Consequently the quite natural leftward trend of the German people after the collapse of the totalitarian dictatorship led to a growth not of the Communist but of the Social-Democratic Party. And, despite their 'left-wing' attitude, the S.D.P.D. were not very sociable, and treated the S.M.A.'s persistent advances with a cool reserve.

The special conditions of the transition stage, together with the very unceremonious economic measures being applied, rendered it necessary to observe certain democratic rules of the game at least formally. One of the first 'formalities' of this kind was the election of the German municipal authorities. The Western Allies repeatedly proposed that the question of general elections in Berlin should go on the agenda of the Allied Commandatura meeting, but the S.M.A. managed to postpone the question again and again--simply because Karlshorst was far from convinced that the K.P.D. would get the desired majority in such elections.

The S.M.A. Political Administration held many conferences with the leaders of the K.P.D. headed by Wilhelm Pieck. The Administration insisted that the Party influence must be increased by every possible means. Pieck could only shrug his shoulders helplessly. Then, after discussions with the S.M.A. Political Adviser, the possibility of a fusion of the K.P.D. and S.D.P.D. was raised. At one stroke that would give the K.P.D. a gigantic increase in membership, and therefore in votes. The S.M.A. regarded the S.D.P.D. as a numerically very strong but politically helpless organization without a backbone.

If the K.P.D., numerically very weak but energetic, unscrupulous in its methods, and supported, moreover, by the bayonets of the occupying power, could swallow and digest the S.D.P.D., success was assured, at least superficially. It was decided to provide the future coalition party with the temporary accommodation address of the 'Socialist Unity Party of Germany' (S.E.D.).

No sooner said than done. A violent campaign was initiated for the unification of the two parties. But the harmony of the concert was disturbed at the very beginning by the resolute voice of the S.D.P.D. leadership and headquarters, which were beyond the reach of the S.M.A. They flatly refused to enter the coalition or recognize the fusion, or rather the inclusion, of their members with the K.P.D. in forming the S.E.D., of which the S.M.A. was the godfather.

So within the area under its control the S.M.A. produced a few renegades who were ready, in the name of the eastern zone S.D.P.D.,

to enter into a socialist coalition with the K.P.D. The result was the formal split of the S.D.P.D. into two parts: east and west. A little
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later the inhabitants of the eastern zone saw brightly colour placards put up on their walls and fences, representing the KPD and the S.D.P.D. as fraternally shaking hands. The Soviet officers sneered: "We hold out our hand to you: you'll hold out your foot yourself."

How completely Karishorst had misjudged the Germans' political maturity was shown by the elections held in Berlin in October 1946. The newly born political bastard on which the S.M.A. had set such great hopes came bottom but one of the four parties that took part. But although the S.E.D. 'suffered a shameful defeat in Berlin where the Germans could give free expression to their opinion it came to power in the provinces of the Soviet zone, where all methods could be used. The occupation authorities had enough means of influencing the masses there.

The building in which the Administration for Industry was housed was outside the Karlshorst military zone, and so the pernicious influence of the surrounding world had obvious effects. Opposite the building was a German newspaper kiosk where many of the Soviet officers on their way to work bought German papers and periodicals, on the simple pretext of getting 'practice in German'. Compulsory courses in German were held in the Administration three times a week. Now the courses were stopped on some pretext or other, so an unexpected 'gap' occurred.

I was sitting in my room, looking through some documents. The door to the next room happened to be open, and I saw Captain Bagdassarian enter, throw a wad of newspapers on to his desk, and remark: "Now we'll see what new sensations there are today!"

His remark referred to the Courier and the Telegraf, newspapers published in the western sectors of Berlin. He sat down at his desk, leaned forward and bent his head down. A casual observer would have thought he was studying official documents calling for particular concentration. His first step was to open the Illustrierte Rundschau, the weekly illustrated supplement to the Tagliche Rundschau, the official S.M.A. organ in the German language, which had Colonel Kirsanov as its editor-in-chief.

"So the Germans plough with tractors! Excellent! Let them plough; we'll eat the fruits." He turned over a page. "Ah, so we're ploughing too." He bent down over the paper in an attempt to pick

out the details. "Apparently the tractor driver's been touched up, but he looks pretty sick, all the same. A black mark for Colonel Kirsanov!

"Ah, so now we have fancy cakes! Lovely, tasty, sweet, delicious cakes! This time it's President Roosevelt's son who is being regaled on our pastries. He had a fine father, but too much of an idealist. Pastries straight off a conveyor belt: open your mouth wide and let them drop in !"

He was looking at a photograph taken in a Moscow confectionery factory during a visit by one of President Roosevelt's sons in January 1946. We all knew that the products of that factory were intended primarily for export and secondarily only for the 'Luxus' shops.' "And anyone who's tired of chocolate can have some bread for a change," Bagdassarian continued to philosophize as he turned over another page. "What a lot of bread! They're jumping right out of the picture." He leaned back and contemplated the picture with admiring eyes. But suddenly he sat up and exclaimed: "But they've all collapsed! Any German who's been a prisoner of war under us will recognize those loaves at once. How could they print such a picture for the Germans to see?"

I got up, went into the next room, and quietly advised him to talk to himself rather more quietly. Then I bent over and studied the picture, which had been taken in a Kiev bakery. In the foreground was a whole mountain of freshly baked bread. He was right, they presented a familiar sight: all their sides had collapsed, which meant that their 'insides must consist of raw, sticky dough. When our men at the front were issued with dry tack made from this bread they couldn't break them up even with their rifle butts. If anyone can be taken in by our export-propaganda, it isn't the Soviet citizen. We have a sixth sense in regard to the Stalinist propaganda cookery.

"But here are some good autos," the captain continued. He read the caption under the picture: " 'comfortable ZIS limousines, being run off in serial production in the Moscow "Stalin" works'. "Immediately I get home I simply must buy myself a ZIS. I'll have to go on saving a little longer, though. How much shall I need? I 'Luxus' shops: state shops where anything can be bought at extremely high prices beyond the reach of the Soviet people. In 1945-7 a tablet of chocolate in a Luxus shop cost 100 roubles, roughly equal to a week's pay for a Soviet worker.

The old ZIS model cost 29,000 roubles. The new one costs 50,000, they say. If my wife and I both work and save, we can put aside 100

roubles every month. That's 1,200 a year, 12,000 in ten years. So we shall only need forty years or so."

The door opened, and one of our drivers, Vassily Ivanovich, stuck in his head. When he saw that the atmosphere was peaceable he stepped fearlessly over the threshold.

"Good morning," he greeted us in German. Then he shook hands with each of us, faithfully observing the precedence of rank. "Your health, Comrade Major. Your health, Comrade Captain. Your health, Comrade Lieutenant." He turned to Lieutenant Kompaniyez, who was sitting at another desk. "My boss hasn't turned up yet so I thought I'd warm up a bit in your room. Do you mind if I wait here?"

Until recently Vassily had been a soldier. Now he was demobilized, and worked for the S.M.A. as a chauffeur. He had a due appreciation of his civilian status and took every opportunity to greet officers with handshakes, to sit down modestly in a corner, and occasionally to join respectfully in the conversation. After five years of life in uniform, during which all his communication with officers had been confined to salutes and the brief. 'Very good, Comrade Lieutenant', it gave him profound pleasure to be able to have simple human relations with them. He sat down gingerly on the edge of a chair by the door.

Captain Bagdassarian continued to look through his papers. The presence of an outsider prevented him pursuing his favorite occupation of pulling Colonel Kirsanov's work to pieces. For us Soviet officers in Germany the *Illustrierte Rundschau* was a highly diverting comic journal. And one not only got a laugh out of it, but could read a great deal between the lines about things not referred to in Soviet papers.

"Why, they've even remembered Trotsky!" The captain turned to the lieutenant. "What does that smack of, d'you think, permanent revolution?"

"It must be tactical differences of opinion," the lieutenant answered reluctantly. He buried himself in his German primer, and tried to ignore the surrounding world.

"Why, yes, it's tactical differences of opinion," Vassily Ivanovich butted in. "The one says, Let's break in from the front; the other -says, No, from the back. The one says, Let's do it today; the other says, No, tomorrow. You'll find that even in the 'Short Course', comrade Captain." He appealed to the Party textbook in order to give his words greater authority.

"I don't remember anything on those lines in it," the captain cautiously observed.

"There's something about the scissors, too. Do you know what that is? It's connected with the peasant question."

"I don't remember."

"Trotsky had a difference of opinion once with Comrade Stalin." Vassily performed a scissor-like motion with two fingers. "The one said the peasants must be sheared, the other said it didn't call for scissors, the peasants could be shaved. And so they argued whether to shear or shave. Only I don't rightly know who wanted to shear and who wanted to shave them."

('Scissors: a term applied to the disproportion in prices of agricultural and industrial goods, circa 1923-4.-Tr.)

The captain pretended not to hear what Vassily had said. "Yes, it's obviously tactical differences of opinion," the driver muttered on. "After Nicholas, the throne was left empty, and everybody wants to sit in it. They say that when Comrade Lenin died he left a testament behind. Have you heard anything about it, Comrade Captain?"

"No."

"They say there are some funny things in it. It seems Comrade Lenin said more or less . . ."

Captain Bagdassarian was already fidgeting uneasily on his chair and he decided to stop this dangerous talk. In the Soviet Union the story went that in his political testament Lenin hit off his two possible successors in the following words: 'Trotsky is a clever scoundrel, Stalin a scoundrelly fool.' It was whispered that Lenin gave his testament to his wife, Krupskaya, on his deathbed, and that Stalin took it from her by force. Later the 'true friend and pupil' sent Krupskaya herself after his 'teacher'. According to the story, the testament rests to this day in Stalin's private safe. It was quite understandable that the captain would wish to turn such talk into another channel.

"Look, Semion Borisovich - he again tried to drag his colleague away from the study of German declensions-"what a fuss the foreign papers have made over Zoshchenkot He's written some story called The Adventures of an Ape. Have you read about it?"

The lieutenant did not raise his eyes from his book. But Vassily

Ivanovich spoke up again for him.

"Don't you know anything about it, Captain?" he asked with assumed astonishment.

"Why, have you read it?" the captain asked, surprised to find that an ordinary chauffeur knew of the latest thing in literature.

"Oh no, I haven't read it. Only heard about it. You know, Comrade Captain, we drivers know everything. We have to drive around all sorts of clever people, even Sokolovsky and Viacheslav ALkhailovich (Molotov) himself"

"Well, and what has Sokolovsky told you about the ape?" the captain sceptically inquired.

Upset at the doubts cast on the quality of his information, Vassily cleared his throat and began:

"Hm ... well, there was once a monkey. Somewhere in Leningrad, it was. I expect war had already started." He took out his tobacco pouch and calmly began to roll himself a cigarette. "Allow me to tear off a bit of your paper, Captain. It has a better taste in newspaper.

"This ape suddenly got a notion that he'd like to live among human beings. He wanted to enjoy a little bit of culture. No sooner said than done: the ape got out of his cage and into a street-car. When he got into the street-car he was a genuine ape, but when he got out he was neither ape nor human being-goodness knows what he was. Then he went to the Russian baths. You know yourselves what goes on in the Russian baths. Nothing came of his wash, but he picked up a regiment of fleas. Then he felt hungry. He went to a shop. He gaped and gaped, and walked out again as hungry as he went in." He took a long, pleasurable pull at the cigarette he had made from the Tagliche Rundschau.

"Where else he went to, I don't know. But it ended up by his going back to his cage, slamming the door behind him and huddling into a corner, shivering like an aspen. It's said he suffered a long time with a nervous breakdown. How the cage has been arranged for Zoshchenko, I don't know. I expect he's been put on the waiting list," he concluded with a profound observation. "Well, now I must go and see whether my chief has come in." He put on his cap, pressed it down on his head with one hand, and went out, closing the door quietly behind him.

"Do you know him well?" Lieutenant Kompaniyev asked, nodding at the door.

"Yes. He's a good lad, only he talks too much."

"What are you to make of him? Do you think he talks like that deliberately?"

"Oh no. It's simply that they've got a bit out of hand here in Germany."

"I don't know, I should keep on my guard. An ordinary soldier, talking about politics !"

"It's best to pretend you haven't heard. Otherwise you'd have to report it all to the Special Department."

"I don't think it was so common before the war. Do you think the conditions here have had any influence?"

"I should say Now the war's over, every soldier feels more sure of himself. After all, they're heroes and victors too. Don't you feel that yourself?"

"Yes, that's true," the lieutenant assented. He contemplated one of the newspapers. "But the way Kirsanov's attacking America !" he remarked. "I'm amazed that they put up with it. We take every possible opportunity to sneer at them, and they just don't answer."

"Criticism of the Allies is strictly forbidden by the Control Commission," the captain observed.

"Have you been in western Germany?" the lieutenant asked.

"No. Why?"

"I was in charge of the dispatch of dismantled equipment from Bremen, and I was absolutely amazed. Communist papers hanging everywhere on the fences, with great banner headlines shrieking: 'Down with America!' And the Americans walking past as though it were all nothing. But let someone try to put up a bill: 'Down with the U.S.S.R.' anywhere in our zone !"

"Well, but does anybody read those papers?"

"I seemed to be the only one. One or two people looked at them out of curiosity. The communists always stick their papers up at the street-car stops, and a man reads them out of sheer boredom with

waiting."

"Maybe it's just an American trick. They can't really allow themselves to be baited like that."

"But when you come to consider it, it's not so dangerous after all. Those papers do us more harm than good."

"How d'you get that?"

"Any intelligent man of the West who reads a communist paper can't help spitting with disgust. You can see at once whose money

is behind it. The capitalists are to blame if it's cold, the capitalists are to blame if it's hot, and everything in the U.S.S.R. is super... lative ... ly good !"

"And yet the press is very important. Take these two papers."

The captain slapped his hand down on a pile of newspapers. "Here's the Rundschau and here's the Courier. We know well enough how it's done, and what's at the back of it, don't we? If you read the Courier there's nothing in it, it's dead. A strike is going on somewhere, someone's been murdered, an actress has performed some where. And as you read you really do feel that the world's pretty rotten. The life's all right, but nothing ever happens."

"That's only because you're not used to it," the lieutenant commented. "Do you remember 1988? People were dropping dead with hunger in the streets, but the papers contained nothing but bliss and benedictions. In the West it's just the reverse: they live quite well and are satisfied, but the papers are full of panic."

"Yes, maybe you're right," the captain said slowly. "And yet... take the Rundschau. One long exhortation Today you can't say the Germans have got any life at all. And at a moment like this they may answer the call. Hungry people go where they're promised the most."

"What would you expect? That's clever policy, first to strip a man of all he's got and then win him over with cake. A man with a full belly wouldn't take any notice."

"The appeal is a great force," the captain mused. "But there's no trace of that left in our country today We're already in the second round."

There was a knock at the door, and a thin-faced man in a green waterproof, carrying his hat in one hand, opened and looked in.

"Good morning, Herr Captain!" he said in a wheedling tone, and bowed deeply.

"One moment !" The captain waved him out negligently. The man drew back and vanished.

Captain Bagdassarian hurriedly gathered the newspapers together and thrust them into a drawer, then took out some files of documents. "This swine says he's a communist. I must put the papers away, just in case," he murmured half to himself. Then he called: "Herr Meyer ! Come in !"

CHAPTER TEN

A Major in the State Security Service

One day I picked up my telephone to answer a call, and heard an unknown voice:

"Is that the staff of the Soviet Military Administration?"

"Yes."

"Major Klimov?"

"Speaking."

"Good day, Klimov." Then, after a brief pause: "This is the Central Administration of the M.V.D. in Potsdam."

"Oh yes. Whom do you want?"

You.

"What about?"

"A major in the State Security wishes to speak to you."

"By all means. What about?"

"A highly personal matter," the voice said with a hint of irony, to go on with exaggerated courtesy: "When can I talk to you?"

"At any time."

"We'd like to pay you a visit after office hours. Be at home this evening. What's your address? But it doesn't matter, we've got it here. Till this evening, so long."

"So long."

Frankly, I thought it was only an acquaintance of mine playing a stupid joke. A silly trick, especially on the telephone. When I got home that evening I lay on the sofa reading the papers, completely forgetting the promised visit. I didn't remember it even when the bell rang. I went and opened the door. In the hall an officer was standing. The hall light shone on a blue cap with a raspberry band,

and on blue-edged tabs. No doubt of it: an M.V.D. uniform. It was the first time I had seen that raspberry band since the end of the war for the M.V.D. officers in Germany usually wore normal military uniform or civilian dress. But now they were calling on me in my own apartment! I felt an unpleasant emptiness in the pit of my stomach. Then the thought flashed through my mind: 'But he's alone. So it can't be so bad; it's not usual to send only one when an arrest is to be made.'

"May I come in?" The visitor walked past me with a confident, step.

I did not look at his face. Startled by the unexpected visit, I tried to think what it meant. Without waiting for my invitation the officer took off his coat and cap, turned to me, and said:

"Well, old fellow! If we'd met on the street I wouldn't have recognized you either. But now make your guest really welcome."

I stared dumbfounded at the officer's face. He was obviously delighted at the impression he had made. I recognized him as my old school colleague and student friend, Andrei Kovtun, whom I had long believed to be dead.

One hot day in July 1941 Andrei and I were standing in the street, watching a column of infantry march past. Yesterday they had still been peaceful citizens. Today they had been led into the Russian bath, their heads had been close-cropped, they had been put in uniform, and now the ragged, silent column was on its way to the unknown. They sang no songs, their faces expressed only resignation to fate. They were wearing old, completely faded uniforms, the heritage of previous generations of soldiers.

"What do you think, how will it all end?" Andrei asked me.

"We'll pull through," I answered, for the sake of saying some thing.

"I think the Germans will get here quite quickly," he said in an enigmatic tone, giving me a searching look.

Andrei was an amusing fellow, outwardly as well as inwardly not good-looking, but sturdily built, tall, rather bandy, with arms too long for his body. His head seemed to go flat at the sides, and was stuck on an absurdly long neck. He was terribly proud of his thick, bristly hair, and had even let it grow into a shock that made

him look like a tsarist cossack. He was all out of proportion, and had a savage appearance. His eyes were too black, his skin far too swarthy, and much too freckled for a grown man. I often used to say to him jokingly: "Andrei, if scientists should happen to dig up your skeleton some day in the distant future, they'll be delighted: they'll think they've discovered a specimen of a cave-man." In those days he bubbled with youthful energy and seemed to exude the scent of black earth and steppe winds.

His chief characteristic was an inordinate self-esteem. When we were at school together we often went out to the lakes about fourteen miles from the city. Andrei took a rod and nets, and I an old sporting gun. On the way we always had a race to see who could walk the faster. He laid down the conditions right to the last detail, and set off at a great pace, looking back again and again to see whether I was keeping up, or possibly felt like giving up. After an hour or more of this he would stop, quite out of breath, and say condescendingly: "Yes, you've got some idea of how to walk. We'll call a halt, otherwise I'm afraid you'll have a stroke." He lay down on the grass at the roadside and gasped: "Of course, your gun's lighter than my rod Otherwise I'd have beaten you. Now we'll swop over."

Later, when he became a student, he found another outlet for his self-esteem: he ardently studied the lives of the great. He did this by simply rummaging through the library catalogs for books which had titles beginning with the word 'great'. He was never put off, even by some three-volume work like Great Courtesans in World History.

Whenever he visited me at home he always sat astride his chair and drummed his fingers on the table without saying a word. Then he would turn his flat face to me and ask in the tone of an inquisitor: "I expect you've heard of Cleopatra. But can you tell me who Messalina was? Well?" When I couldn't answer the question he was absurdly delighted. As a rule I didn't fall into the trap, but resorted to counter-questions. If he asked what stone Nero used for his spectacles I would say contemptuously: "That's just stupid! But you tell me the difference between a cohort and a phalanx. That's a man's question, that is!"

It has to be borne in mind that in the Soviet Union history teaching begins with the Paris Commune. According to Soviet pedagogues all that happened before that event is to be related to the Darwin theory; namely, evolution from ape to man. Man really made his first appearance only in 1871. By the law of action and reaction we felt an invincible antipathy to the 'barrel-organs', as we called the history teachers, and preferred to go and play football. The result

was that it was unusual for a student to have any knowledge of antiquity and the middle ages. To acquire such knowledge one had to study such things for oneself, and it was very difficult to get hold of the necessary books. I first read textbooks on the history of antiquity when I was a university student, as a change from boring differential calculi and integrals. I don't know why Andrei came to take an interest in the ashes of Alexander the Great: probably it was just his self-esteem. He assumed that he was the only student who could ever think of such an idea, and he was highly astonished when he found I could answer his importunate questions.

Another outstanding feature of his character was his deep instinctive hate of the Soviet regime. He hated it as a dog hates a cat. I found his attitude incomprehensible and often rather unpleasant-I was more liberal in my views. Andrei's father was an independent shoemaker, so, according to Soviet ideas, he belonged to the propertied class which was condemned to be liquidated though all the property he owned was a pair of calloused hands and a back bowed with much labour. I expect Andrei heard quite a few bitter curses at Stalin and the whole 'communist band of robbers, even in his cradle. I could find no other explanation for his conduct when he took me aside at school and whispered anti-Soviet verses into my ears: the sort of thing one finds on the walls of lavatories. Usually I refused to be drawn into any argument. We were both sixteen, but I remembered that in a local school three scholars had recently been sent to prison for 'anti-Soviet activity'.

During our student days he often came round to my place. We were not exactly inseparable friends: my impression is that he had no intimate friends whatever. His friendship was based mainly on one-sided contests on every possible issue. He felt a constant desire, to excel me in examinations, and in general knowledge of the humanities. I was amused at his extraordinary ways, tried to haul him down from the clouds to earth and make him realize that even he had still a long way to go to perfection. My feeling for him was not so much one of friendship as of interest, because he was a very unusual fellow. Although he had never done me any wrong, I always kept him at a certain distance. But he honored me in a condescending sort of way with his friendship, or rather his rivalry, explaining that I did have some understanding at least of 'higher things'.

He regarded himself as insuperable, unique. Among us students that gave rise to continual joking and banter. One thing in his favor was that, despite his self-esteem, he never took offense. He simply kept away for a time, and when he had got over it he turned up again as if nothing had happened.

On one occasion, while we were studying at the Institute for Industry, at the beginning of the school year he came round to my place and seated himself, as usual, astride a chair. I was bent over the table, occupied with a plan, and took no notice of him. But this time he had specially important news. At first he preserved a mysterious silence in order to provoke my curiosity. I saw that he was bursting to surprise me with his news, but I pretended that I hadn't noticed.

"Haven't you heard yet?" At last he could hold out no longer. I calmly went on with my drawing.

"Of course you haven't!" He dropped his voice almost to a whisper. "There are some simply marvelous girls in the first course this year. I was in the students' hostel of the Faculty of Chemistry yesterday. They're stunning ! One of them I saw is a real princess.

I've managed to find out her name-it's Halina. And I've thought out a plan and I want to talk it over with you. Oh, drop your stupid drawing ! I've arranged things with devilish cleverness. First I found out what room Halina occupies. Then I discovered whom she has in with her-there are four altogether. Next I sought out the ugliest of the lot and enchanted her all the evening like Mephistopheles. Now the toad thinks I'm head over heels in love with her, and she's even invited me to go and see her. Get that? And in her room I shall find Halina !" He capered about joyfully, and made some indefinite grunts and groans of rapture at his own cleverness. "So it's already half achieved. Only I can't go along by myself. I need a companion. You're going with me!

"Anyway, you're not dangerous as a rival," he added, fully conscious of his own superiority.

I was highly astonished. We all regarded him as a woman-hater. His appearance was so unprepossessing that he never achieved any success with the girl students. He was in the habit of saying: "Women haven't any understanding. They see only the outer shell, they're not interested in the soul." Then he would mutter: "Besides, all the greatest men were lifelong bachelors." So something unusual must have happened to make him suddenly wax enthusiastic about feminine charms.

A little later I did meet the princess he was out to capture. It

need only be added that our friendship and rivalry were extended to include Halina.

We both received diplomas as engineers, passing the State Examination Commission in the spring of 1941. Now the world lay open before us. Despite all its attractions, student life had not been easy. Over half the graduates of our course had had to pay for their studies at a high price: tuberculosis, gastric troubles, neurasthenia. But we had been fighting for our future, and now it lay before us for all its allurements. We had a definite profession, which promised improvement in our material conditions and the possibility of putting long-nursed plans into execution.

Then came 21 June 1941.

There are very many who will never forget that date. The war came like a bolt out of the blue. It shattered all our plans at one blow. We had to renounce all our personal and private life for several years. Yet we accepted the war with great calmness. Germany stood for us as a symbol of Europe, but for the majority of the young thinking people of Russia, Europe was a forbidden paradise. The complete ban on contacts with the outer world had its negative aspects: many of the young Soviet people greatly exaggerated the reality, and thought of Europe as the incarnation of all that they were striving for in intellectual and material respects. During the early days many of us accepted that the war was the signal for the world communist revolution, that it was a logical maneuver engineered by the Comintern, staged by Stalin, and those who thought so were alarmed. But when the first reports began to come in of the Germans' incredible successes and the Red Army's catastrophic defeats, they were reassured. Many people genuinely welcomed the war.

Particularly such a war! Secretly they thought of it as a European crusade against Bolshevism. That is a paradox, and very few people in Europe suspected its existence. Russian people now prefer not to be reminded of it: the later disillusionment was too bitter. Hitler played his greatest trump, the people's trust, into Stalin's hands. Before the war the majority of the young Soviet thinking people had had no faith whatever in Soviet propaganda, or at least treated it with great scepticism. The war taught them a bloody lesson that they will never forget.

In those days, if Andrei caught me, anywhere, it didn't matter where, he excitedly drew me aside and told me the latest reports from the front. The German reports, of course. He swore that Kiev had fallen long before the German troops had got anywhere near it. He greeted every Soviet defeat not only exultantly, but with a really bestial malignity. He already had visions of himself leading a terrorist

band, and was mentally counting the communists he would hang with his own hand.

The war drove Andrei and me in different directions. I had my first letter from him at the end of 1941. It was written on a dirty scrap of paper, and every line expressed a hopeless depression. It was not a letter, it was the cry of a hound howling to the moon. He was with a training unit somewhere in the rear. To make things worse, it was a unit for special training: when the course was finished they were to be dropped as partisans in the German rear. He had been a construction engineer; now he was an officer in the pioneer corps.

That determined his future work: the organization of diversionary activities in the enemy rear.

After reading the letter I felt convinced that the day he was dropped he would go over to the Germans.

I received a second letter from him much later, after some twelve months. The paper was headed with a German staff heading, which Andrei himself had crossed out. As I read it I was not a little amazed at the amount of hypocrisy a man can achieve. It was written in an exalted style and consisted solely of a hymn, of praise of the fatherland, the Party, and the government. He wrote:

'Only here, in the enemy rear, have I come to realize what "home land" means. It is no longer an abstract conception, but a living essence, a dear being, the fatherland. I have found what I previously sought in vain: the meaning of life. To triumph gloriously or go under. But if I survive, to have a chest loaded with decorations. I am now a member of the Party, I have three orders and have been recommended for promotion' I am in command of a partisan force which corresponds roughly to a regiment in numerical strength, but our fighting power is even greater. I was a fool when I decided to be an engineer. Now for the first time I know what I have to do: when we have won the war I shall work in the N.K.V.D. and change my name to Orlov.'

Little Nero no longer had any doubt of the outcome of the war.. He wanted to join the N.K.V.D. because he regarded that institution as the quintessence of the Soviet regime. His letter went on to detail how many bridges his unit had blown up, how many trains it had derailed, and how many of the enemy it had wiped out.

I had no faith in this regeneration. I simply assumed that when writing the letter he had had one eye on the military censor. The authorities form their moral and political opinion of an officer

largely on the content of his letters, and his Promotion therefore depends on them to a large extent. I assumed that his self-esteem and desire for a brilliant career had swamped all other feelings in him. I felt thoroughly angry, and replied:

'I'm afraid you and I may find ourselves on opposite sides of the table, Citizen Orlov': a clear hint at his future career as an N.K.V.D. officer.

The last letter I had from Andrei reached me a year later. It revealed the well-considered, mature thought of someone who had come to manhood. He reported that he now commanded a group of regular partisan units, amounting in strength to approximately an army division. His units were active in a district corresponding in area to a Central European state. The official army communiques made references to their military achievements. He no longer listed the orders he had received, and only mentioned casually that he had been awarded the title Of 'Hero of the Soviet Union'.

So my friend and rival had really carved himself out a career. Andrei was fond of boasting, but he was not a liar. During these years great changes had occurred in the souls of the Russians, and I was genuinely proud of his success. In conclusion, he wrote that he was moving westward with the advancing front into the Baltic States, that the work there would be difficult and there might be an interruption in our correspondence. That was the last I had heard of him. I thought with regret that his career was closed and mentally put R.I.P. after his name.

Now he was standing in front of me alive and unscathed, risen from the dead, a man in the prime of life. On his chest a gold five-pointed star, the highest Soviet distinction for military prowess, glittered above several rows of ribbons. All his being radiated the calm assurance of a man who is accustomed to command; his features had lost their angularity and had acquired a distinctive, masculine, handsome quality. Only his character hadn't changed: he had planned to give me a surprise that would make my heart sink into my boots!

"It's a long time since we last met, brother. Prepare a fitting reception for your guest," he said. His voice was different, strange; it had a note of patronage, as though he were used to ordering people about.

"You certainly are a stranger," I said. "But why didn't you warn me? Now I haven't the least idea how to celebrate your return from

the dead. Why didn't you write?"

"You know what the words 'special task' mean? For two whole years I couldn't even write to my mother. But how are you? Are you married, or are you still ploughing a lonely furrow? Tell me all that's happened to you, from beginning to end. How did you get on in the war?"

"Like everybody else," I answered. I was not yet recovered from the surprise, and felt a little awkward. He had changed so completely: would we find any common language?

"There were various ways of fighting during the war," he commented. "You know, the wise got the rewards while the stupid fought. But that's all past now. What are your plans?"

"About ten in the morning I shall go to my office," I answered.

"Very praiseworthy. So you're still a realist?"
Our conversation was formal and artificial, as though time had washed away the intimacy of our youthful years.

"Ah, those were wonderful times, our student days. It might be a thousand years ago," he said thoughtfully, as though he had guessed my thoughts. "Tell me, how did things go between you and Halina?"

I felt sure you'd marry her."

So he had not forgotten the princess of our student days. I, too willingly turned our thoughts back to those years. I offered him a cigarette, but he refused it. "So you still don't smoke?" I asked. "I tried it in the forests, out of sheer boredom. But I just didn't take to it," he replied.

I knew that in the old days he could not stand spirits. I set a flask on the table before him, and he studied it as though it were medicine.

"That's my biggest defect: I can't drink," he said. "At home, I've got some of the choicest wines from G6ring's private cellar, but I never touch them. That isn't always easy for me. Others can empty a bottle and find oblivion; I can't."

"Are you beginning to be troubled by conscience?" I asked. "If I remember aright, you had a tremendous desire to be a Robes Pierre at one time. Oh, and by the way, is your name Orlov now?"

"No, I was just intoxicated then. A kind of drunkenness" he replied. I caught a note of uncertainty in his voice.

"Tell me, Andrei, what made you write such idiotic rot in your letters? Were you writing with one eye on the censorship?"

"You may not believe it, but I wrote exactly as I felt at that time," he answered. "Today it seems idiotic to me too. To tell the truth the war years were the happiest time of my life, and will always remain so. In the war I found myself. I waded in blood, but I will absolutely convinced that I was right, I was doing a great and necessary work. It all seemed as clear and clean to me as a field of virgin snow. I felt that I was lord of our Russian earth, and was prepared to die for it." He spoke slowly, with an almost imperceptible falter in his voice. The self-confidence was gone.

"Then what do you really feel now?" I asked.

"These days I often lose that absolute conviction," he went on as, though he hadn't heard my question. He stared into vacancy. "I've killed lots and lots of Germans! Look!" He thrust out his sinewy swarthy hands towards me. "With these hands I've put out I don't know how many Germans. Just wiped them out: we partisans didn't take prisoners. I killed, and I felt happy in killing. For I was convinced that I was doing right.

"But do you know what I'm doing now?" His face twitched nervously; there was a note of suppressed resentment in his voice, a peculiar resentment, as though he were furious with himself. "Now I'm killing the German soul and German brains. Goebbels once said: 'If you wish to subject a people, you must rob it of its brains.' That is my job now. The snag is that in this procedure your own brain threatens to go. We are interested in Germany only in so far as it is necessary to secure our own interests! Very sound! But things are going too far. However, that's not really the crux of the matter. How can I put it ...?"

He was silent for a time; then he went on slowly, carefully choosing his words: "I'm tormented with accursed doubts. It seems to me ... that what we're trying to kill here ... is better than what we have at home. I don't feel any pity for the Germans, but I feel pity for myself, and for ourselves. That's the crux of the matter. We're destroying a well-developed cultural system, reorganizing it to match our own pattern, and that pattern ... to hell with it! Do you remember what our life was like?"

"Tell me, Major of the State Security Force, what is the job you're doing at the moment?" I asked. " And another thing: talk a little more quietly. German houses have thin walls."

"What am I doing at present?" he repeated my words. Then, evasively: "Various things. Besides the tasks usually assigned to the M.V.D. we have many others of which nobody outside has any suspicion. For instance, we have an exact copy of your S.M.A. organization, only in miniature. We control all your work, and we give a hand when radical intervention is called for, swift and without fuss. Moscow has less trust in Sokolovsky's reports than in ours."

"I expect you know from experience that an M.V.D. lieutenant can issue orders to your army colonels, and an M.V.D. major's word is binding on your army generals. Yet it is only an unwritten law that that is so: a general takes for granted that it is a law, and that if he disregards or fails to comply with it the consequences can be very unpleasant."

"You know the Political Adviser Semionov, and Colonel Tulpanov?" he asked, but added without waiting for my answer: "We have contact with them very rarely, but they're always conscious of our fatherly care. Right down to such details as would ensure a full hall and a sound moral tone in our Soviet House of Culture here And we often invite Wilhelm Pieck and other leaders to visit us for friendly conversations"-he ironically stressed the words 'leaders' and 'friendly conversations'. "We never even shake hands with them, so that they shouldn't get any Voltairian ideas into their heads. We don't bother with velvet gloves, not like your Tulpanov."

"Only a man who has worked in our organization can know all the depths of human turpitude. All our guests slink in on tiptoe. If they no longer please us, it isn't far to Buchenwald. Pieck and his fellows know that well enough. A number of their colleagues are already stewing in their own juice there."

"The democratization of Germany ... Hm! ... All the bakers and sausage-makers are to be sent to Siberia! The property-owners are to be liquidated as a class! We turn their places into Red Corners and call them after Pieck or some other dog. Do you know how we purged Berlin after the capitulation? It took us just one night. Thirty thousand people were taken from their beds and sent straight to Siberia. We already had the lists prepared while our troops were still the other side of the Oder. We got all we needed from the local communists."

He was silent for a moment, crossed his legs and studied his knee.

"We can hardly shake off the servile scum. You know, after the capitulation there were literally queues of voluntary denouncers and informers waiting to be interviewed by us. Once I gave orders for a whole mob of these human abominations to be driven out of my waiting room with rifle butts. I simply couldn't stand any more. "

His words reminded me of the typical attitude taken by Soviet soldiers to the German 'political comrades'. Shortly before the Soviet and American forces made contact a group of Russian soldiers fell in with a single German. He had a rucksack on his back and was wheeling a cycle loaded with all he possessed. He was going eastward. When he saw the Soviet soldiers he shouted enthusiastically 'Stalin good ... I'm communist ... Comrade . . .' He tried to explain that he was on his way to the Soviet Union, and intended to build communism together with them. The soldiers looked at one another without a word, turned him round to face the west, and gave him a good-natured push. When he resisted, and tried again and again to go east, the soldiers got wild and took away his rucksack and cycle. After they had given him a communist baptism he could hardly move a limb. As he pulled himself together and turned to go back the soldiers called after him: "Now comrade is a real communist

Yours is mine. Stalin-good!" They were perfectly convinced they had done him a good turn, they had saved his life.

The officials of the K.P.D.-S.E.D. decorated their car radiators with red flags and felt that they were lords of creation as they drove like the fire-brigade about Berlin, with no regard to the speed limit. Whenever a Soviet soldier or officer driving a car met such a man he regarded it as a matter of honor to undertake the crazy 'comrade's' ideological re-education. The higher the 'comrade' Party rank, the greater the honor of smashing in his radiator and his mug. "So that he won't be in such a hurry to get to communism in future," was the usual comment in such cases.

The Karlshorst commandant, Colonel Maximov, only laughed when such incidents were reported to him. They were not simply acts of crude barbarism. After the Soviet soldiers had lived a while in Germany they spoke with respect and even with envy of the Germans. But they called the German communists rogues and venal riffraff. Any Soviet citizen who has seen Europe is quite convinced that only degenerates in the pay of Moscow can be communists. "Oh, and by the way, what were you doing in Petersburgerstrasse recently?" Andrei asked the direct question.

I stared at him in amazement. It was true that I had been in Petersburgerstrasse a week before. A Moscow girl acquaintance named Irena had invited me to call on her. She had graduated from the Institute for Foreign Languages in Moscow and was now working in Berlin as a teacher of German. The house I had visited differed very little from the others in the street; it had no name-plate or red flag to indicate that it was used by the occupation authorities. But hardly had I opened the door when a man in the uniform of the M.V.D. frontier guards barred my way. My officer's uniform and my identity papers were not of much use. Before I could enter the house Irena herself had to come down and identify me.

The house was used as the school for the M.V.D. censors, and they lived as though in barracks. The conditions were very strict, as they are in all M.V.D. establishments. Although Irena was not on the A.I.V.D. strength, but was simply an outside employee, she had to obtain her employer's permission to go out, even on Sundays. When she went out she had to enter the time she left and the object of her going in a record book; on her return she had to enter the time and sign her name again. As she herself admitted, they all lived like semi-prisoners.

"How do you know I was in Petersburgerstrasse?" I asked Andrei. "That's simple: I took a preliminary look at your personal file, only not the personal file you have in your Personnel Department here. If I'm not mistaken, not long ago you saw 'Eugene Onegin' at the Admiralspalast, and you've seen the 'Petrushka' ballet too, haven't you? I can even tell you whom you went with." He looked at me sidelong, to see what impression he had made. Evidently he was just as fond as ever of cheap effects.

"But that's not a crime at the moment: the Admiralspalast is in the Soviet Sector. But I advise you not to visit theaters in the other sectors, for that will be placed to your debit. Understand? We keep our own books on every S.M.A. officer, right up to Marshal Sokolov sky. At present your personal record is perfectly in order, and I congratulate you.

"Oh, and while we're talking about the Petersburgerstrasse, we've got one or two other interesting institutions there: a special school for German instructors, for instance. They're the framework of the future German M.V.D. There are certain things that it's more convenient to leave to the Germans. I'm only surprised at the enormous amount of trouble they give themselves. There are times

when I can't help thinking that some of them really believe they're

helping to build a finer Germany. And these petty hacks never even get supplementary rations, like the Special-Troika does. You know what the Special-Troika is, I expect. The Germans call the triumvirate Grotewohl, Pieck and Ulbricht simply and briefly the G.P.U. And for simplicity's sake we ourselves have christened them the 'Special-Troika'."

(A reference to the days of the revolutionary Extraordinary Tribunal which usually had three members-Tr)

He went on to tell of the slogans with which the walls of German toilets are embellished. "Do you know what S.E.D. stands for?" he asked. "The Germans say: 'So ends Germany.' (So endet Deutschland.) Maybe they themselves don't suspect how right they are. That will be clear to them when Germany is renamed the German S.S.R and the present S.E.D. is known as the German Communist Party. Of course it's not the name but the thing behind it that's, important.' For the sake of both of us I felt that I had to comment:

"You're saying some very remarkable things. If it were anybody else, I'd report it to the proper authorities without hesitation. But as they're being said by a major in the State Security Service I must take them as deliberate provocation. So I think it unnecessary to do anything about it. Go on until you get bored."

He looked at me and laughed. "But you're a prudent fellow! Reinsurance can't do any harm. To reassure you, you can take every word I have said as provocation. In those circumstances I can speak even more frankly."

He got up from his chair and strode about the room. Finally he halted before my bookcase and studied the books. With his back to me he continued:

"It's really amusing to see how readily whole nations put their necks into this yoke. Take Germany. If Stalin had all Germany in his hands the Germans would dance to his pipe as one man. You know how they think: 'Orders are orders!' Of course one would have to create the prerequisites first: the form of an independent German state, with a premier and other puppets. You have to play up the German national pride. And when the right men are in charge the Germans will vote unanimously for a German S.S.R.

"Form and content !" he continued thoughtfully. "Take socialism and communism, for instance. According to Marx, socialism is the first step to communism. There are very strong socialist tendencies

I

in the world today. Of course as modern society progresses it requires new forms. The Social-Democratic Parties, socialization under Hitler, the present socialistic trend in England. You can see it at every step.

Well then, do all roads really lead to communism?

"Now look at what we've got in Russia. It's called socialism.

By its form it really does seem to be socialism, for everything belongs to society in the shape of the State. But the content? The content is state capitalism or socialistic slave-ownership. The people pour out their blood and sweat to bring about the future communist paradise. It's all strongly reminiscent of the ass with the bundle of hay hung out in front of its nose. The ass puts out all its strength, but the hay always remains the same distance off. And the naive idealists of the West treat the concepts of socialism and communism as interchangeable, and voluntarily put their necks in the same yoke.

"Strange as it may seem, there is only one historical parallel to communist teaching, and that's Christian teaching. Only the Christian teaching was as orthodox as communist teaching is to day, and that is precisely why it spread all over the world. The Christian teaching said to the soul of man: 'Share with your neighbour'. But history has advanced to the materialistic phase. The common law of communism is: 'Take from your neighbor'."

He sank into his chair, stretched out his legs, and leaned his head against the back. "After the capitulation I took for granted that we would be taking all the best Europe had got-after all, we were the victors-and then we would impose order in our own house. Instead, we've forced our own muck down these people's throats while we're (training our own people of their last drop of blood. Permanent revolution! Here I'm building communism on an all-German scale.

In that job Wilhelm Pieck is my errand-boy, and meanwhile what is happening in our own country?"

An evil light gleamed in his eyes. He jumped up and took long strides about the room. His voice choked with fury: "Is that what I fought for?"

"Listen, Andrei," I said. "Assuming for the moment that your remarks are not intended as provocation, but that you really do feel and think as you say, how can you reconcile it with your work in the M.V.D.?~

He looked into my eyes for one moment, then shifted his gaze to some invisible point in the twilight room.

"You mean, why do I wear this raspberry-banded cap?" he asked
"Just for fun. Simply to enjoy the sight of others starting away from me. That's the only thing I get any pleasure out of now in my work, When one has a vacuum inside, one inevitably seeks some substitute in the outside world."

"You had that streak even in the old days, A la Nero!" I retorted

"But a man doesn't get far with that."

"You're quite right. Do you know what are the occupational diseases of M.V.D. officers?" He laughed maliciously. "Alcoholism is the least of them. The majority of the men are drug-addicts; morphine, cocaine. It's been statistically proved that three years' work in the operational organs is enough to turn a man into A, chronic neurasthenic. In the Crimea there's a special M.V.D sanatorium for treatment of the drug-addicts and impotents. But it doesn't do much good. A shattered nervous system isn't easily restored to health. Normal men can't stick the work. And intelligence-that's the most dangerous thing of all in our profession

If you want to make a career in the M.V.D. you must be a scoundrel by vocation. The idealists have long since lost their heads, the old guard has become part of the history of the C.P.S.U. What are left can be divided into two main categories: those who do everything they're called on to do without offering any resistance, since they don't mind how they earn their bread, and those who're ready to betray even their own mother for the sake of their career. You know the Soviet commandment: outwardly be your superior's slave, but inwardly dig his grave, so that you can take his place. The same holds true of the M.V.D., only much more so. No wonder they turn to cocaine and morphine.

"You know, when I get sick to death of it all I go out in the evening of the night, get into my car and drive like a madman through Berlin. At full speed along the East-West Axis. The British Military Police try to stop me, but what can they do? I've got an eight-cylinder Tatra. And then I drive through the Brandenburg

Gate. A hair's breadth to right or left, and I'd be smashed to pulp,

I'm even tempted to, sometimes It's so simple Only a hair's breadth You're all right, you're an engineer. That smells of oil and smoke. But everything around me reeks of blood.

"At the university I thought of engineering as a solid sort of profession. But when I got down to practice and saw what a lot of engineers were I stayed on in the faculty only by sheer inertia. All the time I wanted something different, but now I don't know what I want. I know only one thing: my life will be ended with a bullet my own or another's."

I felt sorry for Andrei now. The man who had entered my room was in the prime of life, with a confident step and outlook, a man who seemed to have achieved his aim in life. But now I could tell from his own words that he was damned. And the calmness with which he spoke only accentuated my feeling.

"But you're still an engineer too," I said. "And you're a Party member and a war hero. You can go back to your old profession."

"That's right out of the question," he answered. "There's no escape from the M.V.D. Have you ever met anyone who has? In the old days, work in the Cheka provided a way to a further, a different career. But now we've advanced in that respect too. Now you're asked: 'Why did you leave the M.V.D.?' Now such a step is a crime, it's desertion from the most responsible sector of the communist front. They'd never release me, except to put me behind bars.

"And besides, anyone who has had some power over other men finds it difficult to start catching butterflies- and growing geraniums in a flower-box on the window-sill," he said with an unpleasant smile.

"Power is a tasty dish. And you can't tear yourself away from it, you're only torn away."

His words reminded me of a man I had met in a front-line hospital during the war. He was a private in a punitive company. Before the war he had been an aviation engineer. He was a Party member, and when he was called up he was assigned to work in the N.K.V.D. They sent him to the Secret Department of the Central Institute for Aerodynamics in Moscow, where he was put on secret work in the field of constructing special high-flying machines driven by turbo compression engines.

Nobody in Moscow suspected that almost all through the war a solo German Henschel circled over Moscow day after day. It flew at such a height that it was invisible to the naked eye. Only the experts knew the secret of the white smoke-clouds that formed and then slowly dissipated in the sky. The machine never dropped bombs, it only took photographs with the aid of infra-red films. The Germans attached great importance to the regular photographing of the Moscow railway junctions, through which the main flood of military material passed to the West. German machines flew over Moscow day and night, and they gradually began to get on the Kremlin's

nerves. When the Soviet fighters attempted to go above their 80,000 feet limit the Henschel calmly climbed still higher, then swooped down and shot up the Yaks and the MIGS. However, it did not often show the Soviet fighters such honor, and only made fun of them.

The Defence Council gave the Institute for Aerodynamics the urgent task of inventing means of combating these German reconnaissance planes, and the former aviation engineer, the newly commissioned N.K.V.D. officer, was given the task of controlling the work. Under the 'plan' drawn up by the N.K.V.D. higher authorities he was instructed to send them each month the names of a fixed percentage of spies, diversionists and wreckers. The 'plan' was strict: every month a certain percentage of spies, a percentage of diversionists, and similar 'people's enemies'. Often, in addition they sent him an urgent demand for ten 'spies' from the milling machinists, or five 'wreckers' from the laboratory or metallurgical workers, the demand being made to meet the N.K.V.D.'s special needs for some urgent construction project of its own.

After some months the lieutenant had a nervous breakdown. He was not very well acquainted with the ways of the N.K.V.D., and he put in a report with the request to be assigned to other work. A day later he was reduced to the ranks and sent to a punitive company

In the hospital where I came to know him he had had both legs amputated.

Andrei was right, there would be no way out of the M.V.D. for him.

"Where is Halina now?" he suddenly asked bluntly.

"Somewhere in Moscow."

"I have only one hope left now," he said dreamily. "Perhaps if could see her again. .

There was a ring at the door. I went out, and came back with an acquaintance named Mikhail Sykov, who lived not far from me. He excused his invasion with the usual remark: "I happened to be passing, and saw your light was on, so I thought . . ." He broke off as he caught sight of Andrei. Andrei's face was not recognizable in the dusk; my desk lamp lit up only his blue and gold epaulettes and the numerous decorations on his chest. Sykov greeted Andrei who only nodded without rising from his chair. The newcomer obviously felt that he had called at an awkward moment. It isn't so easy to make conversation with an M.V.D. officer as with ordinary mortals. Besides, who knew what the officer was here for? On official business, quite possibly. In such cases it's much the best to make yourself scarce. Anyway, the taciturn major showed no inclination to talk. So Sykov declined the chair I offered him, with the remark:

"I'll drop in some other time. I think I'll go and see who's around in the club."

He vanished as suddenly as he had arrived. Next morning he probably told everybody in his office that I was on friendly terms with the M.V.D., embellishing his story, of course. Among official S.M.A. circles my stock would rise: intimate relations with the M.V.D. were not without significance.

Andrei sat a little longer without speaking, then rose and remarked: "I think it's about time I was going, too. Drop in and see me whenever you're in Potsdam."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

KING ATOM

Siemens in Arnstadt: that's under control isn't it ?

"Yes.

"Read this."

The head of the Administration for Industry handed me a code telegram struck across diagonally in red to indicate that it was secret. It read: 'Electronic measuring instruments discovered. Object of use unknown. Suspect atom research. Awaiting instructions. Vassiliev.'

Colonel Vassiliev was the S.M.A. plenipotentiary at the Siemens works in Arnstadt, as well as the director of the scientific research institute for television which was attached to the works. He was an experienced and reliable man: if he mentioned 'atom research' he had reason for doing so. I held the telegram in my hand, waiting for Alexandrov to say more.

"We must send someone there. As the works is under your direction it would be best if you went yourself," he said.

"It would be as well to take someone from the Department for Science and Technique with me," I observed.

Half an hour later the deputy head of the Department for Science and Technique, Major Popov, and I left Karlshorst for Thuringia. We reached Arnstadt just before midnight, and went straight to Colonel Vassiliev's house, right opposite the works. He had been phoned that we were coming, and he and his assistant were waiting for us,

"What have you discovered, Comrade Colonel?" Major Popov asked.

"Let's go to the works at once and you'll see for yourself," Vassiliev said.

Accompanied by the commander of the works guard we made our way through the darkness to the far end of the yard, to the warehouse for raw materials and finished production. A guard challenged us outside; and inside, before a sealed door, we found a second armed

guard. When the seal was removed we passed into a great warehouse packed with half-assembled electrical equipment: unfinished war production—a scene common to all the German factories immediately after the war.

Vassiliev halted beside several large, long woodencases. They contained enormous glass utensils with spherical swellings in their middle; they were packed with great care, and held by special clamps. The equipment was similar to the ordinary cathode tubes used in oscillographs, but was much bigger. It was an easy deduction that it was connected with electrical measurement, and the type of insulation used showed that it was intended for hightension current of enormous voltage, such as is employed in cyclotrons for experiments in atom-splitting. One of the pieces had a special attachment for taking photograms of the process. Judging by its construction it was not intended for measuring continuous charge, but a single, sudden, enormous application of current.

The cases were marked: 'With great care, glass', but we vainly looked for any indication of where they had come from or whom they were consigned to. They bore only indecipherable rows of numbers and letters.

"How did they get here?" I asked Vassiliev. "They couldn't have been produced in this works."

He only shrugged his shoulders.

Next morning we opened an official inquiry. All the people who might be expected to have some knowledge of the mysterious cases were summoned one by one to Vassiliev's office. The warehouse men knew nothing, for the cases had not been opened on delivery to the warehouse, and had lain until Vassiliev had discovered them. The technical staff said the instruments had not been produced in Arnstadt, but had probably come with other material from the Telefunken and Siemens chief works in Berlin.

We felt convinced that they did not even know precisely what instruments they were being asked about.

We decided to send a wire direct to Karlshorst, asking for the help of experts from the Special Group. The Special Group is the highest Soviet organization for scientific research in Germany and is attached to the M.V.D. Department for Science and Technique in Potsdam. They have full powers to make direct contact at once, if necessary with all the scientific research organizations in the Soviet Union.

It did not surprise us to find the mysterious apparatus in the Siemens warehouse at Arnstadt. During the later years of the war all the large German works shifted their industrial plant and established branches and depots in areas less subject to air attack

Moreover, immediately before the capitulation the more valuable installations and stores of raw material were removed and secretly deposited in various remote parts. We often came across most interesting material in the least expected places.

It was of great importance to find out who had ordered this apparatus to be made, and whom it was intended for. To discover this, we must first ascertain where it had been produced. Only a very few German works could have made it, the most important of these being at Siemensstadt, in the British sector of Berlin. That was beyond the scope of our authority—at least, officially. On the other hand, the Telefunken works were at Erfurt, and they were concerned with producing huge transmitter valves for broadcasting stations. Telefunken-Erfurt was perfectly able to handle such a contract. Moreover, the technical directors at Erfurt were in constant business contact with Siemensstadt, and had a pretty good idea of all that went on in other Telefunken works. There we should find the threads linking up with the mysterious apparatus at Arnstadt,

We decided that Colonel Vassiliev should await the arrival of the Special Group experts, while Major Popov and I visited the Telefunken works at Erfurt.

We notified the S.M.A. control officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Yevtikov and Lieutenant Novikov, that we were coming to Erfurt, and found them waiting for us in the former directors' office.

When we explained the reason for our visit they breathed a sigh of relief; they had obviously been expecting one of the regular inquiries into their failure to comply with production plans and reparations deliveries. We questioned all the engineers working in the department for transmitter valve production, and came upon several essential clues. Shortly before the capitulation they had executed some special orders for gigantic electrodes and other parts for some quite unknown and completely new type of construction.

The construction plans had come from Berlin, and the parts, when manufactured, were to be sent there, presumably for assembly. The work was strictly secret. When we persisted in asking the origin of the commission and the construction plans, the technical head of

the transmitter valve department said uncertainly: "Berlin-Dahlem ... I think . . ."

That was good enough. During the war Berlin-Dahlem had been the headquarters of the secret laboratories for atomic physics engaged in atom-splitting experiments.

At this stage Colonel Vassiliev telephoned from Arnstadt to report that the Special Group experts had arrived. I knew that Lieutenant-Colonel Yevtikov was a sluggish sort of individual, so

I asked Lieutenant Novikov to get reliable men to start a thorough search immediately for anything that could have any connection with the mysterious order, and to place anything found under lock and key and post a military guard over it. Lieutenant Novikov was- an energetic and able man, an engineer by profession, who later, when the Telefunken-Erfurt was transformed into a Soviet A.G. company, was appointed chief engineer to the works. While he set to work on the inquiries, Major Popov and I drove back to Arnstadt.

In Vassiliev's office we found a group of men who were obviously scientists and thoroughly at home in laboratories and research in situations. Together with them there were several taciturn men in civilian dress, who took no part in the discussion of technical points and kept mainly in the background. But one could see that they were the real bosses: they were the M.V.D. shadows.

The experts had already examined the mysterious apparatus, and without asking them any questions we felt that they confirmed our suppositions. - Major Popov reported on our visit to Telefunken Erfurt. Now we had the unpleasant feeling that our report was acquiring the features of a judicial interrogation; it was as though the M.V.D shadows suspected that we might be concealing something. Even in dealings with Soviet officers that institution applies its quite distinctive methods.

A searching examination of the technical employees at Arnstadt continued all that day. Each individual had to pledge himself in writing to the strictest secrecy. Towards evening the apparatus was all taken to Berlin, under reinforced escort and with the greatest Of precautions.

Accompanied by Major Popov and myself, the Special Group experts went on to Erfurt. Yevtikov had already been ordered not to let anybody leave the works who was likely to be required for questioning.

The inquiry went on all night: the taciturn men with the pale faces seemed to make no difference between night and day. The inquiry was held in Yevtikov's office, but he, Major Popov, and I spent the night in an adjacent room, whence one or another of us was summoned to establish some fact or to give information, as we were well acquainted with the activities of the Telefunken works. The Special Group acquired not only a mass of fresh material, but also a list of the German scientists and engineers who had been directly concerned with carrying out the secret commission. Once more the threads linked up with the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute and the secretly laboratories for atomic physics in Berlin-Dahlem.

One of the leading German atomic physicists was Dr Otto Hahn a pupil of Max Planck. A number of the German scientists who had been working in his laboratory fell into the hands of the Soviet authorities after the capitulation and were taken to the Soviet Union where they were afforded every possibility of continuing their research. Such famous German scientists as Professor Herz and Dr Arden are now working in Soviet Research Institutes connected with atomic research under the general direction of Professor Kapitza who is also head of the Supreme Administration for the scientific research organizations attached to the Ministry for Special Weapons.

By the last few months of the war the Germans had cyclotrons for atom-splitting at their disposition. But the catastrophic situation at the fronts-- and the destruction of the German heavy-water plant in Norway by the R.A.F. forced them to suspend attempts to solve the secret of the atom. Before the final capitulation they scattered all the atom laboratory equipment in spots which seemed safe from discovery. The Soviet authorities set up Special Units to search exclusively for the secret weapons on which Hitler had set such great hopes.

During the month following our finds at Arnstadt all who had had anything to do with it were once more summoned to Potsdam-Babelsberg, to the headquarters of the Special Group. Somehow or other it had got hold of some valuable clues, both from German scientists working in the Soviet Union and from many others living in the German western zones. At times one cannot but feel admiration at the precision and speed with which the M.V.D. works. It is with good reason that this highly responsible field of research has been entrusted to it.

While the Special Group was solving the problem of the Arnstadt equipment the S.M.A. made a further important discovery. From Suslov, the Scientific and Technical Department's representative

for Thuringia, the head of the department, Colonel Kondakov, received a telegram announcing that 'The Levkovich Group has come upon a secret store of equipment whose purpose is unknown'. Colonel Levkovich was the head of the Dismantling Group operating in Thuringia. Such discoveries were by no means rare; dismantling teams had more than once come across double walls, with special installations or machinery concealed between them. Because of this a circular had been issued, instructing that all the walls of dismantled works were to be sounded. The dismantlers also searched systematically for plant removed from factories and works immediately before the capitulation.

Kondakov sent two of his officers to Thuringia immediately.

In the abandoned galleries of an unfinished underground factory, packed apparatus

which in connection with very

situated in a forest, they saw carefully

apparently had been intended for use

high-tension transformers or dischargers such as are required in laboratories researching into the problems of high-tension current. They were especially struck by the remarkable scale of this apparatus, and especially the insulation. Although the experts from Karlshorst had never had anything to do with cyclotrons, they thought at once of atomic research, and cabled for experts from the Special Group.

A few hours later the experts arrived from Babelsberg; their car was escorted by a second containing a force of soldiers in green caps: M.V.D. special troops. One glance at the plant convinced the experts of the significance of the find. A cypher cable was sent to General Pashchin, in the Ministry for Special Weapons at Moscow, and the following day a group of M.V.D. experts left Moscow to take over the plant. As soon as they arrived the area, with a circumference of several miles, was sealed off with M.V.D. guards. From that moment neither the men from Karlshorst nor those of the Special Group from Babelsberg were allowed to visit the area until the entire equipment had been removed to the Soviet Union. Later, Colonel Kondakov explained that we had not discovered anything new in the sphere of atomic research in Germany. Similar equipment was being made in the U.S.S.R. before the war, under the Supervision of Professor Kapitza. Owing to war-time difficulties, Germany had been unable to conduct the research on any large scale.

The Purely scientific and theoretical aspects of problems associated with the atom have been known to the scientists of many countries for many years past, and Germany failed to find the solution to the problem of splitting the atom chiefly because of technical difficulties -above all, that of constructing the necessary plant and providing the energy for splitting the atom.

One must remark on the striking difference between the Soviet and the foreign press in its handling of atomic questions. We officers from Soviet Russia, who stood on the bounds between two worlds saw the difference more clearly than anybody else. While in general the Soviet press maintained an excessive silence, the foreign press was vociferous, and reminded one of a woman going into hysterics at the sight of a mouse. The fuss made over the atom bomb is indicative of fear and shows a lack of sense of reality. In the last resort the atom bomb alone cannot decide the destiny of the world. Man has already produced the atom bomb, and he will always be mightier than the atom.

"It's amazing how much fuss is being made over the atom bomb" Colonel Kondakov remarked one day.

"Yes, and the reports always come from 'reliable sources' his assistant, Major Popov, smirked. "Sometimes from circles close to Karlshorst, sometimes 'direct from Moscow'."

"To tell the truth, the foreign press knows more than we ourselves do," the colonel sighed. "Their continual quest for the sensational..." His remark was typical of the attitude of responsible Soviet officials. Each of us knew exactly so much as he had to know in order to perform his duties. And the majority of us went to great trouble to know as little as possible. While the world was shivering with atom fever our life pursued its normal course. I am reminded of a comparatively unimportant yet significant incident that occurred in my everyday life about that time.

Shortly after my return from Thuringia the Administration for Reparations sent me a file containing construction plans accompanied by a note: 'We send you the prototype plans for a standard house----cottage-intended for workers' colonies in the Soviet Union, in accordance with reparations Order No We request you to check the electrical installations for the proposed project and confirm them. We also request you to prepare an overall plan of electrical installations for a total of 120,000 houses, and to notify us which works are in a position to execute such an order

Petrov: Head of the Electro-Industry Department of the Administration for Reparations.'

The plans included construction diagrams for an ordinary German one-family house, consisting of three rooms, kitchen, bath room, and toilet. In the basement there were a coal cellar and wash house.

I and several other engineers studied the plans with much interest. When we go back to Russia we'll get a little house like that," one of us remarked. The electrical installations were checked, the plans approved, and the Administration for Reparations sent them on to Moscow for final approval.

A little later I found the file again on my desk, with an accompanying note: 'On the instruction of the U.S.S.R. Ministry for the Building Industry I request you to make certain requisite modifications in the project. Petrov.'

Curious to see what improvements Moscow had ordered, I unfolded the plans. To begin with, the wash-house had been abolished; the Ministry considered that the washing could be done just as well in the kitchen. Second, the veranda was eliminated. Quite understandable: the tenants weren't to loll around on verandas.

After the modifications had been made accordingly, the project was returned to Moscow for approval. A few weeks later I found it on my desk yet again, this time accompanied by the laconic remark: 'Please make the necessary alterations. Petrov.'

This time the changes were pretty drastic. Without a word of explanation the bathroom and the toilet had been abolished. Every workers' colony has public baths, so why a bathroom to each house? But the toilet? Apparently the Moscow authorities were of the opinion that such things were unnecessary so long as there were bushes around.

The plans for electrical installations had been provided with a plentiful crop of thick red question-marks. For instance, in the bedroom there were question-marks against the wall plug, the bedside lamp to be attached to it, and the cord to enable it to be worked from the bed. The 120,000 workers' dwellings had been refashioned to meet the Soviet requirements. The cottages had been turned into ordinary huts. As finally 'modernized', the project was the subject of bitter jest among the engineers of our department, 'lid none of them expressed any desire to live in such a house.

From one-fourth to one-third of the budget for the current five-year plan for the 're-establishment of Soviet Economy', i.e. some 60 milliard roubles, goes directly or indirectly into atom research and development. But if a man, the lord of creation and the creator of the atom bomb, needs to perform his natural functions let him run to the nearest bush. So the State interest requires!

In the high summer of 1946 a number of commissions from various Soviet ministries arrived in Karlshorst to inquire into the possibilities of allocating reparations orders and of exploiting the finished production lying in the warehouses of German industrial works. Two representatives from the Soviet Ministry for Shipbuilding invited me to travel with them through the Soviet zone to study the situation on the spot. Colonel Bykov, Captain Fedorov, and I set out from Karlshorst to go to Weimar. On the road I got to know my companions quite well. They were both extremely pleasant fellows, and ignored military regulations so far as to use the familiar Christian name and patronymic, rather than the prescribed rank and surname

They were not professional officers but engineers. And besides, they were in the navy; anybody who has had anything to do with seamen knows the difference between the navy and the army.

On our arrival at Erfurt we put up at the Haus Kossenhaschen which had been turned into the staff headquarters of the dismantling teams working in Thuringia. We sat in the old-fashioned, oak paneled hall, talking while we waited to be called to lunch. I had been here often before, so the scene was familiar to me. But my companions had left Moscow only a few days previously, and they were keenly interested in all that was happening.

"Tell me, Gregory Petrovich, what's going on around here ? Are they preparing for an expedition to the North Pole?" Colonel Bykov asked me in an undertone. The strange inquiry was due to the fact that all the dismantling officers bustling to and fro were wearing enormous boots of reindeer hide, although it was a very warm summer day. And these men in fur boots carried sporting guns with them wherever they went, even taking them into the dining hall

"No," I answered. "It's only that the dismantlers have found a store of German airmen's arctic equipment somewhere or other, and now they're enjoying the pleasure of trying it out. And they've got their guns with them because they're going off to hunt immediately they've had their dinner."

"An amusing lot !" The colonel shook his head. "Haven't they really got anything else to do?"

"The position's rather complicated," I explained. "The main work of dismantling was finished some time ago now, and the majority of them haven't anything to do. But they aren't having a bad time here, so their chief activity in life at present is to drag out whatever they're doing. As they're directly under Moscow control, the S.M.A. can't do anything about it."

"In Berlin we were told that many of them have accumulated enough to retire for the rest of their lives," Fedorov remarked.

"Recently the S.M.A. Department for Precision Tools did take up one case," I said. "It involved the director of the State Watch and Clock Works No. 2. He had been sent to Germany to dismantle the watch and clock industry. Soon after his return to Moscow the S.M.A. discovered that while here he had acquired many thousand gold watches and several dozen kilograms of gold illegally."

"That certainly should provide for the rest of his life, " Fedorov remarked with conviction in his tone. "If only for a lifelong free lodging."

"I doubt whether he'll get that," I commented.

"Why do you?" The captain was astonished.

"Well, the circumstances were reported to the higher authorities, and they hushed it all up."

"But why?" Fedorov still failed to understand.

"Don't ask me!" I replied. "Apparently they prefer not to bring such people into disrepute. 'Don't wash dirty linen in public', says the old saying. His wasn't the first case of its kind."

"And he's a Soviet director!" the colonel exclaimed indignantly. I could not help smiling bitterly. Nodding towards the dismantling officers bustling about, I said: "In the Soviet Union all these people are either high ministerial officials or factory directors.

And hardly any of them are very different from that director I've just told you of. You can take my word for it. We in the S.M.A. are getting more and more of that sort of case brought to our notice."

There was an awkward silence, broken only when the head waiter summoned us to the dining hall.

We spent two days visiting factories and works in the Erfurt district. My companions were especially concerned with orders for

special electrical installations in warships, and in particular in U-boats. I was struck by the interest they showed in the life going on around us-I had been more than a year in Germany now, and I was not so impressed by the contrasts as I had been at first. Among the works we visited was the Telefunken factory; my companions wanted to find out whether it could undertake reparations orders for naval receiving and transmitting apparatus. As we drove along the drive to the offices the colonel exclaimed: "Look at that, Victor Stepanovich ! Tennis courts !"

Captain Fedorov also stared through the window at several courts surrounded with a high wire-mesh wall. Around the courts there were flowerbeds, and a little square where one could rest. The captain gazed with intense curiosity at the tennis courts, the garden, and the nearby factory buildings, as though the very fact that they were all to be found together within the factory walls was noteworthy in itself.

In the Soviet Union it is continually being proclaimed that the workers need to have opportunities for rest and recreation within the factory area. But as a rule the idea never gets beyond the proclamation stage, and such facilities are to be found only in a few works which serve as showplaces. But now, in Germany, the two Soviet officers were seeing things which they had been told at home were the achievement exclusively of the Soviet system.

Not far from the office building there were several rows of cycle stands, all of them empty.

"But where are the cycles, Gregory Petrovich?" the captain~asked me.

Now that's really too simple!" I retorted. "In Russia, of course."

"Oh, of course!" he smiled. "But there must have been a lot~here at one time. Almost one per worker."

After we had discussed our business with the Soviet control officers and the Telefunken directorate's representatives, Colonel Bykov turned to me with an unexpected request: "Couldn't you arrange for us to go over the works? So that we can get to know

the labor processes and organization?"

The technical director was quite willing to take us round. We went right through the production departments, from beginning to end of the process. In a great hall where electrodes were being wound and assembled for wireless valves several hundred women and girls were sitting at tables. The director explained the details# but Colonel Bykov did not listen to him. The colonel had fallen a little way behind, and was unobtrusively surveying the hall. His eyes passed slowly over the huge windows, over the high walls, the ceiling, and rested for a moment on the glass partitions that separated one sector from another. As a high ministerial official and head of one of the main departments in the Ministry for Shipbuilding he was well acquainted with working conditions in the Soviet Union, and it was obvious that he was quietly comparing them with conditions in this German works.

As we were leaving the hall Captain Fedorov drew me back. "Gregory Petrovich," he said, "how do you like this seat?" He perched himself on one of the seats, all of the same pattern, used by the women workers. It was fitted with a padded backrest, and its height was adjustable.

"What do you find interesting about that seat, Victor Stepanovich?" I asked him.

"To start with, it's comfortable. For a worker it's absolutely luxurious. But quite apart from that, did you notice the seats they had in the factory office?"

"No, I didn't."

"They're exactly the same," he said with a faint smile. "Directors and workers, they all sit on the same seats. And they're really comfortable, too."

As we went on, the technical director began to complain of the difficulties they met with in regard to labour power; workers tended to come and go as they liked, and this had a detrimental effect on output. "It takes four weeks to train a new worker," he said. "But many of them don't stay longer than a fortnight. And absenteeism is very common."

"But haven't you any means of stopping it?" the colonel asked in astonishment.

The director shrugged his shoulders. "A worker can be away three days without good reason," he explained. "If he's away any longer he must obtain a doctor's certificate."

"Then how do you stop slacking and shifting from one works to another?" the colonel asked.

"If the worker comes within the categories I have just referred to we have no powers of dismissal. On the other hand, if he wishes to throw up his job we can't make him work," the director replied.

"I'm not thinking of dismissal, I'm thinking of the necessity to make a man work," the colonel persisted.

The director stared at him blankly. "I beg your pardon?" he said.

The colonel repeated his remark.

"We have no legal means of compelling a worker to work. We can only dismiss a worker who violates the labor code," the German answered.

There was an awkward pause. The worst punishment a German worker could suffer was dismissal. In the Soviet Union dismissal was frequently a worker's one, unachievable, dream. A Soviet director can deal with a worker entirely as he wishes. He can put a man on a poor and badly paid job, and he can, or rather must, hand a man over to the law for arriving late, even if it be only a few minutes. But the worker has no right whatever to change his place of work without the director's agreement. Arbitrary absenteeism is liable to lead to imprisonment. We Soviet officers were used to such discipline, and so we could not understand the German director's impotence. And he for his part was highly astonished at what he evidently regarded as our absurd questions. Two worlds: two systems.

"You were speaking of the labour code, just now," the colonel went on. "What labour legislation governing relations between employer and employee is in force today? Laws dating from the Hitler regime?"

"The German labour code dates mainly from the time of Bismarck," the German answered. "It has suffered only insignificant modifications since then."

"The time of Bismarck?" Bykov sounded incredulous. "But that's something like seventy years ago"

"Yes," the director answered, and for the first time a look of pride showed in his face. "Germany's social legislation is one of the most progressive in the world . . . I mean in Western Europe," he hurriedly corrected himself as he remembered that he was talking to Soviet officers.

The colonel looked at the captain. The captain, for his part, looked at me. I was used to this kind of mute dialogue; it was the normal reaction of Soviet people to things that made them think, but which could not be discussed.

I took advantage of the fact that none of our control officers was near to ask the director why there had been a sudden fall in radio valve production during the last few months. When one inspects a factory it is best to talk with both sides separately.

"The main reason is the shortage of wolfram and molybdenum wire," he answered.

"But you were recently allocated a supply securing the production plan for six months," I retorted. "Haven't you received it from Berlin yet?"

"Yes, Herr Major, but don't you know . . . he muttered in his embarrassment. "Hasn't Herr Novikov reported to you . . . ?"

"He's reported nothing. What's happened?"

The director hesitated before answering:

"We needed the wire so urgently that we sent a lorry to Berlin to fetch it."

"On the way back the lorry was stopped . . ."

"What happened to the wire?"

"Herr Major, our men couldn't do anything"

"But where's the wire?"

"As our lorry was approaching Leipzig at night another lorry blocked its way. Armed men with machine-pistols forced our driver and the dispatching clerk to get out, and they took over the lorry and drove off. The wire . . ."

"Who were the bandits?"

"They were wearing Soviet uniforms," he answered reluctantly. As we got into our car after leaving the director, Captain Fedorov asked:

"But who could have been interested in that lorry and its wire?

D'you think it was some diversionists trying to sabotage reparations deliveries?"

"We're well aware of that kind of diversionary activity," I told him. "The lorry will be found abandoned in a forest in a day or two, with the wire still on it, but stripped of its tires and battery. I expect that's what Novikov is hoping for, too. That's why he hasn't reported the matter yet."

"But who goes in for that sort of thing?" the captain asked.

"You live here for any length of time and you'll find out." I avoided a direct answer.

From the Telefunken works we drove to a Thiel works for precision instruments and clocks. It was situated in a small village which we had difficulty in finding on a map. There were several other quite large industrial works engaged in armature production in the same village. It lay in a narrow valley between wooded hills, along the sides of which the Thuringian houses, brightly painted, clung in rows. It was difficult to believe that this place was a workers' settlement.

"It looks more like a sanatorium," Fedorov remarked, and his voice expressed envy, or regret. "In this country workers live as if, they were staying at a health resort."

We called on the S.M.A. control officers, who had taken up their residence in the villa of one of the factory owners. As we came away the colonel laughed and said: "Victor Stepanovich, what do you think these brothers of ours are most afraid of?"

"I&st they should be transferred somewhere else," the captain replied without stopping to think. And we all understood what he meant by 'somewhere else'.

People living in the West would never guess what it is that most astonishes Soviet people, especially engineers, on their first visit to a German factory. It might be thought that the Soviet officers would gaze open-mouthed at the enormous buildings, the innumerable modern machines and other technical achievements. But such things have long since lost any power to surprise us. It is rather the

western peoples who would be astonished at the size of Soviet factories and the scope of their technical achievement. It is not western technique, not western machinery, that are new to us, but the place which man occupies in society and the State. We have to recognize the fact that men in the western system of free development of social relations enjoy far greater rights and liberties, that, to put it simply,, they get much more out of life than do the Soviet people of the corresponding social stratum.

As we were traveling on to our next point of call that evening, not far from Jena a fault developed in our car's dynamo, and it stopped charging. To avoid running down the battery completely we switched off our headlamps and drove slowly through the night.

On one side of the narrow road a steep cliff overgrown with trees towered above us, on the other side the cliff fell away into bottomless darkness. In the most God-forsaken spot of all, in the middle of a gorge, our auto petered out completely. We got out to stretch our legs while the driver examined the engine by torchlight.

A dark form pushing a cycle loomed out of the darkness.

"Can you tell us where we are?" I asked the German.

"You're at Goethe's castle," he answered. "It's right above your heads."

"But is there a village anywhere near?"

"Yes. You'll come to a bridge a little way along the road, and there's a village on the other side of it."

"I can't do anything to it, Comrade Colonel," our driver reported a moment or so later. "It'll have to go to a garage."

"Now what shall we do? Spend the night in the car?" my companions fumed.

"Of course not !" I said. "There's a village not far off, We'll go there for the night."

"God forbid, Gregory Petrovich !" the two sailors exclaimed in horror. "We shan't find a commandatura or an hotel for Soviet officers there."

"And very good, too!" I answered.

"Cut it out !" they objected. "We're not tired of life yet."

"Why did you say that?" It was my turn to be astonished.

"Have you forgotten where we are? Not a day passes without a murder being committed. It's been drummed into our heads that we've got to take the utmost care. We've been told not to let our driver spend a night in a car alone, for he's sure to be murdered if we do. You know for yourself what things are like."

"And where were you told all this?"

"In Moscow."

I couldn't help laughing. "Well, if that's what you were told in Moscow, it must be so. But you get a different view of it when you're close up to it. We shall sleep better in the village than in any commandatura hotel: I guarantee you that. After all, we've all got pistols in any case."

After long argument they agreed to take the risk of spending the night in a wild and strange village. They told the driver he was to remain in the car, and we set out to walk,

"But where shall we sleep there?" The captain was still dubious.

"You can't wake people up in the middle of the night and force your way into their house."

"Don't worry, Victor Stepanovich. The very first house we come to will be an hotel. Would you care to bet on it?"

"But how can you be so sure that it will be an hotel?" Captain Fedorov asked. "Anyway, if you're right, we'll open a bottle of cognac."

"It's quite simple. We're traveling along a country road, and in Germany the hotels are always found in the main street, at the beginning and end of the village. That's an easy way to win cognac!"

"All the same, I don't like it." The captain sighed mournfully.

Some ten minutes later a bridge loomed up ahead of us. Immediately beyond it we saw light streaming through the chinks of window-shutters.

"And now we'll see who's right, Victor Stepanovich," I said, as I shone my torch on to a signboard, depicting a foaming tankard, fixed above the main door. "Here's the hotel."

A few minutes later we were sitting at a table in the bar-parlour.

My companions cast suspicious glances around the room, as though they expected to be attacked at any moment. The room was decorated in the Thuringian manner, and had heavily carved dark oak furniture, and antlers on all the walls. The ceiling- and wall-lights were fashioned from antlers, too. At the back gleamed the chromium-plated taps of the bar, and two girls in white aprons stood smiling behind the counter.

After we had arranged rooms for the night, we ordered hot coffee.

From our cases we took bread, sausage, and a bottle of cognac which the captain had brought with him as a 'remedy against the flu'!

"Ali, Gregory Petrovich, it's all right to drink, but we'll be slaughtered like quails later on," the captain sighed as he drew the cork. "You'll have to answer for it all to St. Peter."

"Would you like me to betray my little secret to you?" I said.

"Then you'll sleep more quietly. I have to do a lot of traveling about on official business, and I've driven through Thuringia and Saxony again and again with a fully loaded lorry. In such cases there is a certain amount of danger, and you have to be on your guard.

And when evening comes on and I have to look for quarters for the night ... do you know what I do?"

"You make for a town where there's a commandatura hotel, of course," the captain answered with the utmost conviction.

"I did that once; but only once. After that first experience I've always tried to avoid towns where there's a Soviet commandatura and garrison. I deliberately pull up in the first village I come to and spend the night in an hotel."

"But why?" Colonel Bykov asked.

"Because it's safer that way. During my twelve months in Germany I've had to draw and fire my pistol three times ... and in every case I had to fire at men in Soviet uniform ... out to commit

a robbery," I explained after a pause.

"Interestingly" the captain said through his teeth.

"I spent one night in an officers' hotel at Glachau," I went on,

"To be on the safe side I drove the lorry right under my bedroom window. Hardly had I gone to bed when I heard it being dismantled."

"Amusing !" the colonel commented.

"It wasn't at all amusing to have to chase through the streets in my underclothes and waving a pistol," I retorted. "I rounded up two Soviet lieutenants and a sergeant, called out the commandatura patrol, and had them arrested. Next morning the commandant told me: 'I quite believe you, Comrade Major, but all the same I shall have to let the prisoners go. I haven't time for such petty matters. Let me give you some good advice for future occasions. Next time, wait till they've robbed your car, and then you'll have evidence to show. Then shoot them out of hand and call us in when you've done it. We shall draw up a statement on the affair and be very grateful to you. It's a pity you were in such a hurry this time.'"

At that moment a fashionably dressed young woman and a man entered the bar-parlour. They sat down at a table opposite us and lit cigarettes.

"All very well" the captain said. "But there's one thing about this place I don't like: the people are too well dressed. Look at that fellow sitting opposite us with that dame. I wouldn't be surprised if they're former Nazis, who've hidden themselves away in this lonely spot. And now we've come and stirred them up. And did you notice that group of youngsters a little earlier? They came in, stood whispering to one another, then slipped out again ! It strikes me as highly suspicious."

"Well, I think the best thing to do is to go to bed," I proposed.

"Bed, maybe ! But sleep?" the colonel retorted. "I think our first job is to see which side our window looks out on."

As soon as we went to our bedrooms upstairs, the colonel and the captain made a security check. They opened and closed the windows and tested the shutters. "We were told they throw hand-grenades through the window," the captain explained. He went into the

corridor and tried to discover whether the adjacent rooms were occupied by members of the Werewolf organization.'

(The organization planned by Nazis to carry on guerrilla resistance and terrorism after the war. -TR)

Finally he tested the door lock. My companions occupied one room, and I had the one next to it. Now, for the first time since I had arrived in Germany, I felt a little dubious. I bolted the door, thought for a moment, then

took out my pistol and slipped it under my pillow. After undressing I put out the light and plunged beneath the enormous feather bed

The following morning I knocked at my companions' door to awaken them. I heard sleepy voices, then the bolt was shot back. They were weary and worn out. I gathered that they had sat up till long past midnight, discussing whether they should get into bed dressed or undressed. Now, in the morning sunlight, all their fears and anxieties were dispelled, and they began to pull each other's leg.

"Tell us how you went to the toilet in the middle of the night with your pistol at the ready, Victor Stepanovich!" the colonel said winking at me.

"Do you know who that well-dressed couple were yesterday evening?" I asked him. "The village shoemaker and his wife. And he's an old communist, too. I asked the landlord. And you took them for Nazi leaders!"

We had asked the landlord the previous evening to arrange for a mechanic to help our driver first thing in the morning. When we returned to the car we found them both hard at work. To pass the time, we climbed the steep path up to Goethe's castle, and were shown over the place by the caretaker-guide. When we returned the car was in order, and before long we were on our way again.

We journeyed through the length and breadth of Thutrin and Saxony for several days, controlling, sequestrating, requisitioning current production, and allocating orders on behalf of the Administration for Reparations. It was during this trip that I first began to experience an unusual feeling. It made me realize that the year I had spent outside the Soviet Union had not passed without

leaving its effect on me. Somehow, a change had taken place with in me. I was conscious of that as I worked and lived together with my two naval companions. They provided a kind of standard measure against which I could check the process that was going on inside me

As I talked with them I was disturbed to realize that my thoughts and my outlook had been modified by comparison with those of Soviet people. What I felt was not a simple renunciation of what i had believed in favor of something else. It was an enlargement of all my horizon.

CHAPTER 12

PRISONERS OF THE SYSTEM

"Let me introduce you," Colonel Kondakov said. "Lieutenant Colonel Dinashvili."

I shook hands with a man in grey civilian clothes. His white shirt was open at the collar and he was not wearing a tie: an exaggerated negligence in civil attire, characteristic of the professional officer.

A puffy face, whitish complexion, obviously long unacquainted with sunlight. A weary indifference in the black, staring eyes. A flabby handgrip.

At the request of the M.V.D.'s Central Operational Group, Colonel Kondakov and I had gone to their headquarters. There were certain matters in their hands which overlapped analogous material in Colonel Kondakov's department, and so the M.V.D., had invited the S.M.A. into consultation and assistance. Kondakov studied the reports of previous examinations of certain prisoners, and other material relating to them. The first case was that of a former scientific worker in the laboratory at Peenemunde, the headquarters of German research into rocket-missiles.

"A slight delay !" the lieutenant-colonel said with a glance at the door. "I've given orders for him to be made rather more presentable first."

"Have you had him long?" Kondakov asked.

"Some seven months," Dinashvili answered in a drowsy tone, as though he had not slept a wink since the day of his birth. "We received certain information from agents, and decided to take a closer look at him."

"But why ... in such circumstances?" the colonel asked.

"He was living in the western zone, but his mother is in Leipzig.

We ordered her to write to him and ask him to visit her. And now we've got to keep him under lock and key until the question's cleared up.

"But how did his mother come to agree?"

"We threatened to expropriate her green grocer's shop - if she didn't. We told her we only wanted to have a friendly talk with her son," Dinashvili explained with a yawn.

A little later a sergeant brought in the prisoner. The chalky whiteness of the man's face and his feverish, deeply sunken eyes were more eloquent than all the M.V.D. endeavors to make him more presentable.

"Well, you get to work on him, and I'll take a rest." Dinashvili yawned again and stretched himself out on a sofa. The prisoner, an engineer and expert on artillery weapons, was of particular interest to us, for according to agents' reports he had worked in the 'third stage', as it was called, at Peenemunde. The 'first stage' was concerned with weapons already tested in practice and being produced serially; the 'second stage' dealt with weapons that had not gone beyond the phase of tests inside the works; the 'third stage' was concerned with weapons that had not got farther than the planning phase. I knew all about the results of the work of the first two stages, but the 'third stage' represented a gap in our knowledge, for almost all the designs and formulae, etc., had been destroyed at the time of the capitulation. No factual material whatever had fallen into our hands; our only source of information was the oral testimony of a number of persons.

Judging by the reports of the interrogations so far made, the prisoner held for examination had worked among a group of scientists whose task was to produce guided rockets for anti-aircraft defense. The German decision to explore this line of activity had been due to the fact that the Allies' air-offensive powers had greatly outstripped Germany's air-defense resources. The rockets were planned to be shot from special mountings, without precise ranging on the target.

At a certain distance from the target plane, highly sensitive instruments built into the rocket head automatically directed the missiles and exploded them in the target's immediate vicinity. The Germans had already effectively exploited the same principle in magnetic mines and torpedoes, so causing the Allied fleets serious losses in the early days of the war. In the case of a rocket the problem was complicated by the much greater velocity both of the missile and of its target, by the smaller dimensions of the target, and by the fact that an aeroplane is constructed mainly of non-magnetic metal.

Nonetheless, we had indications that the Germans had actually found the solution to these problems. But there were many contradictory opinions as to how they had done so, whether, by radar, photo electric cells, or in some other manner.

The reports of the interrogations showed that the prisoner had

been ordered to reconstruct all the formulae and construction plans of the V-N rocket out of his own head. Colonel Kondakov turned the inquiry in a very different direction. After comparing the available data he tried to determine the position the prisoner had occupied in the complicated system of the Peenemunde scientific staff. He clearly saw that one individual could not possibly know every aspect of the work on the project, as the M.V.D. demanded.

"Would you be prepared to continue your work in a Soviet research institute?" he asked the prisoner.

"I've already asked again and again for an opportunity to prove the accuracy of my statements," the prisoner replied. "Here I can prove very little. You understand."

The grey form lying with his back to us on the sofa came abruptly to life. The lieutenant-colonel sprang to his feet. "You want your freedom? Then why did you flee to the West?" He stormed and raged at the prisoner, who shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

"I propose to place him at the disposition of General.

Kondakov turned to Dinashvili, mentioning the name of the general who was in charge of the Soviet research station at Peenemunde.

"There we'll get out of him all he knows."

"But supposing he escapes?" The lieutenant-colonel gave the prisoner a distrustful glance.

"Comrade Lieutenant-Colonel," Kondakov smiled stiffly, "for us the decisive question is how we can extract the greatest possible advantage from each individual case. I shall apply to higher authority to have the man transferred to Peenemunde."

We turned to the next case, which was connected with an idea for a really fantastic invention. Plans had not gone beyond the stage of the inventor's own calculations and sketches, and had never been tested by any official German organization. The man had been living in the French zone, and had offered his project to the French authorities for their consideration. The interested Soviet quarters had learned of his plans through the intermediary of the French

Communist Party, and they had put the case in the hands of the M.V.D. How the German inventor had been brought to the Soviet zone was not mentioned in the reports; one learned merely that he had been ten months in the cellars of the Potsdam Operational Group, and had been encouraged to continue work on his invention with all the numerous means it possessed of 'bringing influence to bear'.

We were confronted with a fairly young man, by profession an

electrical engineer who had specialized on low-tension current problems. During the war he had worked in the research laboratories of several important electro-technical firms concerned with telemechanics and television. He had been working on his invention for a number of years, but the plans had only begun to take practical shape towards the end of the war, by which time the German military authorities were no longer interested in such things.

He began to explain his invention, referring to the works leading German scientists in the field of optics for support. It was to consist of two instruments, a transmitter and a receiver. The transmitter, a comparatively small instrument, was intended to be dropped some miles behind the enemy lines; and when in operation the receiver, situated on the other side of the front, would show on a screen everything that was happening between the two instruments; in other words, all the enemy's dispositions and technical resources. The use of a series of transmitters and receivers would provide a survey of any desired sector of the front.

There was no indication in the reports of the reason why the M.V.D had held the prisoner for ten months. With their characteristic distrust, its officers assumed that he was attempting to conceal details from them, and tried every means of forcing him to say more than he actually knew.

In this case Colonel Kondakov tried a different tack from the one he had taken with the rocket specialist: he attempted to find out how far the inventor had realized his ideas in practice. He was interested not only in the theory but in the feasibility of its application. He plied the man with expert questions in the field of wireless telegraphy and television. The man passed the test with honor. But, with an obstinacy rarely met with behind the walls of the M.V.D., he hesitated to give up the key details of his invention. Possibly he was afraid the M.V.D. would liquidate him as an unnecessary and inconvenient witness when he had told them.

"Would you be prepared to demonstrate that your plan is technically feasible within the walls of a Soviet research institute?" Kondakov asked him.

"Herr Colonel, that's the one thing I wish for, the one thing I've asked for again and again," the man answered in a quivering voice. "He's lying, the swine !" a voice shouted from the sofa. Dinashvili sprang to his feet again. "He's only looking for an opportunity to escape. Why did he offer his invention to the French?"

"I propose to place this man at the disposition of Colonel Vassiliev in Amstadt," Kondakov told the M.V.D. officer. "If Vassiliev takes a negative view of his proposals, you can have him back and settle the matter as you wish."

"The way you're going on you'll let all my prisoners escape," Dinashvili fumed.

We devoted the rest of the day to examining various documents, chiefly agents' reports on German scientists and technicians in the western zones. We had to decide how far these people could be of practical use to the Soviet Union. If we thought they could be, the M.V.D. took further steps to 'realize the opportunity'.

We were finished late in the afternoon. Glancing at the clock, I decided to phone Andrei Kovtun. When I told him I was in Potsdam he invited me to call on him in his office.

Several months had passed since our first meeting in Karlshorst. Meanwhile, he had been visiting me almost every week. Sometimes he arrived in the middle of the night, sometimes towards dawn. If

I offered him some supper or breakfast, he only waved his hand wearily and said: "I merely wanted to drop in for a little while. I'll have a nap on your couch."

At first I was astonished by these irregular, purposeless visits; he seemed to find a morbid pleasure in talking about our school and student days. He went over the tiniest detail of our youthful experiences again and again, always ending with the exclamation: "Ah, they were great days!" It sometimes seemed to me that he came and talked to me simply to escape from his present circumstances.

I asked Colonel Kondakov to drop me outside the building of the M.V.D. central administration, where Andrei worked. A pass was already waiting for me at the inquiry office. In the dusk of the summer evening I walked through the garden and up to the second storey, where Andrei had his room.

"Well, pack up !" I said as I entered. "We're going to Berlin."
"Hmm! you're finished for the day, but I'm only just beginning" he snarled.

"What the devil did you ask me to come here for then?" I said angrily. After spending the day in Lieutenant-Colonel Dinashvili's company I felt an urgent desire to have some fresh air as soon as possible.

"Don't get worked up, Grisha! I've often been to your place, and you've never been here before."

I've already spent all day in a similar hole," I retorted making no attempt to conceal my annoyance. "I've no wish to stick here if you like, we'll go to Berlin and see a show. If not. . . ."

"You'd like to see a show?" he interrupted. "Well, you can see a good show here too. Things you'd never see in a theatre."

"I don't feel like it today," I insisted.

"Now listen, Grisha !" He changed his tone, and his voice recalled the days when he had sat astride my chair. "For a long time now I've been interested in a certain question. To make you understand, I shall have to go rather a long way back. You and I have nothing to conceal from each other. Nobody in the world knows me better than you do."

He was silent for a moment or two, then he added: "But to this very day I don't know you"

"What is it you want to know then?" I asked.

He went to the door and turned the key. Then from sockets in the wall he pulled several plugs attached to cords running to his desk

"Do you remember our childhood?" he said as he leaned back in his chair. "You were a boor just like me. And you must have had the same sort of sensitive reaction as I had. But you never said a word. In those days it used to make me mad with you. But now I must regard it as something praiseworthy. Do you know why?" I made no comment. After a moment he went on, staring under his desk:

"It's an old story. I was fourteen years old when it happened.

On the very eve of the October celebrations I was summoned to the school director's room. He had another man with him. Briefly and simply, this man took me to the G.P.U. There I was accused of having stuck cigarette butts on Stalin's portrait, and other counterrevolutionary crimes. Of course it was all sheer lies. Then they told me that as I was so young they were prepared to forgive me if I was prepared to work with them. What could I do? I was forced to sign a document condemning me to collaboration and silence. And so I became an N.K.V.D. spy. I hated Stalin with all my heart, I

decorated the toilet walls with anti-Soviet slogans, and yet I was an S.K.V.D. spy. Don't get anxious! I never denounced anybody. When they pestered me too much I wrote in charges against similar spies.

As I was in touch with the G.P.U. I knew their people. It didn't do them any harm."

He fidgeted in his seat and said without raising his eyes:

"I was mad with you in those days because you didn't share your thoughts frankly with me, I was convinced that you thought as I did. When we were students ... do you remember Volodia?" He mentioned the name of a mutual friend who had graduated from the Naval Academy shortly before the war broke out. "He used to talk to me openly. But you were always silent. And all the time it went on like that. I joined the Young Communists. You didn't. Now I'm in the Party. You're not. I'm a major in the State Security Service, and at the same time I'm a bigger enemy of the system than all my prisoners put together. But are you still a convinced Soviet citizen?"

Why are you so silent, damn you?"

"What is it you want from me?" I asked with a strange indifference. "An avowal of counter-revolutionary sentiments, or assurances of devotion to Stalin?"

"Ah! You don't need to tell me that !" He shook his head wrathfully. "I simply regard you as my best friend, and so I'd like to know what you really are."

"Then what am I to say to you?"

"Why don't you join the Party?" He gave me the vigilant look of an interrogating officer.

"It isn't difficult for me to answer that question," I said. "It's more difficult for you to answer the question: 'Why did you join the Party?'"

"Wriggling against" he cried in a blind fury, and let slip a foul curse. "Forgive me, it fell out!" he said apologetically.

"It's all because your life flatly contradicts your convictions, Andrei," I said. "But I do only just so much

"Aha! So that's why you don't join the Party !" he exclaimed with

unconcealed malevolence.

"Not entirely," I protested. "When I flew from Moscow here I had every intention of joining the Party on my return."

"You had?" He stressed the word derisively.

"There's no point in arguing over grammatical tenses, Comrade Interrogating Officer." I tried to turn the talk into a joke. I had the singular thought that the major of the State Security Service sitting opposite me suspected me of sympathizing with communism and was trying to convict me of this sympathy.

"Grisha, putting all jokes on one side," he said, staring straight into my eyes, "tell me, are you a blackguard or aren't you?"

"And you?" I retorted.

"Me? ... I'm a victim...." He let his eyes drop. "I have no choice But you're free."

There was a dead silence. Then that hysterical, toneless cry came again: "Tell me, are you a blackguard or aren't you?"

"I do all I can to become a good communist," I answered thoughtfully. I tried to speak honestly, but my words sounded false and hypocritical.

He sat for a time without speaking, as though seeking a hidden meaning in my words. Then he said calmly and coldly: "I think you're speaking the truth, and I believe I can help youyou want to learn to love the Soviet regime. Isn't that so?" As he received no answer, he continued: "I had an acquaintance

Today he's a big shot in Moscow. He did it like this: He arrested a man and accused him of making or planning to make an arrested a Stalin's life, a blow against the Kremlin, of poisoning the Moscow water supply, and similar crimes. Then he handed him a statement already drawn up and said: 'If you love Stalin sign this!'" Andrei smiled forcibly and added: "And I can help you to love Stalin Agreed? I'll arrange a little experiment for you. I'm sure it will help you in your endeavour to be a good communist."

"What am I to do?" I asked, feeling thoroughly annoyed. This conversation was getting on my nerves, especially as it was taking place in the M.V.D. headquarters. "I have no intention of signing any statement. And I certainly shan't come here to see you again,

"One visit will be enough." He smiled sardonically and looked at his watch. "The show will be starting in a moment. But now, not another word." He replaced the plugs of the telephone cords in their sockets. He opened a drawer and took out various documents, and after checking them reached for the telephone. From the conversation that ensued I gathered that the investigating officers subordinate to Andrei were at the other end of the line. Finally he nodded with satisfaction and replaced the receiver.

"Act one, scene one. You can think of your own title later," he said quietly, and switched on a dictaphone in front of him on the desk. Two voices sounded in the stillness of that large room: a pleasant, feminine voice in pure German, and a man's voice speaking German with a pronounced Russian accent.

"If you don't mind, Herr Lieutenant, I'd like to ask about my husband," the woman said.

"The only definite thing I can say is that his fate depends wholly and entirely on your work for us."

"Herr Lieutenant, it's exactly a year since you promised me that if I fulfilled certain conditions my husband would be released in a few days," the woman said.

"The material you've brought in to us recently has been unsatisfactory. It would be very unpleasant for me if we were forced to take certain measures. You might happen to meet your husband in a place where you wouldn't wish to."

The woman gave a suppressed moan. Andrei switched off the dictaphone, took a sheet of paper out of a file and handed it to me. It was a decision of an M.V.D. military tribunal, condemning a man to twenty-five years' forced labor 'for terrorist activities directed against the Soviet army's occupation forces'.

"He'd been a communist since 1928," Andrei explained. "Spent eight years in a Nazi concentration camp. One month after the beginning of the occupation he resigned from the Communist Party.

He talked too much. You see the result. His wife works as a translator for the British. She enjoys their trust because she's the wife of a man who has been persecuted by the Hitler regime. Since we imprisoned her husband they trust her even more. Until recently she was an extremely valuable agent of ours."

He nodded to me to be silent, and switched on the dictaphone again. This time two men were talking, also in German.

"You've come well out of the test recently. Now we want to give you a more responsible commission," said a voice speaking with a Russian accent. "At one time you were an active member of the National Socialist Party. We've given you the chance to join the S.E.D. Now we expect you to justify the trust we've placed in you.¹⁹

"Herr Captain, even when I was a member of the N.S.D.A.P. and I was only a member because of circumstances -I always sympathized with the ideals of communism and looked hopefully to the East," a voice said in pure German.

"Today the S.E.D. has a large number of members who formerly sympathized with the ideas of national socialism," the first Voice replied. "We're particularly interested in these nationalistic tendencies among the S.E.D. members. Such people are really working for the restoration of fascism, and they're the most bitter enemies of the new, democratic Germany. And as a former national-socialist you'll be trusted by such people more than anyone else. In future your task be not only to register any such expression of opinion, but even to sound your comrades moods and tendencies. You must pay particular attention to the following people." He read out a list of names. Andrei cut off the dictaphone and looked at a document:

"A Gestapo spy since 1984. Has worked for us since May 19 1945
So far, on the basis of his reports 129 arrests have been made. He's been accepted in the S.E.D. on our recommendation.

"Ali, here's a case of love in the service of the State," he remarked as he opened another file. "Baroness von ... Since 1928 has been running a matrimonial agency for higher society and has simultaneously owned brothels. A Gestapo agent since 1936. Registered with us since July 1.945. Has two sons prisoners of war in the USSR

The head of the prisoner of war camp has been ordered not to release them without the special instructions of the M.V.D. Are you interested in pretty girls? Look!"

He handed a portfolio and a card index across the desk. On the portfolio cover was a series of numbers and pseudonyms; they corresponded with similar references in the card index, which contained personal details. At the top of the portfolio was the photographs of a grey-haired, well-set-up woman in a white lace collar.

I opened the portfolio: it contained a number of sheets to which the photographs of young, beautiful girls were attached * These were the baroness's protegees, and with their unusual beauty they were a credit to her philanthropic institutions. In addition to the normal personal details each sheet bore an entry: 'compromising details

Beneath the picture of a happy, smiling, fairhaired girl this entry commented: 'Fiance served in the Waffen-S.S. In Soviet hands since 1944. 1946, syphilis.'

The next photograph was of a girl with the eyes of a young doe; it had the note: 'Father a member of the N.S.D.A. Interned in U.S.S.R. 1944, illegitimate child.' Next came a brunette and the comment: 'Registered with the police on account of prostitution. 1946: illegitimate child by a negro.' All the comments provided exact dates and factual material.

"The baroness's house is in the American zone," Andrei explained, and her sphere of activities corresponds." He took the photo of the girl with doe's eyes from me, noted the code number, took a file bearing the same number from his desk and said: "Look!" It contained the girl's reports as an agent. Photos of American soldiers. Numbers; dates; love letters, for attestation of the signatures; details of places of service, personal manner of living, political attitude, American home addresses.

"What are the American addresses for?" I asked.

"If we need to we can always make contact with the individual concerned. It's even easier for us to do so there than here," Andrei replied. He pointed to a special folder in the file: it contained photographs of the girl in an American lieutenant's company. First came Leica amateur snaps, reflecting all the stages of the progressive intimacy. Then, on a special sheet, numbered and dated, were photographs of a different kind: The technical finish revealed the work of an automatic micro-film camera. Unequivocal pornographic pictures, perpetuating love not only in its nakedness, but in its perverted forms. On every photo the American lieutenant was clearly recognizable.

"That young man's also working for us now," Andrei grinned. "In America he had a young and wealthy fiance. When he was faced with the choice either of compromise in her eyes, with all that it entailed, or quietly helping us, he preferred to help. Now he's sending us quite valuable material.

"That's only just a sample of the baroness's work," he continued. "We have others of her kind, all engaged in exploiting the prostitutes

in all the four zones of Germany. Quite an extensive enterprise, as you see."

"But does it pay?" I queried.

"More than you'd think. Prostitution and espionage have always gone hand in hand. We've merely given these activities a new, ideological basis. We approach every single case individually. And in addition almost every one of these women has a relative in our hands. Our system is the cheapest in the world."

"You must have seen men condemned to death," I remarked.

"Tell me, have you often met men who died believing in the truth of what they were dying for?"

"At the beginning of the war I often saw S.S. men about to be shot," he said thoughtfully, rubbing his brow. "They used to shout: 'Heil Hitler !' When I was with the partisans I sometimes had to

stand by and watch while Germans hanged Russians. And as they stood with the rope round their necks they cursed the Germans and shouted: 'Long live Stalin!' I knew some of them personally, and

I knew they had never said words like that before. Yet as they stood waiting for death they shouted 'Long live Stalin !' I don't think it was because they believed them, I think it was a matter of personal courage. They simply wanted to give expression to their contempt for death and the enemy."

"And now you're engaged in destroying the enemies of the State," I continued. "According to the History of the C.P.S.U. the capitalists and landowners have long since been exterminated. So those you have to fight against today are children of our new society. If they're enemies, how are they to be classified? Are they ideological enemies or are they simply people who by force of circumstances have done something punishable under the M.V.D. code?"

"Why do you ask that?" He looked at me distrustfully.

"The question's interested me for some time now, and who could answer it better than a major in the M.V.D.?"

"Damn you, Grisha !" He sighed unexpectedly. "I thought I'd put you through it and so relieve my own feelings. But there you sit like a post, and now you're starting to grub around in my soul. You've

raised a question that's been troubling me for a long time." He spoke more slowly. "If it's a question of ideological enemies, then today all the nation is our ideological enemy. Those who fall into the hands of the M.V.D. are only victims of a lottery. Out of every hundred charges brought by the M.V.D., ninety-nine are pure inventions. we act on the principle that every man is our enemy. To catch an enemy red-handed you have to give him the opportunity to commit hostile act. if we wait, it may be too late. For their name is: million So we seize the first to hand and accuse him of what you will. Thus we liquidate a certain proportion of the potential enemy and simultaneously paralyze the will of the others. That's our prophylactic method. History itself has forced us to resort to it. But such a system has certain positive aspects too . . ."

"You still haven't answered my question," I said. "Have you ever met a real enemy? A man who gazed straight into your face and declared: 'Yes, I am against you!'"

The major looked up at me from under his brows. "Why don't you yourself come and work for the M.V.D.? You'd make a remarkably good examining officer," he muttered. "I've deliberately been dodging the question; you see, I have a living answer to it ... Only,

I didn't intend to bring him to your notice. I'm afraid it might have an unhappy effect on our friendship."

He looked at me expectantly, and hesitated. As I raised my head

I saw the clock. It was long past midnight, but the building was living its own life. From the corridor came sounds comprehensible only to people intimate with the work of the M.V.D. From time to time there was a cautious knock at the door, and Andrei went out of his room, locking the door behind him. Again and again our conversation was interrupted by telephone calls.

"Good !" he said at last ' as I did not reply. "But I ask you not to draw any conclusion about me from what you sec." He picked up a telephone: "Comrade Captain, what news of 51-W? Still the same?"

Good! Have him brought up for examination. I shall come along with another officer."

We went down to the next floor. Here there was no carpeting in the corridor; the walls were painted with grey oil-paint. We entered a room. At the desk opposite the door sat a captain of infantry. Andrei answered his greeting with a nod, went to a sofa by the wall, and buried himself in examination reports. I sat down at the other

end of the sofa.

A knock at the door; a sergeant in a green cap reported: "Prisoner No. 51-W, at your disposition, Captain." He was followed by a dark figure with hands crossed behind him. A second guard closed the door.

"Well, how are things, Kaliuzhny?" the captain asked in a friendly tone.

"Is it such a long time since you saw me last, you hound?" The words burst from the prisoner in a cry of boundless hate and contempt, suppressed pain and mortal yearning. He staggered right up to the desk and stood there, his legs straddled. I saw that his wrists were handcuffed. The M.V.D. handcuffs only prisoners who are candidates for death, or are particularly dangerous.

"Well, what's the position? Have you remembered anything yet?" the captain asked, without raising his head from his scrutiny of the papers on his desk. The answer came in a rushing, largely in comprehensible stream of curses directed against the captain, the M.V.D., the Soviet government, and, finally, the man whose portrait hung on the wall behind the desk. The prisoner leaned forward, and it was impossible to tell whether he was on the point of dropping with

exhaustion or making ready to strike his tormenter. His guards, one on either side, seized him by the shoulders and thrust him down on a seat.

"Now let's talk to each other quietly," the captain said. "Would you like a smoke?" He beckoned to the guards, and they removed the handcuffs. There was a long silence, while the man took a greedy draw at the cigarette. A gurgling sound came from his chest, he coughed painfully and spat into his hand.

"Here, enjoy this, Captain!" He stretched his hand across the desk revealing black clots of blood in the bright light of the desk lamp

"They've damaged my lungs, the hounds!" he croaked, as he wiped the blood on the edge of the desk.

"Listen, Kaliuzhny," the captain said in a pleasant tone. "I'm terribly sorry you're so pigheaded. You were a model citizen of the Soviet Union, the son of a worker, a worker yourself. A hero of the patriotic war. Then you go and make one mistake . . ."

"That was no mistake!" The words came hoarsely from the other side of the desk.

"We know how to value your past services," the captain continued

(Torture by being kept constantly in a standing position.)

"Atone for your guilt, and your country will forgive you. I only want to make your lot easier. Tell us who the others were. Then give you my word as a communist. . . "

"Your word as a communist !" The bloody rattle conveyed inexpressible hate. "You viper, how many have you already caught with your word of honor?"

"My word is the word of the Party. Confess, and you will be given your freedom!" The captain had difficulty in controlling himself.

"Freedom?" came from the bloody mask that had been a face. I know your freedom ! I shall find your freedom in heaven . . ."

"Sign this document !" the captain held out a sheet of paper.

"You wrote it, you sign it !" was the answer.

"Sign !" the officer ordered in a threatening tone. Forgetting the presence of the two men sitting silently on the sofa, he swore violently and snatched up a pistol lying on his desk.

"Give it here, I'll sign !" the prisoner croaked. He took the sheet of paper and spat on it, leaving clots of blood clinging to it. "Here you are ... With a genuine communist seal!" His voice rose in malignant triumph. He slowly raised himself out of his chair and slowly bent over the desk to face the pistol barrel. "Well, now shoot ! Shoot, hangman, shoot! Give me freedom!"

In impotent fury the captain let the weapon sink, and beckoned to the guards. One of them sent the prisoner to the floor with his pistol butt. The steel handcuffs clicked.

"You don't get away so easily as that!" the captain hissed. "You'll call for death as if you were calling for your mother before we're finished !" The guards hoisted up the prisoner and stood him on his feet. "Put him to the 'stoika'," the captain ordered.'

With an unexpected, desperate writhe the man wrested himself free. With a vehement kick he sent the desk over. The captain

sprang away, then, howling with rage, flung himself on the prisoner.

He brought his pistol butt down heavily on the man's head; a fresh purple patch appeared above the crust of congealed blood.

"Comrade Captain !" Andrei Kovtun's voice sounded sharply. As the man was dragged out of the room the captain gasped out: "Comrade Major, I ask permission to close the examination procedure and transfer the case to the tribunal."

"Keep to the instructions I've given you," Andrei replied coldly, and went to the door. We walked silently along the corridor.

"You wanted to see for yourself," Andrei said moodily as he closed the door of his room behind us. He spoke hurriedly, as though anxious to justify himself, to forestall what he felt I was bound to say.

"Why was he arrested?" I asked.

"For the very question you were so interested in," Andrei answered as he dropped wearily into a chair. "He was a man who openly declared: 'Yes, I'm against you !' All through the war he was with us, from the very first to the very last day. He was wounded several times, decorated several times. He was to be demobilized after the war, but he voluntarily signed on for longer service. And then, a month ago, he was arrested for anti-Soviet propaganda in the army. His arrest was the last straw. He tore his shirt at his breast and shouted: 'Yes, I'm against you!'"

"How do you explain his change?"

"Not long before he had had leave in Russia. He went home-and found the place deserted. His old mother had been sent to Siberia for collaboration with the Germans. To avoid starving, during the war she had washed crockery for them. And in 1942 they sent his young brother to work in Germany; after the lad's repatriation

he was condemned to ten years in the mines. And apart from that our prisoner saw what was happening at home. When he returned to duty he began to tell others what he had seen and heard. The rest you know for yourself."

"What did the captain mean by his reference to 'the others'?"

I asked.

"Oh, the usual story." Andrei shrugged his shoulders. "Out of one man we've got to unmask a whole counter-revolutionary movement,

There you have the clear evidence that every man is an enemy " he continued in a monotonous tone. "Outwardly he was an, exemplary Soviet man. One of the sort that during the war died with the shout 'Long live Stalin !' on their lips. But when you go deeper. . .

"So you regard him as an ideological enemy?" I asked.

"He hasn't any idea yet," Major Kovtun answered. "But he's already come to the point of saying 'no' to the existing regime. He is dangerous chiefly because he is one of millions. Throw a lighted idea into that powder barrel and the whole lot would go up!"

I was silent. As though he had divined my thoughts, Andrei whispered helplessly: "But what can I do?" Then, with sudden vehemence, he cried: "What did you want to see it for? I'd already told you. . . "

In the dusk of the room his face changed, it expressed his weariness. His eyes were dull and expressionless. He fidgeted with restless, nervous fingers among the papers on his desk.

"Andrei !" I cried, and turned the lampshade so that the light fell full on his face. He huddled himself together, raised his head and stared at me blankly. I glanced into his eyes: they were fixed and dilated; the pupils showed no reaction to the strong light.

"You know what light-reaction is, don't you?" I asked as gently as I could.

"I do," he answered quietly. His head sank on to his chest.

"It means you've reached the end of your tether," I said. "In a year or two there'll be nothing left of you but a living corpse."

"I know that too," he muttered still more quietly.

"Can't you find any other way out than morphine?" I asked, putting my hand on his shoulder.

"I can't find any way at all, Grisha ... I can't," his lips whispered.

"You know, I'm often pursued by delusions," he said in a perfectly expressionless tone. "Always and everywhere I'm followed by the scent of blood. Not just blood, but fresh blood. That's why I come

to you sometimes so unexpectedly. I'm trying to get away from that smell."

Pull yourself together, Andrei !" I rose from my chair, took my cap down from the hook, and glanced at the clock. "It's six already.

Let's go for a drive."

He opened a cupboard and took out a civilian suit. "Every one of us has to own a suit of civilian clothes," he explained as I gave him a questioning look. "Nowadays I use it to get away from the accursed stench."

Before we finally left the room, he took a book out of his desk drawer and handed it to me, saying: "Take and read it. I've seldom read anything to compare with it."

I read the name of the book: Abandon Hope. and of the author: Irene Kordes.

"I don't get much time for reading," I answered, as a rapid glance at its pages showed that the book was about the Soviet Union.

"And I've read enough of this stupid kind of literature. And look at its date of publication: 1942!"

"That's just why I want you to read it," he answered. "It's the only German book about the Soviet Union that every German ought to read. I personally find it particularly interesting because she spent four years in prison; she was held for interrogation by the M.V.D."

Later I did read the book. The writer, Irene Kordes, was living with her husband in Moscow before the war. During the Yezhovshchina period' they were both arrested simply because they were talking German in the street.

(The period of the great purges of 1936-8 to which most of the political emigrants living in the Soviet Union fell victims. Yezhov was head of the N.K.V.D. at the time; in 1939 he himself was dismissed and shot.)

That was sufficient for the M.V.D. to charge them both with espionage. There followed four years of misery and torment, four years of examination in the cellars of the notorious Lubianka and other Soviet prisons. After the Soviet Union signed the pact of friendship with Hitlerite Germany in 1989 she was set free and sent back to her own country. Her husband disappeared within the N.K.V.D. walls.

It is a striking circumstance that the book was published in 1942.

This German woman displayed a true grandeur of spirit. After living for four years in conditions that would have led anybody else to curse the regime and the country, and even the people, who willingly or unwillingly bore the responsibility and guilt for the

Soviet system, Irene Kordes had not one word of reproach or accusation to say against the Russian people. She spent four years in hell, together with hundreds of thousands of Russian people who shared her fate; and during that time she came to know the Russians as few foreigners have done.

The first rays of the rising sun were gilding the crowns of the trees as Andrei and I left the building. He drove our car along the autobahn. He sat silent, his features seemed waxen and sunken in the grey light. His driving was spasmodic and restless. As we drew near to the Wannsee he took his foot off the accelerator and looked at the clock. "You haven't got to be in the office till ten," he said "Let's drive to the lake and lie for an hour on the sand." "Good !"

Gentle waves were curling over the surface of the lake. Mews were flying overhead, or gliding low to send up spray from the crests with their wings. The fresh morning breeze drove away the leaden weariness of my sleepless night. We undressed and plunged into the water. The farther we swam from the bank the more strongly was I conscious of the freedom and expanse, of an inexplicable desire to swim on and on. I felt a rare inward relief, though the waves would wash us clean of the blood of the past night.

After bathing we lay on the sand. Andrei watched the few early bathers. I gazed at the sky, at the white, fleecy clouds. "Well, have I helped you in your endeavors to become a true communist?" he asked in a wooden tone, and tried to smile.

"You've shown me nothing new," I answered. "Many things in this world look unpleasant when seen close up."

"So you excuse all these things?"

"One must attempt to comprehend not merely a part, but the whole. Not the means, but the end."

"So the end justifies the means?" he said bitterly. "You'll make a better bolshevik than I."

"I am a child of the Stalin epoch," I replied.

"So in your view everything is for the best!"
"I'd like to believe that"

"Then what stops you now?"

"I'm afraid I lack the wider vision," I said slowly. "When I've solved the problem of the expediency or in expediency of the final goal it will be easy In either case it will be easy That is my final answer, Andrei. Until then we'd better drop further talk on the subject. Meanwhile, I think you should take some leave and have a thorough rest."

"That won't help," he sighed. "I need something else."

"You must either find a faith that justifies your present activities, or - - ." I did not know how to go on.

"It's rather late for me to seek, Grish!" He shook his head and stared at the sand. "I've burnt my wings. Now I must creep."
Little Lisa was a charming child. When she went for walks with her old governess along the Gogolevsky boulevard in Moscow the people sitting on the benches used to say reprovingly to their children: "Just look at that pretty little girl. See how well she behaves!"

On hearing such remarks, Lisa would pull haughtily at her velvet dress, and deliberately speak in a louder tone to her German governess. The people whispered in surprise: "They must be foreigners. "

Lisa's father was one of those men who have the gift of adjusting themselves to life. He had joined the Party at the right time, he knew when to say the right word, and even better when to keep a still tongue in his head. Thus he rose to the directorship of a large

commercial trust in Moscow. High enough to exploit to the full all the material advantages of his official position, yet not high enough to be forced to take the risk of responsibility for the undertaking. He had prudently brought up his sons in the spirit which had ensured himself a successful career. But he had intended to marry his daughters to men who could guarantee them not only material well being, but brilliant society life. Lisa was the younger daughter, and her father's favorite. From earliest childhood she was the subject of rapturous admiration on the part of her relations and family acquaintances, and the naive envy of her child companions. The years passed, she grew up, and graduated from school. When the time came to decide on what she should do next, after consultations with her father she resolved to enter the Moscow Institute for Foreign Languages. There she could be sure of comparatively easy studies and the prospect of an equally easy position when she left; the Institute was known to be a starting point for careers in the

Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, the Commissariat for Foreign Trade, and other governmental bodies. The young girls of Moscow retailed many strange rumors of the massive yellow building in Metrostroyevskaya Street; Lisa thought of its doors as opening on to a terra incognita.

Thanks to her excellent knowledge of German, and her father's connections, she had no difficulty in entering the Institute. In her very first year she won the professors' notice by her keen intelligence and her success as a student. She considered it a matter of honor to be outstanding in her subjects. She had always been used to admiration, and as the years passed she had developed a morbid craving for it. Now she attempted to win the admiration and envy of those around her. She went to great trouble to excel the other students in every possible respect: in study, in behavior, and in dress. The professors began to hold her up as an example to the others, while her colleagues looked down their noses at her eccentric behavior. The young men turned to stare after her slender figure and were astonished at her provocative conduct and her dress. One morning in the autumn, during her second year at the the Institute, on reaching the door of the lecture hall she was called aside by a senior girl, who whispered: "Lisa, you're wanted in the Special Department. You're to report there at once."

The Special Department was situated next door to the rector's office. None of the students knew exactly what functions the department performed: they could only surmise. Lisa knocked shyly at the door, and went in. Behind a desk sat a woman with the exaggeratedly self-confident air of women who occupy men's

positions. Now this woman took a file from a steel cupboard behind her, and glanced first at the file, then at Lisa. The minutes seemed endless. Lisa stared with longing through the window at the house opposite and thought: 'It's either arrest or expulsion from the Institute.'

The woman held out a sealed envelope to her, and said: "At nine this evening you're to call at the address on this letter Hand in your name at the inquiry office. They'll be expecting you." Lisa glanced at the address: the letters began to dance before her eyes. They read: 'Lubianskaya Square, entrance 8, room 207.'

That day she was unusually abstracted. She heard very little of what the professors said, but in her head the words drummed incessantly: 'Lubianskaya Square, nine o'clock.' Punctually at five to nine she passed through the gates of the N.K.V.D. central offices in Lubianskaya Square. The lieutenant on duty phoned to someone, then handed her a pass. She went to the room given on the letter and knocked almost inaudibly with her knuckles.

"You're punctual; that's a good sign." The young man in civilian dress who opened the door smiled as he spoke. "Please come in!" He pointed affably to a comfortable chair by the desk. She dropped into it, and planted her feet firmly on the floor.

The young man smiled again, pleasantly. "May I offer you a cigarette?" He pushed a box of expensive cigarettes across the desk. Her fingers trembled, she had difficulty in opening the box and taking out a cigarette. She did not know what to make of this warm reception.

"Would you like some tea? Or coffee?" the obliging young man asked. Without waiting for her answer he pressed a button on his desk, and a few moments later a tray of coffee, cakes, and a tablet of chocolate arrived. To cover up her uncertainty and shyness she took a cake. But somehow she had difficulty in getting it down.

"Have you any idea why I've invited you to come and see me?" he asked, lighting a cigarette and studying Lisa from one side.

"No ... I haven't," she answered in a trembling voice.

"We've been interested in you for a long time now," he began, leaning back more comfortably in his chair. "You're a cultivated and an attractive girl. I might go so far as to say very attractive. And you're from a good Soviet family. Your father's an old Party

member. You yourself have been active as a Young Communist in the Institute. We've received very favorable reports about you." He paused and glanced at her, to study the effect of his words. The expression of anxiety and excitement gradually faded from her face, to be replaced by one of tense expectation.

"We not only punish enemies of the Soviet regime," he continued.

"We're even more concerned to see that the numbers of genuine Soviet people should increase. As we've had such good reports about you we consider it our duty to take some interest in your future career." He paused again. "Tell me, we're right, aren't we, in regarding you as a true Soviet citizen and in wishing to help you in your career?"

"I'm still too young," she said in some embarrassment. "So far I've not had the opportunity. . . "

"Oh, I quite understand," he interrupted. "You've always wanted to prove your devotion to the Party, but so far you haven't had the opportunity: that's it, isn't it?"

"I ... I've always tried. . . " she stammered.

"I know. I've taken some trouble to find out about you before asking you to come and see me. And now we think we can test you in action. You're studying in the Institute for Foreign Languages,

You know that after graduating many of the students will be given the opportunity to work together with foreigners, or even abroad. That's a great honor. I'm sure you'd like to belong to that select few, wouldn't you?"

"Of course, Comrade," she readily answered; but then prudently added: "If it's in the interests of the Party and the government." She now realized that this evening visit to the N.K.V.D. by no means held out the unpleasant prospects it had suggested to her. And she resolved to exploit all her powers to grasp the attractive possibility that seemed to be looming up on the horizon.

"Call me Constantine Alexievich," the man said in a friendly manner, as he pushed the tablet of chocolate across to her. "I see you're a clever girl. Work with foreigners, or even abroad: you know what that means! It means Lyons silks, Parisian perfumes, and the

best restaurants in the world. It means special privileges, high~society. An easy and fine life filled with pleasure. Men at your feet...'

He took a breath and gave her a swift glance. She was sitting motionless as though entranced, her eyes were shining with excitement. The chocolate began to melt in her fingers.

"But all that is, possible only on one condition," he said with a hint of regret. "That is, that you have our complete trust. Not everybody has that. It has to be won."

His last words seemed cold and hard. For a second she again felt helpless and afraid. But in a moment her longing for a brilliant existence and admiring glances shattered all her doubts and fears.

What have I got to do?" she asked practically.

'Oh, we'll give you various commissions that will provide you with opportunities to show your devotion to the party," he explained in a careless tone. Then, as though she had already indicated her assent, he added in a businesslike tone: "You will be given additional schooling. And instructions will be issued to you for each separate commissariat ... as well as the requisite means to achieve the task."

"But perhaps I shan't be equal to your demands," she feebly objected, for she hadn't expected matters to develop so quickly, and instinctively she tried to secure a way of retreat.

"We shall help you. Besides, from the personal knowledge we already have of you we know very well what you can do. Now may I ask you to sign this document?" He pushed a form across the desk and showed her where to sign. She glanced rapidly through it: it was a formal promise to collaborate and not to talk; in the event of breaking this promise she was threatened with 'all necessary measures to defend the State security of the Soviet Union'. Her radiant vision of a brilliant future seemed to turn a little dim. He handed her a pen. She signed.

Thus she achieved her desire for a brilliant life. And thus the N.K. V.D. added one more to its list of agents. Before long, without interrupting her studies at the Institute, Lisa was transformed into a model siren.

During the war there were no Germans in the true sense of the words living in Moscow. So she was introduced into the small circle of German anti-fascists who had arrived as political emigres, in the

Soviet Union and had managed to survive the continual purges. But soon this work proved to be without point, as the only German communists left in freedom were themselves secret agents of the N.K.V.D., and that organization had introduced her to them only in order to provide yet one more cross-check on the reliability of their spies.

But the Germans had grown cunning through experience, they glorified Stalin and repeated the fashionable slogan: 'Smash the Germans.'

She was disgusted with this way of showing devotion and grew angry at the lack of opportunity to prove what she could do.

Constantine Alexievich, who was her immediate superior, quickly became convinced of her keen intelligence and unusually wide cultural horizon. She was capable of starting and carrying on a conversation on any subject. Now she was entrusted with the task of spying on higher Party officials, and had the opportunity to visit the exclusive clubs of the various People's Commissariats and even the very special club attached to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. The results of her work were stored away in the N.K.V.D. files and prisons. The fact that she was kept at work on the 'internal front' for a long time is testimony to her success. In the N.K.V.D. view, work among foreigners is comparatively unimportant. Where foreigners are concerned the N.K.V.D. is interested in external details and factual material. But spies working among the 'beavers',

i.e. the important Soviet Party men, are expected to discover their secret thoughts and moods: a complex task, and calling for real art on the part of those engaged in it.

In the spring of 1945 Lisa graduated from the Institute as one of its best students. At this period many of the graduates were sent to work in the S.M.A. in Berlin, and Lisa went with them. Once more she was given special commissions. She was appointed translator member of the Special Dismantling Committee under the Council of People's Commissars, simultaneously acting as his N.K.V.D. control.

When this general was recalled to Moscow on the completion of his task she was appointed to the personnel department of the S.M.A. Her personal file contained the remark: 'Employment to be given in agreement with the Administration for State Security.' A few days later she became personal interpreter to General Shabalin, the economic dictator of the Soviet zone.

That was when I first met her. Soon afterward Major Kuznetsov gave me his secret warning concerning her. Did the general himself know what sort of people he had around him? After a time I came, to the conclusion that he had good reason not to trust anybody.

His orderly, Nikolai, had served in the N.K.V.D. forces at one time. As is the custom in the Soviet Union, anyone who has ever had any kind of relations with the N.K.V.D.-not only their former workers, but even their former prisoners-always remains in touch with them. Of course the general knew that quite well. Nikolai was his master's orderly, and simultaneously his control.

Shabalin's maid, Dusia, was a pleasant, quiet girl. At the end of 1945 all the Russian women who had been brought to Germany during the war and had later been employed by the Soviet authorities to fill subordinate positions were sent back home. To everybody's astonishment Dusia remained behind. People assumed that she owe~d" 11 to the general's protection. But when the general returned to Moscow while Dusia still remained in Karlshorst it was assumed that s must have some other highly placed protector. Only a few suspected the truth.

She was a very pleasant girl, but I always felt that she suffered from some personal sorrow and vague depression. She knew what had happened to her friends who had been sent back to Russia, and she knew that in the end she would share their fate. Yet she had to work as an instrument in the hands of those same men who sooner or later would become her jailers.

Thus the general's orderly, his maid, and his personal interpreter were all N.K.V.D. agents. I don't think the general was so stupid as not to realize it. Even if he hadn't noticed it, he must have known from experience that it must be so. And so, to simplify matters, he regarded all those who worked in close touch with him as informers for the N.K.V.1). Including me.

After Kuznetsov's warning I was more on my guard with Lisa, I found out more about her from former friends of hers who had studied with her in the Institute, and who were working as translators in the Supreme Staff. She was not only inordinately ambitious, but inordinately talkative; and in such circumstances the M.V.D. trust could not remain a secret for long. I gleaned other details of her from various sources.

One evening shortly after General Shabalin's recall to Moscow, while she was waiting to be given a new appointment, she dropped in on me on some pretext. In Karlshorst we all had a habit of calling casually on one another, without waiting for special invitations. After looking round my apartment she made herself comfortable

on the couch and declared: "You're a poor sort of lady's man, Gregory Petrovich. And to make matters worse, you're a skinflint." As she tucked her feet up on the couch she added: "Bring a bottle of wine out of your cupboard and let's feel at home."

"I already feel at home," I answered.

"Don't be so detestable !" She purred like a cat. "I'm going away soon. Though I simply can't endure you, I'd like to celebrate our parting."

"The feeling is mutual," I retorted. "And yet I'm sorry you're going."

"So you really are sorry to part from me?" She gazed at me with her dark brown eyes. "You admit it !"

So far as her feminine charms were concerned, what I found most attractive in her was the polish acquired from residence in a great city, her culture and knowledge, in combination with a superlative vulgarity. Such a combination involuntarily attracts by its very novelty.

"I find you as interesting as the beautiful skin of a snake," I confessed.

"But why do you avoid me, Gregory Petrovich?" she asked.

"By all the signs you and I ought to understand each other better than anybody else."

"That's just the very reason, Lisa," I said. "Don't be annoyed with me. Shall I tell you your fortune? You'll marry an elderly general. That's the only way in which you'll be able to satisfy your demands on life. You regard life soberly enough to know that I'm telling the truth."

She was rather disconcerted, uncertain how to take my words, in joke or earnest. Then she began to talk sincerely and passionately, as though she wanted to justify herself:

"Good ! One confidence deserves another! Yes, I shall marry a man in the highest possible position. I don't suppose he'll be young."

What is so-called 'pure love' in comparison with what a -man in a high position can offer me? I can pick up handsome young men in any street, and they'll do as I tell them! Let other women run about without stockings and act 'pure love'. One, must have power: money,

or a high position. Then, and only then, can one understand how cheap love is . . ."

"It's a matter of taste." I shrugged my shoulders.

"Not of taste, but intelligence," she retorted. "You're old enough to understand that life is a struggle. That there are strong and weak. If you want to live, you must be strong. If you're weak, you must serve the strong. Equality, brotherhood? Beautiful fairy stories for fools!"

"You take a very critical attitude to life !" I observed.

"Yes. I want to be on top, not underneath," she continued in a dreamy tone. "You can only comprehend life when you see it from above. And to do that you need wings..."

"I like you today, Lisa," I said almost sincerely. "Life is often far from easy. Often one looks for a fine fairy-story. As you say, fairy-stories are for fools. But ... do you remember the story of Icarus? That's a story for the wise. He, too, wished to have wings ... Do you know how the story ended?"

She looked up at me blankly. "What are you getting at, Gregory Petrovich?" she asked uncertainly.

"Oh, nothing ! It's just a mental association," I replied.

At the beginning of 1940 Lisa was appointed a translator to the Soviet delegation at the Nuremburg trials. She remained in that position for a year. Of course she had other tasks, her real tasks, to perform there too. But she is of interest because she is a shining example of a new type of Soviet personality, someone who is the educational product of the Stalin epoch, and exploits all the prerequisites for a successful life under Soviet conditions. They have grown up in a milieu which excludes mental freedom, freedom of thought, and their consciousness is automatically focused on the material aspect of existence. Their driving impulse is the desire to climb as high as possible up the social ladder. The means? People of Lisa's type are trained not to think about the moral aspect of their activities. Soviet morality justifies everything that serves the Party interests.

One cannot help drawing a comparison between Andrei Kovtun and Lisa Stenina. They both serve one and the same institution.

He carries out his task with all his inner being protesting, but with no

possibility of changing his position in any way. Lisa, on the other hand, does her job quite willingly and deliberately. Andrei has already learnt only too well that he is the helpless slave of the system. Lisa is striving to get higher. And yet possibly she, too, will be pursued by the stench of blood before long.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Before the war I came across a book by Paul de Cruis: *Is Life Worth Living?* The book was a real find for the Soviet State Publishing Company; it was in complete accord with the Politbureau course of that time, with its attack on the 'rotten democracies'. And so the book was translated and published in huge editions. The Russian edition had a foreword by the author; it was so amazing that I read it aloud to a friend: "I cannot pass myself off as a proletarian; rather am I a bourgeois of the bourgeois, enervated and corrupted by the blessings of my social state. With a partridge wing in one hand and a glass of Burgundy in the other, I find it difficult to reflect on the social ulcers and painful problems of modern society. Nonetheless I am enthusiastic for the great Soviet experiment, I raise my right fist'-holding the partridge wing or the Burgundy?-'and cry: "Red Front !"

At this point my friend had had enough, and, swearing violently, he flung the book away. Both of us bitterly regretted that we hadn't got the simple-minded Frenchman in the room with us. It may be that there are people who get pleasure out of watching a dissected rabbit, but the rabbit itself hardly shares the pleasure.

Paul de Cruis truthfully and honestly analyzed the defects of modern American society; he was indignant at the fact that American unemployed workers were living in extremely wretched conditions, and that their food consisted chiefly of fried potatoes and horribly salted pork. And their children received only a litre of ordinary milk a day, as an act of charity. And he exclaimed: "Is their life worth living?" Naturally, standards of good and bad are always relative. And possibly he was justified in concluding that in comparison with American living conditions generally such a state of affairs was very bad.

But a Soviet reader reading those words might well ask: "And what is the state of the Soviet workers, who work themselves to death to earn a wage-not unemployment pay-which only very rarely assures them such a treat as pork, whether salted or unsalted?"

And what of their children, who even in the best years received less milk than an American unemployed worker's child? What answer could be given to the question: "Was it worth while for these children to be born?"

After the war I recalled Paul de Cruis' book, and especially his question: 'Is life worth living?' For now some of us have had an opportunity to see the children of the democratic world, and that in conquered Germany, in conditions that were, generally speaking, worse than those applying in other democratic countries. Now we have had a chance to draw comparisons.

In Germany the difference between the children of the two systems was painfully obvious. At first we noticed only the superficial differences; but when we had lived in Berlin for some time we saw another, much more profound difference. Soviet children seem like little soulless automata, with all their childish joy and lack of restraint suppressed. That is the result of many years of replacing the family by the State. Soviet children grow up in an atmosphere of mistrust, suspicion, and segregation. We in Berlin found it much more difficult to strike up a conversation with the child of a Soviet officer who was quite well known to us than with any German street urchin in the Berlin streets.

The German children born in the Hitler epoch, and those who have grown up in the years following the capitulation, could hardly be exemplary in their characters. So we found it all the more depressing to note these vast internal and external differences between the children of the two systems.

Here is a significant detail. The Germans are not in the habit of having their mother-in-law in the young married couple's home; it is regarded as a family disaster. The German mothers-in-law themselves take the attitude that when they have disposed of their daughters they can 'enjoy life'; they ride cycles, visit the pictures, and live their own lives. In a Soviet family the exact opposite is the case. It is a bit of luck for the wife, and even more for the children, if her mother-in-law is living with them. Soviet children usually

grow up in their grandmother's care. Whereas the German woman of forty or more often begins a 'second youth' when her daughter gets married, the Russian woman of over forty no longer has any personal life, she devotes herself wholly and entirely to her 'second family', to her grandchildren. Only then is there any surety that the children will be brought up in a normal manner.

Generalizing on this difference, one can say that the German woman belongs to the family, the Soviet woman to the State. A Soviet woman can become an engine-driver, a miner, or a stone mason. In addition, she has the honorable right of voting for Stalin, and of being her husband's hostage if the M.V.D. is interested in him. Only one small right is denied her: the right to be a happy

mother.

For a long time there were two conflicting theories as to the formation of the child character, and Soviet pedagogues were divided into two camps. The heredity theory maintained that the chief part in the development of human characteristics was played by the inherited genes; this theory came to be widely accepted by pedagogues after the emergence of a separate science of genetics. The second, environment, theory declared that the infant mind was a tabula rasa, on which environment wrote the laws of human development. This made the child's characteristics exclusively dependent on the influences of its milieu. In due course the Politbureau issued a specific instruction that the environmental theory was to be accepted as the basis of Soviet pedagogy. The totalitarian State fights wholeheartedly for the souls as well as the bodies of its citizens it cannot stand any rivals in the formation of the citizen~,not even genes. Soviet pedagogy now declares in so many words that the Soviet child is a hundred-per-cent product of its communist environment.

During the period before this approach was finally established the Politbureau based its system of Soviet education on a tendentious curriculum and the political organization of the youth in the Pioneers and the Young Communist League; in these organizations the children began when quite young to render their services to the State. The years passed, and after much experimentation , the authorities went over from the 'method of conviction' to the method of compulsion'. In 1940 a 'Committee for the Problem of Labour Reserves' was set up as a subsidiary of the Council of People's Commissars, and trades and technical schools attached to the factories and works were organized. The pupils for these educational institutions were compulsively recruited at the age of fourteen, under the pretext of mobilizing labour reserves.

In 1948 a State decree established the Suvorov and Nakhimov Cadet Schools. The task of these schools-there are some forty of them-is to prepare children of eight years and upward for a military career by a barrack style of education and training.

I once had the opportunity to visit the Suvorov Cadet School at Kalinin. It was not far from Moscow, and consequently was the most privileged of all these schools, there being no Suvorov school in Moscow itself. At Kalinin I met a number of lads who were the grandsons of Politbureau members. Petka Ordjonokidze, the grand son of Sergo Ordjonokidze, at one time People's Commissar for Heavy Industry, was sitting in his underwear on his bed, for his uniform trousers were being repaired, and service regulations

prescribed only one pair per child. In this respect, to have a highly influential and famous grandfather was of no advantage whatever.

The teacher, a captain, complained of his delicate position in regard to Mikoyan's youngest scion, who kept the whole establishment supplied with cigarettes which he smuggled into the school. He could hardly be punished with the cells, for his grandfather was still alive and had a very good seat in the Politbureau. Some of these lads of twelve or thirteen years old were wearing service decorations, which they had won as partisans. Seen close up, all this doesn't look too bad: the Suvorov schools are privileged institutions in which the children are clothed, fed, and educated at the State expense. There are candidates and to spare for all vacancies, so it isn't easy for the ordinary child to get to these schools. In that at Kalinin about half the pupils consisted of relations of generals and other members of the Soviet aristocracy.

On leaving these schools the pupils may not enter any other than an officers' training college. Their fate, their future career, are decided when they are eight years old. The classless society divides its children at an early age into strictly delimited castes: the privileged caste of the military and the caste of the proletarians, whose job is -to do productive work, to multiply up to the approved limits, and to die for the glory of the leader.

In 1940 an urgent conference was called by the head of the S.M.A. Political Administration to discuss the question of improving educational work in the Russian school at Karlshorst. Certain

unhealthy trends had been noted among the scholars in the higher forms. A month or so before, a scholar in the ninth form had shot' his father and his father's young mistress. The father was a Party member, a lieutenant-general, an official in the S.M.A. legal department. Apparently he had taken a fancy to war-time habits, and had been untroubled by the circumstance that he had been living with his paramour under the very eyes of his grown-up son and daughter, whose mother had remained in Russia.

After fruitless talks, pleadings, and quarrels with his father, the son, a seventeen-year-old member of the Young Communist League, had decided to appeal to the advice and assistance of the Party organization. He had put in an official report to the head of the Political Department. When a Party man is accused of moral or criminal misconduct the Party organs usually act on the principle of not washing dirty linen in public. So the Political Department

tried to hush up the affair, and only passed on the report to the father. The result could have been anticipated. The father was furious, and took active steps against his son. It ended by the son snatching up his father's pistol and shooting him.

Hardly had the commotion died down after this tragic incident when the Karlshorst commandant, Colonel Maximov, had to entrust a rather unusual task to a company of the commandatura guard.

A mysterious band of robbers was operating in the wooded sanddunes and wilderness around Karlshorst, and filling all the district with alarm and terror. The company sent to deal with it was strictly enjoined not to shoot without special orders from the officer in command, but to take the robbers alive. For they were scholarly from higher forms of the Karlshorst school, and were led by the son of one of the S.M.A. generals. They were very well armed, with their father's pistols, and some of them even with machine-pistols.

The district was combed thoroughly, the robbers' headquarters were found in the cellar of a ruined house, and it was formally besieged. Only after long negotiations conducted through emissaries did the head of the band declare himself ready to capitulate. It is striking that the first of his conditions for surrender was that they were not to be sent back to the Soviet Union as a punishment. The officer in command of the company had to send a courier to the S.M.A. staff to obtain the necessary agreement to the condition. The stipulation greatly disturbed the S.M.A. Political Department. It was discovered that the results achieved in the higher forms of the Karlshorst school were not up to the standard of corresponding forms in the U.S.S.R., and on the other hand there was a considerable increase in truancy.. The only improvement shown was in regard to German conversation, and this did not please the school authorities at all, as it showed that the pupils were in contact with the German world around them. That might have unpleasant consequences for the school staff.

The commandatura patrols regularly hauled scholars out of the darkness of the Berlin cinemas in school hours. A search of the desks of older scholars led to the discovery of hand-written copies of banned Yesenin poems and amoral couplets by Konstantin Semionov, which soldiers had passed from hand to hand during the war. Worst of all, the S.M.A. hospital notified the chief of staff that several cases of venereal disease had occurred among the senior scholars. A sixteen-year-old girl was brought to the hospital suffering from a serious hemorrhage as the result of a clumsy attempt at abortion. Another girl lay between life and death for several months after

she had made an attempt to gas herself because of an unhappy love affair.

All these things had led to the Political Department calling an urgent conference, which decided that radical measures must be taken to improve the communist education of the Soviet children and youths in Germany. It was agreed that the most effective step towards effecting such an improvement was the approved panacea for all diseases: additional lessons on the 'Short Course of History of the C.P.S.U.' and on the childhood and youth of the leaders of the world proletariat, Lenin and his true friend, collaborator and pupil, Joseph Stalin. It was also decided incidentally to send the incorrigible sinners home to the Soviet Union, a punishment which hitherto had been applied only to the adult members of the Karlshorst Soviet colony.

"Well, did you like it?"

"Oh yes. An outstanding piece of work."

"Unquestionably. A real chef-d'oeuvre."

The solid stream of human beings carried us in the darkness out of the cinema of the officers' club in Karlshorst. The crowd expressed their opinions about the film as they poured out.

That morning Nadia, the secretary to the Party Organizer in the Administration for Industry, had rather startled us by her obliging

conduct. She had gone from room to room, handing each of us it a cinema ticket, and even asking affably how many we would like. Normally it wasn't so easy to get hold of tickets; if you wanted to, go you had to apply to Nadia very early.

"Ah, Nadia my dear! And what is showing today?" I asked, rather touched by her amiability.

"A very good one, Gregory Petrovich. The Vow. How many tickets would you like?"

"Ah! The Vow," I murmured respectfully. "In that case let me have two."

The Soviet press had devoted a great deal of space to this film extolling it to the skies as a new masterpiece of cinematic art. Although, generally speaking, I am sceptical of proclaimed

masterpieces, I decided to go. It was so remarkably publicized that it would have been quite dangerous not to.

Within five minutes of its beginning Captain Bagdassarian and I were watching the clock rather than the screen. It would have been, an act of madness to leave, and yet to sit and watch the film ... 'Let's act as though we were going to the toilet, and then slip out,' Bagdassarian whispered.

"You'd better sit still and see it, out of scientific interest!" I advised him.

Even in the pre-war Soviet films Stalin had begun to acquire a stature equal to Lenin's. But in *The Vow* Lenin served only as a decorative motif. When they heard that Lenin was seriously ill the peasants from all the neighbouring district went on pilgrimage to the village of Gorky, where Lenin was living. But now it appeared that they had gone to Gorky only to plead, with tears in their eyes for Stalin to be their leader. They swore their truth and fidelity to him for thousands of feet.

I swore too. I swore that never in all my life, not even in pre-war days, had I seen such stupid, coarse, and unashamed botching. No wonder that our officers' club had stopped showing foreign films for some months past.

"Show a film like that abroad," Bagdassarian said as we went home, "and they'll believe that all Russians are a lot of fools." "They've got plenty of rotten films of their own." I tried to appease him.

The few foreign films which had been shown from time to time in the Soviet Union were real masterpieces of the international cinema. Of course such films were shown only when they corresponded with higher interests and in conformity with the sinuosities of Soviet foreign policy. The result was that Soviet citizens came to have an exaggeratedly enthusiastic opinion of foreign cinema art.

In Berlin we had extensive opportunities to see the achievements of various countries in this sphere. We often laughed till we cried at some heartrending American picture, with more shooting than dialogue, with blood streaming off the screen right into the hall, and it was quite impossible to tell who was killing whom, and why. It is a striking fact that, if one may dogmatize on the tastes of the 'common people' at all, the ordinary Russian soldiers never got any enjoyment out of such films.

It may seem strange, but we liked German films most of all. Whether in music, literature, or cinematic art—all of them spiritual revelations of national life—the German soul is more intelligible than any other to the Russians. It has the same sentimentality, the same touch of sadness, the same quest for the fundamental bases of phenomena. It is significant that Dostoyevsky has enjoyed even greater popularity among the Germans than among Russians themselves, and that Faust is the crowning achievement of the Russian theatre.

We Russians often had interesting discussions about German films and plays. The Soviet viewer is struck by the unusual attention given to details, to facts, and to the actors themselves. These films provided plenty of matter for argument. The Vow provided no matter for argument.

"Their art is passive, ours is active. Their art exhibits, ours commands," Bagdassarian remarked. "Have you seen Judgement of the Nation?"

"Yes. It's a powerful piece of work."

"I saw it recently in the American sector. They've given it quite different montage treatment, and call it Nuremberg. It's the same theme, yet it makes no impact whatever."

We arrived at Bagdassarian's apartment. Still under the influence of the film we had just seen, we sat discussing the possibilities of propaganda through art.

"It'll take the Americans another hundred years to learn how to make black white," he said as he took off his greatcoat. "If they have to, they'll soon learn," I answered.

It can't be done in a day. The masses have to be educated over many years."

"Why are you so anxious about the Americans?" I asked.

"Only from the aspect of absolute justice."

"Who's interested in justice? Might is right. Justice is a fairytale for the simple-minded."

"I award you full marks in Dialectical Materialism," the captain sarcastically observed. "But, you know, during the war things were grand!" He sighed. "D'you remember the films the Americans sent

us?"

"Yes, they were pretty good. Only it was rather amusing to see how little they know about our life. In Polar Star the collective farmers had more and better food than Sokolovsky gets."

"Yes, and they danced round dances in the meadows, just like in the good old days." He laughed aloud.

In 1943 and later, American films on Russian subjects were showing in the Soviet Union. We particularly remembered Polar Star Although it was very naive, and showed complete ignorance of the Soviet reality, it revealed genuine sympathy for the Russians After a performance one often heard the Russian audience remark "Fine fellows, the Americans"; although the film represented only Russian characters. The Russians took this kindly presentation of themselves as evidence of the American people's sympathy for them.

That film had a number of expert advisers with Russian names" I said. "I don't suppose they'd seen Russia for thirty years or more The American technique is good, but they haven't any ideology Probably they don't even know what it is."

"Stalin's making hell hot for them, but all they do is gape," Bagdassarian meditated. "They don't know what to do. Now they're beginning to sneer at Russian Ivan: he's pockmarked, he squints, and his teeth are crooked. The fools! The last thirty years of Russian history are still a white patch to them, yet it's an inexhaustible well. They've only got to strip Stalin naked and all the world would spit in disgust. And we Soviet people wouldn't object. But when they start to sneer at Russian Ivan . . ."

He sniffed, annoyed to think that the Americans couldn't tumble to anything so simple.

We were often amazed to see how little the outside world knew of the true position in Soviet Russia. The thirty years' activity of the State lie-factory, and the hermetical closure of Russia to free information, had done their work. The world is told, as though it were a little child, that the capitalist system is doomed to go under. But on that question Soviet people have no hard-and-fast standpoint.

History is continually developing, and requiring new forms in its development. But even so, for us the historical inevitability of communism, the thesis that 'all roads lead to communism', is the one constant factor in an equation which has many unknown and

negative factors. For us Soviet people this equation has already acquired an irrational quality.

We are united not by the intrinsic unity of a State conception, but by the extrinsic forms of material dependence, personal interests, or a career. And all these are dominated by fear. For some this fear is direct, physical, perceptible; for others it is an unavoidable consequence if they behave or even think otherwise than as that the machine demands.

Later, in the West, I had an opportunity to see the American film *The Iron Curtain*, which dealt with the break-up of Soviet atomic espionage in Canada. I had already read various criticisms of this film, as well as the angry outbursts of the communist press, and I was interested to see how the Americans had handled this pregnant theme. It left two impressions. On the one hand, a feeling of satisfaction: the types were well chosen; the life of the official Soviet representatives abroad and the role of the local Communist Party were presented quite accurately. Once more I lived through my years in the Berlin Kremlin. No Russian would have any criticism to make of this presentation. It was not surprising that the foreign communist parties were furious with the film, for in this game they play the dirtiest role. Something which for the staff of the military attaché's department is a service duty, is treachery to their country when performed by the communist hirelings.

On the other hand, the film left me with a vague feeling of annoyance. The Americans hadn't exploited all the possibilities. The Soviet peoples are accustomed to films with the focus on politics, in which the audience is led to draw the requisite conclusions. In this respect

The *Iron Curtain* scenario was obviously weak.

In Berlin we Soviet officers were able to compare two worlds. It was interesting to set the impression made by real life against the fictions that the Soviet State creates and maintains. The direct

creators of this fiction are the toilers with the pen, the 'engineers of human souls', as they have been called in the Soviet Union. Of course we were chiefly interested in the writers who dealt with the problem of Soviet Russia. They can be divided into three main categories: the Soviet writers, who are slaves of the social command; the foreign writers who have turned their backs on Stalinism; and, finally, those problematic foreigners who even today are still anxious to find pearls in the dungheap.

Let us consider them as a Soviet man sees them.

One day I found a French novel on Belyavsky's desk. I picked it up to read the name of the author, and was astonished: it was, Ilya Ehrenburg.

"But haven't you read it in Russian already?" I asked him

"It hasn't been published in Russian."

"What do you mean?"

"It's quite simple."

He was right. Soviet experts on literature maintain that the finest journalists of the time are Egon Erwin Kisch, Mikhail Koltsov, and Ilya Ehrenburg. There is no disputing that they are all brilliant writers. Koltsov's literary career came to an abrupt end in 1937 through the intervention of the N.K.V.D. It is said that he is now writing his memoirs in a Siberian concentration camp. For many years Ehrenburg was classified as a 'fellow-traveler'. With a Soviet passport in his pocket, he wisely preferred to live abroad, at a respectable distance from the Kremlin. This assured him some independence. His books were published in big editions in Soviet Russia, after they had been thoroughly edited. It was not surprising that I had found a book by him which was in French, and unknown in the U.S.S.R. Only the Hitlerite invasion of France drove him back to his native land.

First and foremost Ehrenburg is a cosmopolitan. Many people think of him as a communist. True, he subtly and intelligently criticized the defects of Europe and the democratic world. But one doesn't need to be a communist to do that-many non-communist writers do the same. After he had rid his system of his rabid, gutter snipe denunciations of the Nazi invaders he began to compose mellifluous articles about beautiful, violated France, the steadfast British lion, and democratic America. During the war we were glad to read these articles; but it seemed like a bad joke when we saw his signature beneath them. Today, obedient to his masters, he is thundering away at the American 'imperialists'. Ehrenburg, who once enjoyed some independence, has been completely caught in the Kremlin toils.

His career and fate are very typical of Soviet writers generally.

They have only two alternatives: either to write what the Polit bureau prescribes, or to be condemned to literary extinction. If Leo Tolstoy, Alexander Pushkin or Lermontov had lived in the

age of Stalin, their names would never have been added to the Pantheon of human culture. When I was a student books such as Kazakov's *Nine Points*, Lebedenko's *Iron Division*, and Soboliev's *General Overhaul* were passed from hand to hand. These names are not well known to the public generally, the books were printed in very small editions and it was difficult to get hold of copies. It is characteristic that they all dealt with the 1917-21 period, when the masses were still inspired with enthusiasm and hope. Their consciences did not allow these writers to write about later times; faced with the alternative of lying or being silent, they preferred silence.

One cannot condemn the Soviet writers. Man is flesh and blood, and flesh and blood are weaker than lead and barbed wire. In addition there is the great temptation not only to avoid creative and physical death, but to enjoy all the advantages of a privileged position. Some people may think it strange that there are millionaires in the land of communism. Genuine millionaires with an account in the State bank and owning property valued at more than a million roubles. Alexei Tolstoy, the author of *Peter I* and scenarios for *Ivan the Terrible*, was an example of the Soviet millionaire. Who can throw the first stone at a man faced with such alternatives?

As for the foreign writers, they are simply not to be trusted! Not even the dead. At one time John Reed was in charge of the American section of the Comintern. True, he lived in Moscow, but that was in the order of things. He conscientiously wrote a solid book on the Russian revolution: *Ten Days that Shook the World*. Lunacharsky, the then People's Commissar for Education, and Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, wrote introductions to the book in which they confirmed that it was a perfectly truthful description of the October Revolution. John Reed departed from this life not very long after he had written the book, and his mortal remains were interred in the Kremlin wall: the highest distinction for outstanding communists. Then there was trouble! Reed had not foreseen that in Stalinist Russia history would be stood on its head. In all his story of the

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revolution he had devoted only two lines to Stalin, and those only in passing, whereas he had extolled to the skies Trotsky and the other creators of the revolution, all those who after Lenin's death began to pass out with colds in the head and similar ailments. So John Reed's remains had to be removed from the Kremlin wall.

One can think of dozens of world-famous writers who in their quest for new ways for man waxed enthusiastic over communism, As soon as they came to know the Soviet reality they were permanently cured of their enthusiasm. I need mention only one of

the latest of these. Theodor Plievier, author of the book Stalingrad, a German writer and communist who had spent many years in Moscow, fled from the Soviet zone into western Germany. In an interview given to the press he explained that there was not a trace of communism left in Stalinist Russia, that all communistic ideas were strangled and all the socialistic institutions had been turned into instruments of the Kremlin's totalitarian regime. He discovered this quite soon after his arrival in Moscow, but he had to keep quiet and reconcile himself to the situation, since he was to all intents and purposes a prisoner, it is difficult to convict the Kremlin propagandists of pure lying

There is a refined art of lying, consisting in the one-sided ventilation of a question. In this field the Kremlin jugglers and commercial travellers have achieved a very high level of artistry: they pass over one side in complete silence, or even furiously revile it, while exalting the other side to the skies.

In Berlin we often got hold of amusing little books written by foreign authors and published by foreign publishers, extolling Stalin and his regime. It is noteworthy that these books are either not translated into Russian at all, or they are published only in very small editions, and it is virtually impossible to buy copies. They are intended purely for external consumption. The Kremlin prefers that the Russians should not see such books: the lies are too obvious.

Not far from the Brandenburg Gate there is a bookshop, 'Das Internationale Buch'. It is a Soviet shop selling literature in foreign languages and intended for foreign readers. We often visited it

Of course we didn't buy Lenin's works but ordinary gramophone records. Things that can't be bought at any price in Moscow are offered in abundance to foreigners.

Propaganda: only a Soviet man has any idea what that is! It is said of a famous drink that two parts of the price are for the mixture and three for the advertising, and many consumers convinced that there is nothing in the world more tasty, healthy, and costly. Such is the power of advertising.

Among the Soviet people communism is in a somewhat similar case. They are continually being told that communism is the finest of all systems, an achievement that is unsurpassable. The mixture is rather more complicated than that of any drink. It is injected into the Soviet man day in day out, from the moment of his birth. What advertising does in the Western World, propaganda takes care of in the U.S.S.R. The people are hungry, naked, thrust down to the level of speechless robots, and meanwhile they are assured that the complete

opposite is the case. Most astonishing of all, they believe it, or try to.

That makes life easier.

The Kremlin knows what enormous power propaganda has over human souls, it knows the danger that threatens it if the mirage is dispelled. Under the Nazis during the war the Germans were forbidden to listen to enemy broadcasts, but they were not deprived of their receiving sets. But the Kremlin did otherwise: in the U.S.S.R. all receiving sets were confiscated on the very first day of the war. The Kremlin knew its weak spot only too well. If its thirty years of propaganda;ire undermined, the ephemeral spiritual unity of the Kremlin and the people will vanish like mist.

"The Press is our Party's strongest weapon," Stalin has said. In other words, the Kremlin's strongest weapon is propaganda. Propaganda welds the internal forces and disintegrates the external ones. So much the better for Stalin that his opponents haven't any real idea of the accuracy and significance of his words.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Dialectical Cycle

In the steaming heat of the late summer of 1946 Karlshorst lived its normal life. In all the S.M.A. administrations and departments there was feverish activity. In the rush of work the officers with golf epaulettes forgot that Karlshorst was only a remote island surrounded with a foreign and hostile element. But when the time came for them to go on leave and return to the homeland they grew more conscious of the fact that far away to the east was an enormous country whose interests they were called on to defend outside its frontiers.

Letters from the Soviet Union reported an unusual drought all over European Russia. Fears were being openly expressed for the harvest. The small allotments and market gardens which provided produce for the great masses of the people were withering in the sun. People stared anxiously into the sky and feared that they were in for a famine still worse than that experienced during the war. Letters from home sounded desperate, hopeless.

A year had passed since my arrival in Berlin to work in the Soviet Military Administration. I was due for leave at the end of the summer. I could shake the dust of Berlin from my feet and relax at home for six weeks.

Andrei Kovtun took his leave at the same time as I, and we agreed to travel together. We decided to stop in Moscow for a time then to visit our home town in the south, and to finish our holiday somewhere on the Black Sea coast. Andrei insisted on organizing our leave so as to spend it largely surrounded by memories of our youth.

At the Berlin Schlesische station Andrei, relying on his M.V.D uniform, went to see the military commandant, and quickly came back with two second-class tickets. His foresight was amply justified.

All the carriages were packed. The majority of the travellers were taking a mass of baggage with them, and refused to be parted from it; they did not trust the baggage cars. Andrei and I each had two trunks filled mainly with presents for relations and acquaintances.

Our train arrived at Brest without adventure, though the Soviet military trains running between Berlin and Moscow often came

under fire and even attack from Polish nationalists hiding in the forests. The first check of documents and baggage took place at the Soviet frontier post in Brest, where we transferred to another train. The M.V.D. frontier guards made a special point of thoroughly searching the baggage of demobilized military men, looking for weapons which officers and men might be taking home as trophies.

Just in front of us a frontier-guard lieutenant checked the documents of a captain going on leave. "Why didn't you leave your service weapon behind, Comrade Captain?" he asked.

"I received no instructions to do so," the captain answered with a shrug of annoyance.

"On arrival at your destination you must hand over your pistol to the local commandatura when you register," the lieutenant said as he returned the documents.

"That's peacetime conditions for you!" the captain muttered as we left the control-point office. "Everybody's afraid of something or other."

While waiting for the Moscow train Andrei and I sat in the waiting-room. Here there were many officers in Polish uniform, including the Polish square military caps. They were all talking in Russian, resorting to Polish only -for swearing. They were officers of Marshal Rokossovsky's Soviet forces stationed in Poland and dressed in Polish uniforms. Some of the Russian officers returning from Berlin fell into conversation with them.

"Well, how are things with you in Germany?" an officer with an unmistakable Siberian accent and with a Polish eagle in his cap asked a lieutenant who had come from Dresden. "D'you find the Germans a handful?"

"Not in the least," the lieutenant answered casually. "They're a disciplined people. Tell them they mustn't, and they don't. At first We thought we'd have to deal with unrest and even attempts on our lives. Nothing of the sort !"

"You don't say!" The fellow from Siberia shook his head, obviously astonished. "But our 'gentlemen' give us more than we bargain for. Not a night passes without someone being knocked off or shot. And this chicken is of no help whatever"-he pointed to the eagle in his cap.

"You don't know how to treat them!" the lieutenant said with a

hint of superiority.

"It isn't so simple as that!" another Soviet officer in Polish uniform intervened. "During the war years Rokossovsky had sixteen expressions of Stalin's thanks in orders of the day, but during his one year in Poland he has had twenty censures ! All because of the Poles. They shoot at you round corners, and you aren't allowed to raise a finger against them, otherwise you've had it! Court-martial for you. That's politics!" He gave a deep sigh.

Shortly after the train for Moscow had started our documents were checked again, this time in the carriage. We had traveled only a few hours when the procedure was repeated a second time.

Andrei sat silent in a corner seat, taking no notice of what went on around him, sunk deep in thought. A passenger glanced in, noticed the M.V.D. officer's uniform, pretended he had made a mistake, and went to look for a seat elsewhere. Even in the second class, where every traveler had a Party ticket, people preferred to keep a respectable distance between them and the M.V.D. Towards evening Andrei livened up a little-he had not uttered a word for a long time. We began to talk about the past. Gradually his reminiscences turned to Halina. I sat listening in astonishment. Evidently he had been thinking of her all the time, but only now did he openly talk about her. Time and distance had blunted his feelings a little, but now his heart was burning once more with that same former fire.

The story of Andrei's pre-war relations with Halina was somewhat unusual. She was an extraordinarily beautiful girl, with a pure and exalted quality in her beauty. Above all, her character was in perfect harmony with her appearance. Andrei worshiped her.

But for a long time she was indifferent to his attentions and did not notice his slavish devotion. Then a strong friendship developed between them. Possibly his sacrifice and devotion won her, or perhaps she felt that his love was different from other young men's flattering attentions.

Their acquaintances all thought this friendship queer; the contrast between his angular figure and her spiritual beauty was too obvious

Nobody could imagine what bound them to each other. Again and again her girl friends reduced her to tears, for they took every opportunity of pointing out Andrei's defects. His comrades openly congratulated him on his 'undeserved good fortune'. More than once this sort of thing led to their separating for a time. And then

Andrei had no rest. He wandered like a shade behind her, not daring to go up to her, yet lacking the strength to turn away. Thus they went on, all but inseparable, down to the outbreak of war. The war flung him into the partisans and directed his unbridled emotions in another direction. The town in which she was living was soon overrun by German troops, and they completely lost contact with each other.

"We're continually striving towards something," he now said abruptly. "We strive for power, for fame, for distinction. But that is all outside us. And when you come to a certain point you realize that all the time you've only been giving out from yourself. And you ask yourself: what have you gained for it all?"

"I've got a strange feeling. Putting aside everything else and thinking only of myself, I get the impression that all I've done in my struggle to climb higher has been for Halina's sake. Now I shall lay this uniform and these orders at her feet."

He ran his eyes over his perfectly fitting uniform, brushed a speck of dust from the blue riding breeches, and said dreamily:

"Now Halina has graduated as an engineer; she's living in Moscow, she has work worthy of her, and a comfortable home, And what more can any woman achieve today? And now, to complete it all, a major in the State Security Service will turn up as a guard and defender of her well being. Don't you think that's quite a logical conclusion? And now, old friend, I'm hoping that life will repay me with interest for everything." He clapped his hand down on my knee, then rose and stared through the window into the darkness ahead, as though he hoped to discern what fate had in store for him.

I had noticed before that he had rather queer ideas of his position with regard to Halina. He had put all his ardor into his ambitions and had received no satisfaction from life in return; on the contrary, he was tortured by his situation, in which he was compelled to act against his own convictions. And so he had subconsciously begun to seek for some compromise with life, he had begun to convince himself that his old love and the happiness of married life would fill the void in his soul. To meet Halina again had become an obsession

with him; he thought of it as the miracle which would bring him salvation.

"D'you know what?" He turned round sharply. "I simply must

get hold of a bottle of vodka."

"But you don't drink."

"It's for you," he replied abruptly. "I want everybody round me to be jolly. Damn it all, I'm not going to a funeral, I'm going to wedding!"

I tried to dissuade him. "So you want to insult me? Is that it?" li demanded. I could only hope that he was unlikely to find vodka at that time of night.

At the very next station lie went out; a few minutes later he returned with a bulging pocket. "Obtained in perfect agreement with regulations!" he grinned. "The station commandant had confiscated it from someone, and I confiscated it from him. The raspberry capband has its uses!"

He filled the glass so full that the vodka overflowed. "I'm all on fire inside, and there's something lacking," he said. "You drink for me

You know, there are times when I feel an emptiness inside me almost physically." He sat with his feet planted widely apart, his hands on his his knees. "Sometimes I think about God, and I envy those who believe in Him. It's better to believe in a non-existent but infallible God than in the scoundrel pretenders of this earth."

"When did you go to church last?" I asked.

"Some twenty years ago. My father took me. When I was a boy I knew all the prayers by heart.

"Yes, the soul of a man is not a piece of litmus paper," lie sighed.

"You've got no means of deciding straight off whether it will be red or blue. In my damned job one often has to think about a human soul. I've developed quite a psychosis: I'm looking for people who believe in something."

All around us there was silence. Our native land sped towards us.

The train arrived in Moscow next day. We went into the sunlit square outside the station and stopped to look about us. The trams clattered past, cars drove by silently, people were hurrying about their affairs. All the feverish life of the capital city was opened before us. It was all so everyday, so simple. We felt as though we had never

left Moscow.

Thanks to his M.V.D. uniform and the gold star of a 'Hero of the Soviet Union' Andrei easily obtained a room for two in the Staraya Moskovskaya Hotel on the farther side of the river Moskva, right opposite the Kremlin. Our window looked out on to the river, and beyond we could see the new Stone Bridge, the rows of trees beginning to turn yellow along the Kremlin Embankment, the pointed towers and gold cupolas behind the Kremlin walls, and a long white building staring with innumerable windows. That building housed the brain of our country, the laboratory for the creation of a new world.

We spent our first day aimlessly wandering about the city. We were both impatient to see Moscow life with our own eyes. Only a year had passed since I had last seen Moscow, but that year had been so filled with experiences that I felt now as though I were getting to know my own capital for the first time. Somewhere in the depths of my being I felt mingled feelings of expectation, distrust, and anxiety; as though, despite everything, I was trying to find something here that would make me change my mind, would lead me to revoke a firmly made decision.

That summer evening Andrei and I wandered into Mayakovsky Square. Before us the black cube of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute loomed up in the dusk. In that stone chest the brain of Lenin, the ideologist and founder of the Soviet State, is preserved in spirit as a very sacred object. To the left of the square rose the editorial offices of Pravda. At roof level an illuminated sign was announcing the latest news. Nobody in the square paid any attention to it. But we craned our necks and began to read: 'The farmers report ... the accomplishment of the plan for handing in the harvest. . . 'Andrei and I looked at each other. Evening after evening, year after year, similar reports had been flashed along the roof of Pravda before the war. And it was still the same today. Hadn't there been any war and all that the war connoted?

"What does it say up there, little son?" An old, feeble, quavering voice sounded behind us.

Beside Andrei a decrepit old man was standing. He was wearing a homespun coat of uncertain colour, and a tangled, reddish beard framed his face and brightly twinkling eyes. His long hair hung down from beneath his old peaked cap.

"My eyes are weak, little son, and besides, I'm not good at read

ing," he murmured. "Tell me what it says." He addressed Andrei

in the tone that simple folk use to their superiors: with respect and wheedling sincerity.

"Why haven't you learned to read and write, daddy?" Andrei asked with a warm smile, touched by the old fellow's request. "What do we simple people need to know them for? That's what learned men are for, to understand everything."

"Where are you from, daddy?" Andrei asked.

"My village is a little way outside Moscow," the old man answered.

"Nearly forty miles from here."

"Are you in town to visit your son?" Andrei asked again.

"No, little son; I'm here to look for bread."

"Why, haven't you any in your village?"

"No, little son. We've handed over all our corn. Now all we can do is sell our potatoes in the Moscow market in order to buy bread."

"What's the price of bread in the market now?" Andrei inquired.

"Seventy roubles a kilo, little son."

"And how much did you sell your grain to the State for?"

The old fellow fidgeted from foot to foot, sighed and said reluctantly:

"Seven kopeks a kilo . . .

There was an awkward silence. We behaved as though we had forgotten his request that we should read the news to him, and walked on. In the middle of the square we came to a halt before a granite cibelik; it had a bronze plaque fastened to each of its sides., Andrei and I went closer to read the inscriptions on the plaques. "Little son, perhaps you'll tell me what it says on those boards." We again heard that feeble, aged voice behind us. The old man stood there like a shade, shifting from foot to foot. A smile slipped over Andrei's face, and he turned his eyes back 0

the obelisk, intending this time to satisfy the old man. Slowly he read the first few words aloud, but then he broke off and read the further lines in silence.

"What's the matter, little son?" the old man asked with some concern. "Isn't it written in Russian?"

Andrei was silent, he avoided the old man's eyes. In the dusk I, too read the words. The plaques carried extracts from the Soviet Constitution, dealing with the rights and liberties of Soviet citizens, Hungry and ragged Moscow, this old peasant arrived in search of bread, and the bronze promises of an earthly paradise! I realized why Andrei was silent.

The next day was a Saturday; we decided to find out where Halina lived and call on her. Through letters from mutual acquaintances I had learnt that she was working as an engineer in one of the Moscow factories. But when Andrei phoned the works administration they told him she was no longer working there, and refused to give any further information. On making inquiries at the Bureau for Addresses we were amazed to be given an address in one of the outlying suburbs, an hour's journey by electric train.

The sun was sinking behind the crowds of the pine forest when Andrei and I knocked at the door of a small timber-built house in a summer settlement not far from the railway. A negligently dressed, elderly woman opened the door to us, gave us an unfriendly look, listened to us in silence, and silently pointed up a rickety staircase to the first floor. Andrei let me go in front, and I could not see his face; but by the sound of his footsteps and the way he leaned heavily on the shaking banister rail I could tell how much this meeting meant to him.

On the landing damp underwear was hung out to dry. Dirty pails and old rags littered the window-sill. A board door, hanging by rusty hinges, had tufts of wool blocking the chinks between the planks. I irresolutely took hold of the handle, and knocked. We heard shuffling footsteps. The door shook on its hinges and scraped over the floor as it was slowly opened, to reveal a woman simply dressed, with old shoes on her stockingless feet. She gazed interrogatively into the dimly lit landing. Then she distinguished men in military uniform, and the astonishment in her eyes was changed to fear.

"Halina!" Andrei called quietly.

The young woman's face flushed crimson. She fell back. "Andrei!" a half-suppressed cry broke from her lips. She stood breathing

rapidly and heavily, as though short of breath.

Andrei avoided looking about him. He tried not to see the wretched furnishing of the half-empty room; he tried to ignore her old clothes and worn shoes. He saw only the familiar features of the woman he loved. All the world was lost in oblivion, sunk beneath the burning depths of her eyes fixed on him. How often during all the long years had he dreamed of her eyes!

And now those eyes slowly took him in, from head to foot. They rested on the gold epaulettes with the blue facings, on the star indicating his major's rank, on the brilliant raspberry band of his

service cap. Her eyes turned to the M.V.D. insignia on his sleeve, then stared into his eyes.

"Halina !" he repeated again as though in a dream; he stretched out both his hands to her.

"Gregory, shut the door, please!" she said to me, as though she had not noticed Andrei or heard his voice. Her tone was cold, her eyes faded, her features set. She avoided Andrei's eyes and, not saying a word, went to the open window at the far end of the room,

"Halina, what's the matter?" he asked anxiously. "How is it you're living here ... in such conditions?"

"Perhaps you'd better tell your story first," she answered. She seemed to be finding our visit a torture.

"Halina ! What's the matter with you?" A growing alarm sounded in his voice.

There was a long silence. Then she turned her back on us and said in a voice that was almost inaudible as she gazed out of the window:

"I've been dismissed ... and exiled from Moscow."
Why?

"I am an enemy of the people," she said quietly,

"But what for?"

Another silence. Then, like a rustle of wind outside the window'.

"Because I loved my baby. .

"Are you married?" His voice broke with the despair of a man who has just heard his death sentence.

"No." The word came softly.

"Then . . . then it's not so bad, Halina." The fear in his voice turned to a note of relief
There was another silence, disturbed only by his panting breath:

"Look at that !" She nodded at a small photograph standing on the table. Andrei followed her glance. From the simple wooden photograph frame a man in German officer's uniform smiled at the major of the Soviet State Security Service. "He was the father of my child," she said from the window.

"Halina ... I don't understand Tell me what happened.'
He dropped helplessly into a chair; all his body was trembling.

"I fell in love with him when our town was under German occupation," she answered, after turning away from us again. "When the Germans retreated I hid the child. Someone informed on me. And of course you know the rest"

"But where is the child?" Andrei asked.

"It was taken from me." Her voice choked. Her shoulders shook with dry sobbing.

"Who took it from you?" There was a threat in his tone.

"Who?" she echoed him. "Men in the same uniform as you're wearing."

She turned her face to us. It had nothing in common with the face of the gentle and friendly girl we had known in past days. Before us stood a woman in all the nakedness of her womanly pain.

"And now I must ask you to leave my house." She stared fixedly at Andrei's motionless figure. He sat with shoulders bowed as though under the blows of a knout, staring at the floorboards: his back huddled, his eyes expressionless, his body lifeless.

The sun was glowing orange beyond the window. The branches of the dusty pines swayed silently. The sun lighted up the fluffy hair of the woman standing at the window, caressed her proudly carried head, the gentle outlines of her neck, the frail shoulders under the

old dress. The light left in shadow all the wretched furniture of the half-empty room and all the signs and tokens of human need.

At the window stood a woman now farther off than ever, but now more desired than ever. On a chair in the middle of the room slumped a living corpse.

"Halina ... I'll try. . . ." he said thickly. He himself, had no idea what he could hope to do, and he was silent again.

"We have nothing more to talk about," she answered quietly and firmly.

He rose heavily to his feet, looked helplessly about - him. He muttered something, held out his hand as though asking for some thing, or maybe in farewell. She looked away, taking no notice of his hand. There was another long silence.

I crept out of the room as though from the presence of the dead. Andrei followed me. As he went downstairs he clung to the wall like a blind man. His face was ashen, words came incoherently from his lips. Our steps sounded hollowly on the creaking stairs. In the train he stared with glassy eyes out of the window and was obdurately silent. I tried to distract his thoughts with talk. He did not hear my voice, he took no notice of me whatever.

As we made our way to the Moscow Underground station he broke the silence by asking: "Which way are you going?" I guessed he wanted to get rid of me, but I also felt that on no account could I dare to leave him to himself.

We returned to our hotel. All the rest of the evening I followed him like a shadow. When he left the room for a moment I unloaded our pistols, which were lying in the table drawer. He would not have any supper, and went to bed unusually early. But he tossed and turned and could not sleep. He wished to escape from this life at least in his sleep, to find release from his torment; but he could not.

"Andrei, the best thing would be for you to go home tomorrow," I said.

"I have no home," came from his bed after a long silence.

"Then go to your family," I persisted.

"I have no family," he said thickly.

"Your father. . ."

"My father has disowned me."

Andrei's father was a man of the old school, hard as oak and as obstinate as a mule. When the years of collectivization arrived the old cossack had preferred to leave his native soil to live in a town rather than join a collective farm. In the town he had become an artisan. No repressive measures, no amount of taxation could drive him into an artisans' co-operative. "I was bome free, I shall die free!" was his one answer. He had given all his strength to bring up his son in the hope that the lad would be a comfort to his old age. But who he heard that his Andrei had gone over to the enemy he disowned him.

All night Andrei tossed and turned in his bed. All night I lay in the darkness, not closing my eyes, fighting to keep from falling asleep. The hours passed. The ruby stars of the Kremlin towers shone in through the open window. As the sky turned pale and the first feeble light stole into the room, I saw that Andrei was still awake

He had buried his face in the pillow, and his arms hung helplessly down, one on either side of the bed. In the silence I caught words that came strangely from his lips, words that I remembered from times long past, the time of my childhood. They came in a passionate whisper: "Lord, incline Thy ear and hear my prayer, for I am miserable and weak."

For the first time that night I closed my eyes. I would not ' hinder a man who stood on the confines of this world. And again in the early morning stillness I heard a whisper that had nothing earthly in it the words of a long forgotten prayer: "lord, forgive thy sinful slave . . ."

On the farther side of the river the Kremlin clock chimed in answer

While in Berlin I had exchanged very little correspondence with Genia. She was too sensitive to the least hint of insincerity and mental reservations; moreover, there was still a military censorship, and that had to be taken into account. A frank description of my present life and of our impressions of the real world around us would have been unforgivable lunacy. And we had no private life in Karlshorst that I could write about. Both she and I were too young and too fond of life to write each other insane letters out of sheer amiability.

So I preferred to use the nights when I had a twenty-four-hour turn of duty in the staff headquarters, and was alone in the commander in-chief's private office, for getting direct telephonic contact with Moscow and talking to Genia. On such occasions we had long conversations that had no connection with the marshal's office, or policy. The people tapping the telephone could go on reading their novels unperturbed.

On returning to Moscow I looked forward impatiently to seeing Genia again. And in preparing for my first visit I spent a long time pondering what to wear: my military uniform, or civilian clothes. I finally decided in favor of the civvies.

I found only Anna Petrovna at home. She was feeling bored, and she took the opportunity to ply me with questions concerning Berlin, and simultaneously to retail the latest Moscow news.

Now the family was reunited. Genia's father, Nikolai Sergeivich, had returned home after the conclusion of operations against Japan.

But even now, when he was stationed in Moscow, his wife knew as little as ever about his duties and activities, and she lived in constant dread of his being sent off again in some unknown direction and for an indefinite period.

After lunch Genia decided that she and I would go off into the country for the rest of the day. I was very grateful to her for taking me to her parents' country house, for the small summer villa outside the city had been the scene of my first meeting with her, in the early days of the war. She herself drove her sports-model Captain. When we reached the villa she began to question me at great length and in unusual detail about life in Germany. All my explanations and

descriptions failed to satisfy her. Suddenly, quite unexpectedly, she gazed into my eyes and asked:

"But why are you so thin?"

"I'm feeling fine!" I replied. "It may be just overwork."

"No, it isn't that." She shook her head. "You look really bad.

You're keeping something from me." She gazed at me closely, as though trying to read my thoughts.

"Maybe there is something," I assented, touched by her anxious tone. "But if there is I haven't noticed it."

"But I do," she whispered. "At first I thought it must be something coming between us . . . Now I see it's something else. Forget it!"

And I did forget it. I was boundlessly happy to see the familiar walls around me, and to hear only Genia, to think only of Genia.

As the evening twilight settled over the forest and shadows began to steal through the room she decided to celebrate my arrival with a supper.

"Today you're mine." She flashed her eyes at me. "Let father be annoyed because we've gone off I Let him know how mother worries when he's not at home! I'll show him!"

We had hardly sat down to eat when we heard the sound of a car approaching. Genia raised her eyebrows anxiously. The car stopped outside, and a moment later Anna Petrovna entered. She was followed by Nikolai Sergeivich and a colleague of his, Colonel-General Klykov. They were all in a very cheerful mood, and the house was filled with their laughter and talk.

"Now isn't this wonderful! We've only just arrived, and the table's already laid!" Klykov laughed and rubbed his hands.

"Nikolai Sergeivich, your daughter's a treasure !"

"D'you think she's prepared all this for us?" Nikolai Sergeivich answered. "You must excuse us for interrupting, Yevgenia Nikolaevna," he said very formally, turning to his daughter. "Would you permit us to join your company?"

"And you're a fine one!" he added, turning to me. "Get into civilian clothes and you immediately forget your army regulations!

You know your first duty is to present yourself to your superiors !

Ah, you youngsters

"But we were just getting ready to go home," Genia began.

"Then why have you laid the table? For us?" Her father roared with laughter. "So we drive here, and you go back there! You think

you're clever, my girl. But I'm no fool either. Just to punish you we'll spend all the evening with you."

Anna Petrovna set to work to prepare supper. They had brought cans and bottles of a striking diversity of labels with them. All the lands of eastern Europe were represented: Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary. These commodities were not spoils of war, but normal peacetime production. There were American conserves too, obviously the remnants of lend-lease deliveries. None of these things could be bought in the Moscow shops, but they were available in abundance in the special distribution centres to which generals had access.

"Well, Gregory, now tell, us all about it from the beginning."
Nikolai Sergeivich turned to me when the dessert arrived. "What is life in Germany like?"

"Not too bad," I answered vaguely, waiting for him to be more definite in his questions.

"In any case he has a better apartment there than we have," Genia intervened.

The general ignored her, and asked: "What's Sokolovsky doing?"

"What Moscow orders," I replied, involuntarily smiling. "You people here should know best what he's doing."

Obviously I had given Nikolai Sergeivich the opening he was fishing for. He sat turning over his thoughts. Genia looked about her with a bored air.

"Germany's a tough nut." General Klykov broke the silence.

"It'll be a long time before we crack it. The Allies won't clear out of western Germany without giving trouble, and there isn't much to be expected simply from eastern Germany. Not like the Slavonic countries: no sooner said than done! I think our first task is to create a strong bloc of Slavonic states. If we form a Slavonic bloc we shall have a good cordon sanitaire around our frontiers. And our positions in Europe will be strong enough to prevent any repetition of 1941."

"My friend, you're always looking backward, but we've got to look forward." Nikolai Sergeivich shook his head reproachfully.

"What do we want a Slavonic bloc for? The old dreams of a pan Slav empire! Today we're in the epoch of the communist advance along the whole front. Eastern Europe and the western Slavonic

states are of interest to us now chiefly as providing a favorable base for penetration and further action."

"So far the masters are pursuing a quite clear pan-Slavonic policy," the colonel-general retorted. Like all the upper circles of

Moscow he resorted to the vague term 'masters' to denote the Kremlin and the Politburo.

"That's what policy's for, to conceal the ultimate aims," Nikolai Sergeivich said. "It would be a crying shame not to exploit our possibilities today. One half of Europe belongs to us, and the other half is inviting us to take it over and give it order."

It was now quite dark outside. Moths fluttered through the open window and beat against the lamp glass, burning their wings.

A drowsy fly crawled over the table, moving its legs painfully. The fly had no aim, it simply crawled.

"There's Europe!" the general said with a contemptuous smile, and he unhurriedly picked up the fly between two fingers. "You don't even have to catch it, you simply take it."

"But tell us frankly, Nikolai Sergeivich, what do you need that dead fly for? What good will it be to you?" the colonel-general asked.

"Of course we're not greatly interested in western Europe as such," the general answered after a moment's thought. "It'll probably be more difficult to plant communism in the Europeans than in any other peoples. They're too spoiled economically and culturally."

"There you are! You yourself admit it's very difficult to make Europe communist," Klykov expressed his thoughts aloud. "If we intend to build communism seriously there we'll have to send half the population to Siberia and feed the other half at our expense. And what's the sense of that?"

"We need Europe so as to deprive America of her European markets, and then she'll go under economically. But in any case. . . ." The general was silent, thoughtfully rolling the unfortunate fly between his thumb and fingers. Then, as though he had come to a definite decision, he flung the fly away and repeated: "But in any case ... neither you nor I know what the masters are thinking.

And it's just as well that we don't," he went on after another pause,

His tone suggested that he knew more than he proposed to say.

"Communist theory lays it down that the revolution should develop where there are the best prerequisites for it: in the weakest link of the capitalist system. And at the moment that isn't in Europe. Today Asia is ripe for revolution. There we can gain the greatest possible successes with the least risk and the least expenditure. Asia is waking up nationally, and we must use this movement in order to further our objectives. The Asians are not so cultured and spoiled as the Europeans."

He paused again, then went on: "It's more important to have Asia in our hands than Europe. AR the more so as Japan has dropped out of the running. Today China is the key to Asia. Nowhere else in the world are the prerequisites for revolution so favorable as in China."

"All right, I give you China," the colonel-general said in a joking tone. "And what will you do with it?"

"China is an enormous reservoir of vital forces," Nikolai Sergeivich replied. "It would be a tremendous thing to have such a reserve at our disposal, for the army and for industry. And, above all, that's the way we shall force America to her knees."

"So America's giving you trouble again?" Klykov laughed.

"Sooner or later our roads will cross," Nikolai Sergeivich answered. "Either we must renounce our historical mission or follow it through to the end."

"All the same, I assume that our post-war policy is directed towards ensuring the security of our frontiers, both in the West and in the East." The colonel-general held to his views. But he prudently made his remarks sound more like a commentary on Kremlin policy than an expression of his own attitude. The general put on a smile of superiority. "Don't forget, my friend, that one can build socialism in one country, but communism only in all the world."

"What's the world to do with you, when you're a Russian?"

"We're communists first, and Russians only second"

"So you need the whole world." The colonel-general drummed his

fingers ironically on the table.

"That is the general line of the Party," the general answered coldly.

"Our policy during the war. . . ." Klykov put up a feeble opposition.

"Policy can change with circumstances, but the general line remains the general line;" the general would not let him finish.

"It has to be so," he went on slowly. "It's a historical necessity.

We've already exhausted all the possibilities of internal development. Internal stagnation is equivalent to death of old age. Either we finally retreat on the internal front, or we go forward on the external front. That is the law of dialectical development that applies to every state system."

"You're going too far, Nikolai Sergeivich. You're placing the interests of the state system above those of your people and your country."

"That's why you and I are communists," Genia's father said slowly and firmly, raising his glass as though to confirm his words, Klykov pretended not to notice this invitation, and felt for his cigarettes. Anna Petrovna and Genia sat listening to the conversation with bored expressions on their faces.

"What you've just said, Nikolai Sergeivich, is one thing in words but in reality it means war," Klykov said after a long silence. "You underestimate - the external factors-America, for instance, "

"And what is America?" Nikolai Sergeivich asked. "An agglomeration of people who represent no nation and possess no ideals, and whose basis of unity is the dollar. At a certain stage her living standards will fall inevitably, the class antagonisms will grow sharper, and then favorable conditions will arise for the development of the class struggle. The war will be shifted from the front to the rear of the enemy.."

"And that's what you and I are generals for: to wage war," he added.

"A general should be a citizen of his country first and foremost." Klykov drew at his cigarette and sent the smoke curling up to the ceiling. "A general without a native country is.." He did not finish the sentence.

During the war Colonel-General Klykov had successfully commanded large Soviet forces in the field. Shortly before the war ended he had been recalled from the front and given a comparatively subordinate post in the Commissariat for Defense. Generals on active service were not subjected to such changes without reason.

Before leaving Moscow to join the S.M.A. I had met Klykov more than once at the home of Genia's parents. Whenever the talk turned to politics he had always been very moderate, taking the attitude that the war was one of defence of the national fatherland. At that time, just about the close of hostilities, there was a good deal of rather independent discussion, or rather surmise, as to the USSR's future policy. It is hardly to be doubted that Klykov had been rather too frank in expressing his opinions, which did not entirely coincide with the Politbureau's secret plans, and that this had been the reason for his recall to the rear, closer to the Kremlin's ever watchful eye.

"But we won't argue about that, Nikolai Sergeivich," he said in a conciliatory tone, after a long pause. "In the Kremlin there are wiser heads than yours or mine. Let them decide."

They fell into a long silence. Anna Petrovna sat turning over the pages of a periodical. Genia looked at the clock, then at the moon rising through the trees. At last she could stand no more, and she jumped up.

"Well, you can go on dividing up the world, but we're going home."

"Why, is the moon making you restless?" her father laughed.

"Off you go, then, only don't get lost on the- way. If anything happens, Gregory, I shall hold you responsible." He jokingly wagged his finger at me.

A minute or two later we drove off. In the moonlight, the shadows of the trees fell spectrally across the ground. Here and there the window-panes of summer villas gleamed through the trees. The car bumped over the hummocky forest road. I sat at the wheel, not speaking.

"What were you so dumb for this evening?" Genia asked.

"What could I talk about?" I asked.

"What others talk about."

"I can't repeat the sort of thing your father says. And I mustn't support Klykov."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't happen to be Klykov. Your father would never stand from me what he takes from Klykov. Klykov gives expression to very imprudent views."

"Let's forget politics !" she whispered. She put her hand to the dashboard and switched 'off the headlamps. The night, the marvellous moonlit night, caressed us with its silence. I gazed into her face, into her eyes, veiled in the half-light. My foot slowly released the accelerator.

"If you don't close your eyes again. . ." she murmured.

"Genia, I've got to steer the car."

Instead of an answer, a neat little foot was set on the brake pedal. The car slowly pulled sideways and came to a stop.

I spent the next few days visiting my numerous Moscow friends and acquaintances. Everywhere I was bombarded with questions about life in Germany. Although occupied Germany was no longer 'foreign' in the full meaning of the word, and many Russians had

already seen the country with their own eyes, there was no falling off in the morbid interest the Russian people showed in the world on the farther side of the frontier. This interest and the exaggeratedly rosy ideas of life abroad were a reaction from Soviet Russia's complete isolation. Moreover, the Russians have one trait which is' seldom found in other nations: they are constantly seeking to find the good sides of their neighbors in the world. The Germans used to regard this as evidence of the primitive ways of thought in the East.

After I had satisfied my friends' curiosity as far as possible I turned to questioning them about life in Moscow. But while they were very ready to listen to my guarded accounts of life in Germany, they were very unwilling to answer my questions about life in Moscow

The general mood was joyless. Everybody had hoped that living conditions would improve after the war. But now there were signs of famine. And in addition, the papers were again talking hysterically of a new war danger.

When my friends learned that we in Berlin were in the habit of meeting Americans, talking to them and even shaking their hands, they stared at me as if I were a ghost, and did not know what comment to make. Although there had been a considerable cooling off in relations between the Allies during the first twelve months after the war, the very fact that we lived in the same city did to some extent mitigate the growing tension in official relations. But ~I in Moscow the one-sided and continual abuse in which all the press and propaganda weapons were indulging was leading the people, despite their own personal convictions, to think of the Americans as cannibals. The propaganda poison was having its effect.

One evening I went as usual to see Genia, and found all the family making ready for a journey. Anna Petrovna explained that they were going next morning to see Nikolai Sergeivich's parents who lived in a village between Moscow and Yaroslavl, and she invited me in her husband's name to go with them. I knew already that his parents were simple peasants, and that, despite their son's attempts to persuade them, they had refused to move to Moscow, preferring to remain on their land and continue as peasants.

I readily accepted the invitation, though Genia turned up her nose a little and made no comment. I had observed already that she was not fond of visiting her grandparents, and did so only because her father wished her to. She had grown up in the Moscow milieu, and was completely alien to her peasant origins.

Early next morning Nikolai Sergeivich, Anna Petrovna, Genia and I drove in the general's limousine out of Moscow. We passed through the suburbs with its factories and small houses, and plunged into the forests surrounding the city. Towards midday, after a long journey over by-roads, we drew near to our destination.

Bumping over the pot-holes, the car crawled into a village street. It was enveloped in a deathly silence, there was not a sign of life any where. No domestic animals, no chickens, not even a dog to be heard. It seemed to have been deserted by its inhabitants.

Our car stopped at one of the houses on the outskirts. With a groan the general climbed out and stretched his legs after the long drive. Anna Petrovna gathered her things together. Genia and I waited for them to lead the way. There was no sign of life in the hut.

Nobody came out to welcome us. Finally, the general went up the steps of the porch and opened the unfastened door. We went through

a dark entry smelling of dung. general opened the living-room door without knocking. In the middle of the room a girl about eight years old, bare-foot and straight-haired, was sitting on the floor, swinging a cradle hanging from the ceiling. She was singing under her breath. When she saw us she stopped, and stared half in wonder, half in alarm, without rising.

"Good morning, my child," the general said to her. "Have you lost your tongue?"

In her confusion she only stuck her finger into her mouth.

"Where is everybody?" Nikolai Sergeivich asked again.

"They've gone to work," the child answered.

At that moment we heard a noise behind us, and a pair of legs shod in worm feltboots began to stir on the enormous Russian stove that filled half the room. A muffled coughing and groaning came from the shelf for a few moments, then a shaggy, grey head was stuck out from behind a cloth curtain.

"Ah.... So it's you, Nikolai!" an aged, rather hoarse voice said.

"So you've come again!" It was the general's father. The old man's face showed no sign of pleasure at the sight of his son.

"Who else should it be?" the general thundered with forced gaiety as the old man climbed down from the stove. "I've brought something for you, Sergei Vassilievich. Something for the pain in your legs. You won't refuse a bottle of vodka, I'm sure!"

"Bread would have been more acceptable than vodka!" the old man grumbled.

"Marusia, run to the chairman of the collective farm"-the general turned to the child-"and ask him to release all our people from work today. Tell him the general's arrived."

"The general ... the general. . . ." the old man mumbled in his beard. He laid his hand affectionately on Genia's head. "You're looking well, dragon-fly. So you haven't forgotten your old grand. dad in that Moscow of yours?"

I went to the car and brought in the packets and bundles of presents we had brought with us. One after another the rest of the

family arrived, all the general's numerous kindred and their grown up children. They all seemed rather awkward, and showed no sign of pleasure at the arrival of guests. The last to enter was a man, who had been wounded in the war, and now walked with the aid of a stick. He was the general's cousin, and the collective farm store keeper.

As usual in the country, the oldest man of the family issued the orders. The grandfather waved to one of the women:

"Lay the table, Serafima. We'll have dinner now we've got guests." Turning to his son, he remarked: "I don't suppose you've eaten potatoes for a long time, Nikolai? Well, you can have some now. We haven't any bread, so we're eating potatoes instead." "What's happened to your corn then?" Nikolai asked. "Haven't you received anything yet from the collective farm?" "Received anything. . ." the old man muttered. "The collective farm handed over everything down to the last grain to the State and that still left it in debt. We haven't met our delivery plan. We're managing with potatoes at present, but when winter comes ... we haven't any idea what we'll eat."

"Well, don't worry!" the general reassured him. "We've brought bread with us."

"Ali, Nikolai, Nikolai! If you ~veren't my son I'd show you the door! Brought your bread to make a mock of us country-people have you? You know our custom: the host provides for the guest You'll eat what we eat. And no arguments! Don't turn up your nose at our food."

With a sweeping gesture he invited everybody to sit down at the table, op which Scrafima had set a huge iron pot of steaming beet root soup. Next to ii she placed a pot of potatoes boiled in their jackets. Then she arranged earthenware plates and wooden spoon round the table. The general was the first to sit down. He was't most talkative of all the company, and tried hard to show that the was perfectly at home in the house where he had been born. He joked as he peeled his potatoes, readily held out his plate for Serafima to fill with the 'beetroot soup', which apparently had been made without meat or fat. For some time only the clatter of the wooden spoons was to be heard.

"What's a dinner without vodka?" the general exclaimed at last, and he rose and went across to his packages. "We'll throw back a glass all round, and then we'll feel more cheerful."

All the men in the house readily accepted his invitation, and the bottle was swiftly emptied. A second followed. The plain peasant food was quickly disposed of. The general again resorted to his packages, and littered the table with cans of preserves labelled in all the languages of Europe. His old father watched him glumly, and tried to protest; but then he held his peace and, staring at the strange labels, confined himself to the brief remark: "You've done some looting"

The plentiful supply of vodka had its effect; they all found their tongues.

"Well, Nikolai, tell us. They say there's a smell of war around again," the old man asked, a little more amiable after several glasses of vodka.

"We're a long way off war at the moment, but we must always be ready for surprises," the general replied. "We've won the war, now we must win the peace," he added self-importantly.

"What sort of world?" his father asked, screwing up his eyes cunningly. "That old story again 'proletarians of all countries unite. . . .?'" ,

('The Russian word *mir* has two meanings: 'peace', and 'world'; the old man deliberately twists his son's remark.)

"Why of course, we mustn't forget the proletarians of other countries," the general said sluggishly, conscious of the ineptitude of his remark. "Proletarian solidarity," he added, avoiding his father's eyes.

"Of course, of course My belly tells me every day that we're proletarians. But as for the solidarity! D'you mean that others are to go hungry with us? Is that it?"

"Let's have another drink, Sergei Vassilievich," his son proposed, realizing that there was no point in arguing with him. He filled his glass again.

"But tell me just one thing, Nikolai." His father went over to the offensive. "I don't say anything about our having shed our blood and gone hungry in this war. God be thanked that it ended as it did. But tell me one thing: did the soldiers want to fight at the beginning, or didn't they? You should know the answer, you're a general." The general stared silently at his plate.

"Nothing to say?" the old fellow crowed. "The soldiers didn't want to fight. And you know very well why. Because they'd had enough of that song long before. You can't fill your belly with songs.

"But all the same we won the war," the general said in his own defence.

"Nikolai I'm your father, and you needn't tell me lies. Have you forgotten what was promised us during the war? Why were the churches opened again? Why have you been given Russian epaulettes? Why have you got tsarist ribbons on your chest? You hid behind the backs of the Russian people! We were promised land and freedom. That's what we fought for! And where is it all?" He banged his fist down on the table, making the glasses jingle. "Where is it all?" he shouted again, furiously pointing a skinny finger at the potato-skins littered about the table.

"You can't have everything at once," the general feebly protested

"What do you mean by that? You can't have everything at once!

The old man exploded like a gunpowder barrel. "D'you mean it's going to be still worse?"

"Oh no But when everything's been destroyed it can't all be restored at once;" the general made his retreat.

"Ah, now that's a different story! But you began at first with the old song: Solidarity! Proletariat! We know it all by heart. We even know it backward!"

The general said no more, but apathetically chewed a breadcrumb. The old man could not get over his excitement. With a trembling hand he helped himself to a glass of vodka and tossed it off. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, then looked about him to see if anyone was daring to oppose him. But they all sat staring indifferently into their empty plates.

"Don't tell me any of your fairy-stories, Nikolai" the old fellow said decisively, with a challenging stare across the table. "I know all that you've been up to! D'you think I don't know how for the last twenty years you've been going about the world with a flamitoreli? D'you think I don't know where you got all those gewgaws from?" He pointed to the orders on his son's chest. "When you were lying in that cradle," he nodded to the cradle hanging from the

ceiling," we didn't only have bread in the house, we had everything in plenty. Now you've become a general, but the child in that cradle is crying with hunger. What's happened to your conscience?

Answer me! Have you exchanged your conscience for those gew gaws?"

"Grand-dad, where could I find a basket?" Genia, who had been sitting silent next to her father, asked the old man. She rose from the table to go out.

"What, dragon-fly, had enough?" Her grandfather gazed after her. "Go and pick some mushrooms in the forest, then we'll have mushrooms as well as potatoes for supper."

Genia stood at the door with a basket on her arm, and nodded to me to go with her. As I left the room I heard the old man say:

"I tell you, Nikolai, I don't want to hear any more about the proletari in my house. If there's anybody who's the last, the very bottom-most proletari, it's us, and not anybody else. If anybody's got to be set free, it's us! Get that? Put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

Genia and I walked out of the village. The forest began almost at the last house. The sky was overcast with grey. The air was autumnally clear, and pervaded with the scent of rotting leaves and dampness. Genia had flung a kerchief over her head, knotting it beneath her chin. She took off her high-heeled shoes and dropped them into her basket, and went on in front without saying a word, cautiously stepping with her bare feet through the grass. I followed her, my eyes delighting in her supple figure. We went deeper and deeper into the forest, and at last came to a clearing littered with the great, mossy trunks of felled trees; all around them was a wilderness of wild berries, mushrooms, and grasses.

"But what does father come here for at all?" Genia broke the silence. She walked aimlessly along with bent head, gazing at the ground. "Grand-dad always entertains him with this sort of performance, and father seems to like it."

"Perhaps he likes to see the difference between what he was and what he is now," I suggested.

"I've had enough of this comedy, long since!" she went on. "And this time it's all the more unpleasant because you've seen it."
"Genial" I called quietly.

She turned round so swiftly and so readily that she might have been waiting for the call. Her chestnut eyes were fixed on me with a look of expectation.

"Genia, what comedy are you referring to?" I asked, feeling an unpleasant suspicion rising in my mind. She stood embarrassed disturbed by the tone of my voice. I took her by the hands and set her against a large, mossy stump rising as high as her head. She humbly stood as I had placed her. I

"Don't you see it for yourself?" She attempted to avoid my question.

"But it isn't the comedy itself you mind?" I gazed into her eyes and saw that she was expecting, yet fearing, my question. "Which one do you think is the comedian?"

"I ... I don't know, Grisha"

"Genia, which one do you regard as the comedian?" I repeated harshly.

"I'm sorry for grand-dad," she whispered, lowering her eyes. I could see that this talk was torturing her. "But it's all so silly. . . she added, as though excusing herself.

"So you think your grandfather is a comedian?" I insisted.

"No; he's quite right. But. . ." Tears came into her eyes. I had a feeling of relief, mingled with a warm tenderness. I took her head between my hands and kissed her on the lips. I had no wish to go on tormenting her, by forcing her to disavow her own father. There was no need for me to say more.

"D'you know what, Genia?" I said, as I played with a strand of her hair. "I'm very grateful to you at this moment."

"Why?" she whispered in surprise.

"I was afraid for you. I was afraid you'd say something else. . .

"I felt really upset for the old man," I added thoughtfully

"Before the war came, each of us lived in his own nest, and each built his life to the best of his ability. During the war everything

was changed, everybody was threatened and everybody was equal in the presence of death. In those days of blood and evil I experienced so much good from people I didn't know at all, from simple people like your grandfather. The war brought us together in a brotherhood of blood. Now I feel sick at heart for these people."

A grey pall crept across the sky. The scent of rawness rose from the earth. A bird fluttered about for a moment, then flew off. "You and I are on top," I went on quietly. "We must never forget that. Our being on top and remaining there only makes sense if we don't forget it. I think your father has. And I was afraid you had too

The rustles of the autumnal forest stirred through the glade. I looked at Genia's bare feet, at her peasant's kerchief, at the basket standing beside her. In her hands she held a sprig of ash berries which she had broken off as she walked along.

"I'd be tremendously happy if you, were only your grandfather's grand-daughter and lived in that hut," I said.,
She pressed closer to me, as if she were cold.

"For then I'd know you belong to me," I whispered into her ear. "You know, I often think of the first days we met. When you were simply Genia, a delightful girl who was a soldier's friend. D'you remember how I knocked at your door, straight back from the front, in a soldier's dirty greatcoat? I was always so proud of you ...

A soldier's little wife . . ."

"Grisha, tell me quite frankly." As she leaned against the mossy stump she bore little resemblance to the satirical and carefree girl

I had once known. She spoke quietly, seriously. "You've come back from Berlin completely changed And you talk so little ... I feel that something's getting you down. What is it?"

"Genia, it's because I'm sorry that our friendship will never be anything more than that .

"What's preventing it?"

"When I first met your father I was proud of him. I thought of him in those days as an example to be followed... "

"And now?" She looked into my eyes with a strange look.

I did not answer at once. I could not yet put what I felt into words.

"That you should leave the life you're living now and belong only to me ... I can't insist that you should do that," I said quietly. "But if you were to include me in your life, it would be the end for all of us."

"So my father stands in the way?" she said with a strange calm. The words came as an answer to my own thoughts. I remained silent, gently stroking her shoulders. The leaves of the birches rustled quietly. The cloudy sky was silent. Ants crawled aimlessly over the stump.

"Don't be afraid, Grisha. I'd come to the same conclusion myself." Her voice betrayed her weariness. "There's just one thing I

want to say: it isn't my father that stands between us. What has come between us is something that long since came between me and my father. I am only a woman and a daughter. But I feel differently about that." She was silent for a moment, then she went on: "I've told you once already I'm an orphan..."

She raised the sprig of mountain ash to her face and brushed her cheeks with the cluster of berries. The air was fresh with the autumn

We stood silent in the forest glade, forgetting what we had come there for.

"And so you've quite made up your mind?" she asked at last. I only shrugged my shoulders impotently.

"But supposing I throw up everything and come to you in Berlin?"

"My position there is too insecure. I can't risk your future . . . She played thoughtfully with the cluster of orange berries. Her eyes gazed over my shoulder into the distance.

"I shall never forget you, my dear," I began, and was not at all sure whom I was trying to comfort, her or myself. My heart quivered once more with all the pang of a soldier's parting, with sadness and tenderness, as in times past. But now the girl's body did not quiver and caress me as it had done in the past. It was lifeless and cold.

"Don't be angry with me," I pleaded. "It's very difficult for me too. Very. . ."

She raised her head. The emptiness in her eyes slowly gave place to

the irresistible call of life. "If it has to be so, " she whispered soldier's little wife won't cry." She smiled through her tears. Then she set both her hands on my shoulders and threw her head back though she were looking at me for the first time. A burning kiss scalded our lips.

After a fortnight in Moscow I suddenly felt a griping void and restlessness. I hurried to put my affairs in order, feeling rather like a man afraid of being late for a train.

Andrei Kovtun had already left Moscow. After his meeting with Halina he had wandered about for several days as though in a trance dead to everything around him. I had great difficulty in persuading him to take the train to Sochi on the Black Sea, to spend the rest of his leave in a sanatorium. Even when I saw him off at the station he did not smile, and as he shook my hand he gazed aside.

When I left Berlin to return to Russia I had not felt any need of a rest. But now, after a fortnight in Moscow, I felt desperately tired and in need of a break.

One morning towards the end of the third week I hurriedly packed my few belongings and took a trolley-bus for the Central Aerodrome. I had already phoned and found out that there were always free places in the S.M.A. planes, flying from Moscow to Berlin. And now, just as I had done more than a year before, I stood in the airport office, entering my name in the passenger list.

With a pain in my heart I went to a telephone kiosk and called up Genia. When I heard her familiar voice I said:
"Genia, I'm phoning from the airport. I've been urgently called back to Berlin."

"Don't tell lies," I heard her say. "But I'm not angry with you.

Only it's a pity you didn't give me a parting kiss. . . "
I was about to say something, but she had already rung off. Half an hour later our plane was airborne. This time the pilot did not make a farewell circle above Moscow. This time I did not gaze out of the window. And I did not look forward with any feeling of pleasure to what lay ahead of me. I tried to avoid thinking of what I had left behind me.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Marshal's Emissaries

So I fled from Moscow back to Berlin.

I closed the door of my Karlshorst apartment behind me, went to my desk, sat down and stared miserably at the calendar. I had two more weeks of leave: what was I to do with them? Report for duty before my time was up? Some would think me mad, others would call me a careerist. Visit my friends? I would be asked too many questions which I had not the least desire to answer. I had been in a great hurry to get away from Moscow; but what I had hurried for, where I was hurrying to, I had no idea.

In the end I decided to take a rest, and spent the next few days visiting bathing resorts, deliberately making for the most frequented spots, lying on the sand and watching the alien, carefree world all around me. At first I got a tremendous kick out of this occupation

But after a time I began to experience a mortal boredom with seeing the same packets of sandwiches and the same childish antics of grown-up people day after day.

Ten days before my leave expired I reported to the head of the Administration for Industry, and expressed my desire to resume my duties. Alexandrov looked pleasantly surprised. "Well, did you have a good rest in Moscow?" he asked.

"Very good!"

"You couldn't have turned up at a more opportune moment" He got down to business. "Over half of our staff are on leave, and at this very moment the supreme commander has given us an urgent and responsible commission. We've got to collect material against the dismantling organizations to send to Moscow."

He spent the next half-hour discussing the tension that had arisen between the S.M.A. Department for Reparations and the Special Committee for Dismantling set up by the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers. In order to justify the S.M.A.'s attitude we had to collect as much incriminating material as possible about the Special Committee's activities. The Administration for Industry had been ordered to put at the supreme commander's disposition a Special Commission consisting of several engineers. Officially their

task was to co-ordinate the work of the S.M.A. and the Special Committee, but unofficially they would be charged to collect information exposing the dismantlers. The commission was to make visits to all the most important industrial works in the Soviet zone.

"If you agree, I'll nominate you as a member of the commission," Alexandrov said in conclusion. "Especially as you know German, for it will be necessary to make close contacts with German works directors."

Continual traveling and visits to factories. For the next few weeks, possibly even for months, I would be free of Moscow, and Karlshorst too! I could not hope for anything better at that moment, and I readily agreed to Alexandrov's suggestion. Next day I was appointed to the Co-ordination Commission, which was responsible directly to the Supreme Commander.

So here was a Soviet citizen who had fled from Moscow, a Soviet officer who could find no peace in Karlshorst, who at the same time was an emissary of the S.M.A. Supreme Commander, working for Moscow. A fortuitous coincidence? No! Rather a law of progression. The grey automobile sped through the chilly autumn air. The road drummed monotonously under the tires. A covey of partridges flew over the bare field beside the road.

"Let's take a pot-shot," Major Dubov proposed, reaching for his double-barreled gun, which was stuck behind the seat.

"Why bother?" I answered. "In any case we'd have to hand our bag over to someone else."

"All the better !" the major laughed. "It might be a way of getting someone to talk. Vassily Ivanovich, to arms!"

Our driver, Vassily, was an elderly man, a former soldier. He lowered one of the car windows, then turned off the road. The

partridge's thinking apparatus is rather restricted: it won't let a man come anywhere near it, but you can almost drive over it in a car. Karlshorst lay behind us. In our pocket we had a plenipotentiary document signed by Marshal Sokolovsky, valid for the district of Thuringia, and empowering us to carry out a special commission for the S.M.A. Supreme Commander in Germany. That would be sufficient to open all doors in Thuringia. But if that failed to achieve its purpose, we had a second document ready, giving us 'full powers to check up on the fulfillment of the S.M.A. order No.... and the decree of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers dated. . . '

These resounding documents were chiefly intended for General Dobrovolsky, who was plenipotentiary of the Special Committee for Dismantling and also Soviet director of the Zeiss works at Jena.

Although he was a hundred-per-cent civilian, and formerly had been director of a Soviet optical works, and in addition was a member of the ambiguous tribe of 'dismantlers', he enjoyed some authority, since he held strongly entrenched positions in Moscow.

Although Marshal Sokolovsky had issued the strict order that all members of dismantling organizations were to wear civilian dress, Dobrovolsky was behaving as though he had never heard of the order. Whenever Sokolovsky met Dobrovolsky, the marshal always addressed the general in an ironically friendly tone, using the civilian form of address, ignoring the military regulation that military men were always to be addressed by their rank.

Apart from his childish attachment to the insignia of his rank, Dobrovolsky was also notorious for his rudeness. He had been known to throw officers down the steps when they arrived to check up on his activities, or had refused to allow them into the works at all, politely telling them: "If you don't like it, complain to Moscow."

But in order to make a complaint it was necessary to have evidence, and that could not be obtained from the Zeiss works except through Dobrovolsky.

So far as the Soviet Military Administration had internal enemies and antagonists at all in Germany, they were to be found mainly among the people collectively known as dismantlers. General Zorin, head of the Administration for Reparations and Deliveries, had made a number of futile attempts to work with the dismantlers, but at last he had given up all hope. Now all his communications with these bodies, who frequently were only five minutes away from Karlshorst, were made through Moscow, in the form of complaints, demands, and reports on failures to accomplish the reparations plan because of the dismantlers' activities. But they only laughed and continued to search through the Soviet zone for anything that the S.M.A. had not so far succeeded in sequestering. But even sequestration was not of much value, for the dismantlers quickly made contact with Moscow, with the result, as a rule, that an order came through to the S.M.A. to hand over the object in question to the dismantlers.

Among the chief duties of the S.M.A. Economy Department were

the securing of deliveries on reparations account and ensuring that German industry worked within the limits of the peace potential fixed under the Potsdam Agreement. The very task of reconciling these two functions was a difficult one, to put it mildly, as one can see especially when the scope of the reparations plan is borne in mind. But then a third power intervened, and so far as we were concerned it was an uncontrollable fiction, for this third power-the dismantlers was responsible directly to Moscow.

The work of the dismantling organizations was directed by the Special Committee for Dismantling set up under the Soviet Council of Ministers, and therefore by the Council of Ministers itself, together with the ministries directly interested. The result was a kind of socialist competition: two milkmaids assiduously milking the one cow. One of the milkmaids behaved like a poacher, got as much as she could and went her way. That was the dismantlers. From the other the masters first demanded milk, then hung the half-dead cow round her neck with the demand to go on milking and milking. That was the S.M.A. No matter what happened to the cow and the two milkmaids, the masters got their milk down to the last drop.

As soon as the Red Army crossed the German frontier special army trophy brigades were entrusted with the task of collecting and valuing the spoils of war, even to the extent of dismantling industrial plant. When it was found that these brigades could not cope with their task special dismantling organizations came more or less arbitrarily into being, and these were later co-ordinated under the Special Committee for Dismantling. Every People's Commissariat, the chief administrations of commissariats, and even single Soviet works and factories sent their own dismantling brigades to Germany.

Dismantling became all the rage. Things went so far that even the State Lenin Library in Moscow sent its own specialists to dismantle Goethe and Schiller, while the Moscow 'Dynamo' sports stadium

hurriedly sent its football team to Germany in search of a swimming pool suitable for dismantling.

The dismantlers were given military rank on the following basis a technician became a lieutenant, an engineer a major, a director came a colonel, and a higher ministerial official a general. The authorities who had created the dismantlers did not worry themselves unduly over this problem. But it gave the S.M.A. all the more headaches when it came to have dealings with these home-made officers. As time passed they grew more and more fond of their getup, and the S.M.A. had no little trouble in dismantling them

again.

Major Dubov had been sent with me on this trip because he was an expert on optics and precision machines. In addition, there was the positive advantage that he and Dobrovolsky had been fellow students. While he was drawing the general into reminiscences former days I would be free to prepare the downfall of our enemy and rival No. 1.

In the case of the Zeiss works the conflict of interests between the S.M.A. and the Special Committee was particularly glaring. After the first spasm of dismantling in Germany, which the S.M.A. had neither the time nor the desire to prevent, economic consideration began to be thought of. From the very beginning the Special Committee had insisted that the Zeiss works was to be completely dismantled and transferred to the Soviet Union. From the aspect military strategy that was sound. But there were difficulties in the way. The crux of the matter was that the industrial plant of the Zeiss works was of comparatively little value; in fact it included no machinery that did not exist in the U.S.S.R. already. The value of the Zeiss works inhered in its experts, starting with the ordinary workmen polishers, who had worked there all their lives and who passed on their experience from generation to generation, and ending with the engineers, who had laid down the classic formulae for optical mechanics. Without these men the whole of the Zeiss works would not have been worth a brass farthing in the Soviet Union. But to transfer the works complete with the staff would have been too difficult and too risky an undertaking.

An attempt was made to find a compromise by proposing that Soviet workers and technical staffs should be sent to Jena to make special studies. After their return to the Soviet Union they were to take over the dismantled plant and apply the technical experience of the Zeiss works. This plan was put into operation to some extent, but inadequately. The Kremlin was very reluctant to let its children travel to foreign parts, even to occupied Germany, for they might learn other things besides the technical experience of the Zeiss works. The first round of dismantling proved unprofitable. The Zeiss equipment dismantled and sent to the Soviet Union made very little practical contribution to the country's economy. Meanwhile the main works, which had thus been amputated, excelled all expectations, for it continued to turn out genuine Zeiss products to the astonishment even of General Dobrovolsky, who, after the dismantling was completed, had remained in Jena as Soviet director of the

works. He was relatively little interested in this production, since it went to the S.M.A. Administration for Reparations and all the laurels fell to his sworn enemy, General Zorin.

On the other hand, the S.M.A. was deeply interested in the works, for its production was beginning to play an important part in the reparations account. If a second round of dismantling were to occur-and Dobrovolsky was persistently pressing for it-the S.M.A. would lose a considerable contribution on that account. As the Council of Ministers would never reduce the figure set for reparations, new sources would have to be found for reparations deliveries, and as time passed this presented increasing difficulties. And now a duel began between the S.M.A. and the Special Committee. Dobrovolsky solemnly assured Moscow: "If I finally dismantle Zeiss, and it is set up in the Soviet Union, within twelve months it will be achieving a production worth a hundred million roubles."

The S.M.A. parried with the counter-blow: 'The first dismantled section of the Zeiss works already set up in the Soviet Union has so far achieved a deficit of fifty million roubles, and requires continual subsidies, whereas the half-dead Zeiss works in Jena is bringing us yearly reparations deliveries to the value of twenty million marks.'

The conflict took an unexpected turn for both sides. After studying the reports of both parties Moscow ordered: 'A corresponding number of highly skilled German experts is to be drawn from the staff of the Zeiss works at Jena and its subsidiary undertakings for work in the optical industry of the Soviet Union, chiefly in the dismantled Zeiss undertakings; they are to be recruited on the basis of individual contracts and transferred to their new assignments. The selection of these experts and the execution of this order are entrusted to the director of the Zeiss works at Jena, Comrade Dobrovolsky. Simultaneously it is decreed that the restoration of the

main undertaking Zeiss-Jena is to be forced in accordance with previous decrees. Signed: Minister for Precision Industry, by plenipotentiary powers from the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R.'

So Dobrovolsky had achieved a partial success. It had been decided that the first step was to dismantle the Zeiss experts. But what was one to make of the fact that one and the same decree demanded the destruction and also the 'forced restoration' of one and the same undertaking?

Some days previously, in the Tagliche Rundtchau I had read a nauseating letter written by one of the German specialists who had been sent to the Soviet Union on the basis of an 'individuals contract', which really meant compulsion. The happy expert hastened to inform the world that he was doing very well and was earning 10,000 roubles a month. At this same period Marshal Sokolovsky was receiving 5,000 roubles a month. The average Soviet engineer receives 800 to 1,200 roubles a month.

The deed was done: a considerable proportion of the workers and technical staff at Jena was sent to the East 'on the basis of individual contracts'. The Zeiss output fell. Dobrovolsky celebrated his victory, and sought to convince everybody of the soundness of his theory that the Zeiss works must be dismantled completely. But now Major Dubov and I were traveling to Jena as spies venturing into the enemy camp.

"Why, old colleague, how's things?" Major Dubov shook Dobrovolsky's hand effusively.

"What wind has blown you here?" The general welcomed his old comrade in a somewhat unfriendly manner. He behaved like a dictator in the works, and simultaneously like the commander of a besieged fortress. Especially when his visitors smelt of the S.M.A., I stepped aside and turned to study examples of Zeiss products which were attached to the wall, to give the impression that I was not in the least interested in business matters. But when Major Dubov had drawn Dobrovolsky into his private office I set to work to turn the general's flank

Through a communicating door I passed from Dobrovolsky's waiting room into the waiting room of the German director. I showed the woman secretary my documents with Marshal Sokolovsky's signature, and expressed a wish to see the director. He was very glad to see me, and hurriedly got rid of the visitors who were with him. He was a fairly young man, a member of the Socialist Unity Party. Only recently he had been a worker in the packing department of the works. Now he was the director. Just the sort of man I wanted to get hold of. Not intelligent, but an energetic executive.

"Well, Herr Director, tell me how things are going!" I said. I knew quite well that two feelings were struggling for mastery within him: his fear of Dobrovolsky and a feeling of professional or national duty, if such conceptions exist at all for members of the Socialist Unity Party. He must realize that the S.M.A. stood for the

interests of the works, so far as its continued existence was concerned. I had no need to explain the situation to him, he knew it very well. He only wished to be assured that Dobrovolsky would not learn anything of our conversation.

Despite his apparently quite genuine desire to spike Dobrovolsky's guns, my talk with him did not get me very far. I thanked him for his exceptionally useless information and asked his permission to talk to the higher technical staff, 'just to elucidate certain details'. He was so forthcoming as to put his office at my disposition. A few minutes later a gaunt man in horn spectacles and a white overall came in. He was a being of a different cut. I stared at him silently, and smiled, as though he were an old acquaintance. I had already gathered information concerning the technical managers of the works. After a few preliminary remarks concerning Zeiss and its production we understood each other.

I told him frankly that, although I was not moved by any philanthropic impulses, my object nonetheless was to free the works from Dobrovolsky's terror regime. In this particular instance we were involuntary allies. I assured him that our conversation would be kept a dead secret. He declared himself ready to place his knowledge and experience at the disposition of the S.M.A.

"What in your view are the bottlenecks in the work of the undertaking, Herr Doctor?" I tried to minimize the catastrophic situation by using the euphemistic word 'bottlenecks'. "It would be simpler to specify the bottles!" he replied with a mournful smile. "There's a shortage of everything. But the chief thing is that we've been deprived of our brains, our specialists. And that damage cannot be made good for decades."

He went on to paint a pitiful picture. Unlike Soviet industry, German industry depends to a particularly high extent on the co operation of related enterprises. In the Soviet Union economic con

siderations were sacrificed in order to achieve autonomy in industry whether large or small, both on a national scale and in regard to individual and factories. This issue was decided not so much by economic as by military strategic factors.

The basis of capitalist economy is that production should at least pay its way. The structure of any enterprise and its viability are governed by strictly economic calculation and an active balance. Western economists would consider it absurd that in the Soviet Union the majority of the chief and basic industrial undertakings

work at a loss and are dependent on a State subsidy, which the State through its plan pumps out of light industry by over pricing means of consumption, and from collectivized agriculture.

At the moment we are still working with old stocks and semi manufactures. We are not getting any new deliveries. When these stocks are exhausted . . ." the technical director threw out his hand in despair. "Our former suppliers in the Soviet zone have largely ceased to exist. The promised raw materials from the Soviet haven't started to come in yet. It is practically impossible to obtain anything from the western zone. We've already tried sending lorries over the frontier illegally, at our own risk, in order to renew commercial contacts and thus get hold of something. But that is no solution."

We Soviet engineers were frequently amazed at the vitality German industry, despite all the difficulties of total warfare, the capitulation, and the dismantling process. At the capitulation stocks of raw materials in many German works were often larger than those held by Soviet works in peacetime.

In May and June 1945, immediately after the fall of Berlin, Soviet dismantlers hurriedly dismantled the industrial plants at Siemens stadt, the heart of the German electro-technical industry. Even then, before the Potsdam Conference, it was known that the capital of Germany was to be occupied by all the four allies. Officially this decision was taken on 5 June 1945, by inter-allied agreement. But the Western Allies' entry into Berlin was artificially delayed for another month. The reason? Dismantling. The Soviet dismantling brigades worked feverishly day and night in the sectors of Berlin to be handed over. And they dismantled in earnest: right down to the pipes of water closets.

A year later I visited Siemensstadt in the company of Colonel Vassiliev, who had been in charge of the dismantling operation in these works. He shook his head in astonishment. "Where on earth have they got all this new plant from? Why, we even removed the cables from the conduits!" The German directors greeted the colonel genially as an old acquaintance. "Ah, Colonel, how are things with you? Have you any orders for us?" And that without a hint of irony, simply with an eye to business.

The Zeiss technical director continued:

"We're trying to meet and we are meeting demands so far as we can. But it is being achieved only against an ultimate exhaustion

of production. This is an internal process which so far is barely perceptible; but one day it will lead to a complete standstill."

I asked him to draw up a report, together with an economic analysis of the state of the undertaking. I would collect these documents on my way back to Berlin. I once more assured him that his name would not appear in my report to Marshal Sokolovsky.

I took the same line with two other technical managers. I had to get a general picture of the situation, though in fact there was little difference between their stories.

During a visit to the head of the Economic Department of the Jena commandatura I learned more details of Dobrovolsky's activities. In regard to the Zeiss works the commandatura was working for both sides. It readily helped Dobrovolsky to draw up 'individual labour contracts' for the Zeiss specialists to be sent to the Soviet Union, and just as readily it communicated all the details of this special measure to the S.M.A. representative.

We obtained no new information from the head of the S.M.A. Economic Department in Thuringia, but he was loud in his complaints about Dobrovolsky: "He's sabotaging the S.M.A. work shamelessly.

He doesn't care what happens to reparations, so long as he enjoys Moscow's favour. 'So many units of installations sent to the address of the Ministry for Precision Tool Industry.' But he doesn't care a damn what benefit is derived from them. And now in the Soviet Union men are being put in prison because they can't make use of the plant."

That was quite true. For instance, in one German works a serial installation of a hundred specialized machine-tools for the mass manufacture of a certain article was dismantled and sent to Russia.

But on the way one of the special machines attracted the interest of another dismantler, and without more ado it was readdressed to a new consignee. When it arrived at its destination it was discovered that a little mistake had been made; it was a special machine that

could not be used in that works at all. So without unnecessary fuss it was scrapped. But when the rest of the series arrived at the rightful destination and they set to work to install them, it was found that one machine was missing. Yet without it the entire series was useless. There was no hope of finding a substitute for the missing item, so the whole lot was scrapped. The total cost was charged to

capital investments', and several men were brought to trial for sabotage.

Our car sped through the frosty winter air of Thuringia; Karlshorst's emissaries drew up the balance-sheet of their work. Sokolovsky would have material for another report to Moscow and for further charges against Dobrovolsky. But there would be no change in the situation. The Kremlin knows what it needs.

Major Dubov was more interested in the purely technical aspect of the affair. One day he unexpectedly asked me: "Do you know the story of Zeiss at all?" Without waiting for my reply he went on: "It's a very interesting and striking story. While they were still alive old Zeiss and the scientific founder of the works, Professor Ernst Abbe, transformed the enterprise into a foundation. A foundation statute strictly bound the administration; the supreme management was vested in representatives of the town's municipal council and representatives of the works. The district of Thuringia appointed the foundation president. So you had a kind of voluntary socialization of the works without the disadvantages of a , state capitalistic enterprise. The revenues have contributed greatly to the material and cultural prosperity of the city of Jena. And that is precisely what we in Russia came to later, only in a different form.

"And in addition" Major Dubov gazed out of the window and said, apparently incidentally: "In addition, under the founder's, will all the workers and employees in the works directly participation in the profits. Which is exactly what should happen in the ideal socialistic society, according to our theories. But that has existed in the Zeiss works for decades, and still exists today." Our driver, Vassily Ivanovich, whose presence we tended to overlook, pushed his cap on to the back of his head and added: "Not exists, but existed . . . until we arrived."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Stalin's Party

The days passed into weeks, the weeks into months. An incessant lapse of time in which there was no purpose, in which one only looked back and felt a great emptiness in the soul.

Winter had come. The new year 1947 was approaching. In us Soviet men, who stood on the bound between two worlds, this aroused few cheerful memories and still fewer cheerful expectations. We had recently witnessed two noteworthy events: in the October there had been the first post-war elections to the Berlin municipal council, and in November the regular election of candidates to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

The German elections aroused far greater interest among the Soviet residents in Berlin than one would have expected. Perhaps it was because they differed fundamentally from those to which we were accustomed. It was strange to see the pre-election slogans of the various parties. We were struck by the powerful and intelligent propaganda of the Socialist Unity Party. Here one sensed the long experience of Soviet propaganda; it was self-confident and shameless. We, who were the masters of the S.E.D. and knew what was behind it all, were particularly struck by this latter aspect.

I well remember one incident that occurred during the Berlin elections. One Sunday morning I and two other officers decided to take advantage of the fine weather to go for a motor-cycle ride. We borrowed three heavy military motor-cycles from the Auto Battalion and tore out of Karlshorst along the Frankfurter-Allee.

On our way to the Alexanderplatz we overtook a slowly marching column of men with crimson banners and flags in their hands. The demonstrators made an exceptionally depressing and joyless impression. Men in Thaelmann caps and red armbands were bustling

backward and forward along its sides. We accelerated to drive past. It had been organized by the trade unions of the Soviet sector to express the wishes and desires of the German people. Attendance was compulsory. Any man who didn't turn up was in danger of losing his job. It was pitiful and absurd to see this flock of sheep moving along under the supervision of the herdsmen in Thaelmann caps.

I don't know how it came about, but all the three of us Soviet officers began to ride our powerful military motor-cycles round and round that column. The demonstrators looked at one another

anxiously, assuming that we were a military patrol sent to ensure that the procession didn't melt away. The herdsmen stared at us in astonishment, and as we drove close to the edge of the column they had to jump aside to avoid being knocked down. For our part, we were sickened at the sight of this shameful comedy, and on the other hand we enjoyed not having to take part in it ourselves for once.

On that same day a Soviet patrol shot an American who was attempting to photograph a similar demonstration in the Soviet sector of Berlin. Evidently someone was of the opinion that such photographs might have the same effect on the close observer that that procession had made on us.

The elections were held on 21 October. I have never known people in the Soviet Union to take any interest in the results of elections to the Soviet elected authorities. But on that election day in Berlin,

I doubt whether there was one man in Karlshorst who was not interested in the results. Most interesting of all was the fact that the S.E.D. came last but one of the parties. Not much was said about this eloquent circumstance.

In the S.M.A. Administration for Industry the Berlin elections, led to the following conversation between Captain Bagdassarian and Major Zhdanov:

"You know," Captain Bagdassarian said, as he pointed to the results printed in one of the newspapers, "when I think of these elections I get a queer thought. All the parties are voting. Supposing the Communist Party gets a majority. Does it mean that the other~ will let it take over the power?"

"Yes, it looks like it," Major Zhdanov answered uncertainly.

"That's funny! If the Communist Party comes to power, its first, step will be to wring the necks of all the other parties. Yet these other parties are ready to give the power into the Communist Party' hands without making any resistance. That doesn't make sense !"

"You can't make sense of this democracy business all at once!" the major sighed.

"It's utter idiocy !" the captain agreed,

"Perhaps it isn't so stupid after all." The major knitted his brows in the attempt to get to the bottom of it all. "Democracy as a political form, is the will of the majority. If the majority votes for communism, there will be communism. True, very few are voting for it at the moment!" he ended on a different note.

"All the same, it's queer." Captain Bagdassarian ran his fingers through his curly hair. "They all sling abuse at one another, but nobody puts anybody else into prison. But we do just the reverse: one says nothing and is put in prison. A man doesn't even think, and still he's put in prison

In December 1946 the Officers' Club in Karlshorst was the scene of electoral meetings at which candidates were nominated for the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet. On the day set apart for the Administration for Industry all the workers in the Administration had to be present in the Club, which had been decorated for the occasion with additional portraits of the leaders, and red bunting.

We sat for some time in the hall, utterly bored. At last the chair man called on a speaker, who had been previously arranged. With a paper in his hand the speaker went to the platform and, speaking in a monotonous tone, began to explain how happy we all were that we ourselves could elect the representatives to our country's supreme governmental authority. Then a further speaker went to the platform to propose our candidate from the Special Electoral District formed by the Soviet Occupation Zone. Then the candidate himself came out from the wings and told us his life story. He was a general, but I doubt whether he had ever spoken in such a humble and lackadaisical manner in all his previous military career. The second candidate was someone quite unknown to all of us. We knew such a person existed only when he went to the platform not from the wings, but from the body of the hall. He was chosen to play the role of candidate 'from the very heart of the people'. Both candidates had been put forward in advance by the S.M.A. Political Administration and had been approved by Moscow.

We all waited impatiently for this boring procedure to finish, especially as it was to be followed by a film show. When the chair man announced that he proposed to take the vote the hall sighed with relief, and everybody hurriedly raised their hands without

waiting to be invited. Armed with pencils and paper, the tellers hurried through the hall. The audience began to murmur with impatience. At last the votes were counted, and the chairman asked in

a drowsy tone: "Those against?"

There was a dead silence. Nobody stirred.

The chairman waited for a moment or two, then looked round the hall. Then, to intensify the effect of the unanimous decision, he asked in a tone of assumed surprise:

"Nobody against?"

And thus we elected two men 'chosen of the *people' to the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet.

The turn of the year brought several innovations that made one take yet another glance back over the eighteen months that had passed since the capitulation of Germany.

In the early autumn of 1946 the United States Secretary of State, Byrnes, had made a speech in Stuttgart, soberly surveying events since the end of the war and indicating the main features of American foreign policy. Only now, after eighteen months, were the Americans beginning to suspect that it was hard to sup out of the same bowl as good old Uncle Joe. Byrnes' speech was not to the Kremlin's liking, and it was given a sharp answer in Molotov's speech on the occasion of the revolutionary celebrations on 7 November. So much importance was attached to this speech that it was made the subject of compulsory study in all the political study circles throughout the S.M.A. There was no attempt to conceal the connection between the Byrnes and Molotov speeches from the senior officials of the S.M.A.; the two speeches were studied simultaneously, and those taking part in the discussion had to unmask the American's imperialist intrigues and to stress Molotov's peace-loving policy. But Byrnes' speech was regarded as too dangerous for the less politically educated workers,' and they were allowed to discuss only their own leader's speech.

These two political speeches can be regarded as marking the beginning of the cold war. In the Control Commission Allied relations cooled off still more and went no further than diplomatic courtesy required. Decisions affecting the future of Germany were more and more removed from the Control Commission meetings to the private offices of the Kremlin and the White House.

This situation also served as a signal for a final tightening of the screw on the Soviet post-war front. The S.M.A. Political Administration issued an instruction accusing minor Party authorities of having lost contact with the masses and neglecting political educational work. This was the crack of the whip. One could guess what would follow. In fact the first consequence was a change of Party organizers in all the S.M.A. departments. This was followed by measures to

tighten things up all through the Soviet machinery. Hitherto the Soviet residents of Karlshorst had lived and worked without engaging in political study. Anybody who knows anything about Soviet life will know what that meant. The higher authorities were secretly astonished, the smaller fry quietly rejoiced; but one and all held their tongues, on the principle of not mentioning the devil in case he appeared. But now political studies were started, including study of the Short History of the C.P.S.U. And it had to be carried through in shock tempo at that. Evidently to make up for lost time.

The next step was a campaign to raise labor discipline. It was decided to remind Soviet citizens abroad that there was such a thing as the Soviet labor code. Brand-new boards with hooks and numbers were hung up in all the departments, and every worker in each department had to take off and rehang his own allotted number four times a day. In the Soviet Union these boards are the object of fear, but their effect on us was rather to get our backs up. The head of the Administration for Industry, Alexandrov, entrusted his number to his chauffeur, who very quickly lost it. We officers regarded the boards as an insult and took it in turn to remove several numbers at a time. But once more Soviet law with all its consequences hung as a threat over the head of every one of us.

Then an hysterical 'vigilance' campaign was inaugurated. Personnel Departments were instituted in all the S.M.A. offices with the obvious job of keeping closer watch on the workers. Once more extensive questionnaires were drawn up 'for Soviet citizens abroad'. These with their endless list of questions had to be filled afresh every three months. Many of us kept a copy of the questionnaire and our answers, and next time simply copied the old answers on to the new form.

A demobilized lieutenant of the N.K.V.D. forces was appointed head of the Personnel Department in the Administration for industry. From the very beginning he behaved with such rudeness and insolence that many of the officers, who were of higher rank, were infuriated. His room was in the basement, and he would ring some one up: "Comrade Colonel, come down to me and fill in your

questionnaire." But as often as not he got the answer: "If you need it filled in, bring it up to me. At the moment I'm still a colonel, I believe."

An order issued by General Dratvin, chief of staff of the S.M.A.,

was circulated for the information of all members of the S.M.A. In it, without actually mentioning names, he stated that the wives of quite a number of highly placed Soviet officials were going to the Berlin western sector while their husbands were at work, and were forming impermissible acquaintances among officers of the western powers. The order spoke in very sharp terms; it referred to fashionable restaurants, expensive furs, and, to crown all, agents of foreign intelligence services. All the accused women were returned to the Soviet Union at twenty-four hours' notice, and the husbands were sternly reprimanded for their lack of Bolshevik vigilance.

The secret purpose of this unusually frank order was revealed in its second paragraph, in which all members of the S.M.A. were strictly forbidden to visit the western sector, and were reminded of the necessity to be particularly vigilant in the circumstances of residence abroad. The women were chastised in order to serve as a warning to others.

In conclusion, General Dratvin threatened the application of sterner measures to all who violated the order ... down to and, including return to the Soviet Union. In saying so much, the general went too far. For thus officially, in the words of the S.M.A. chief of staff, return to one's native land was recognized as serious punishment for Soviet citizens, abroad.

None of this was anything new to us. We had experienced it before, at home. But coming after we had won the war, after we had looked forward hopefully to changes in the Soviet system, and above all after our comparatively free life in occupied Germany, this abrupt return to former practices gave us furiously to think. Or rather, to avoid thinking if possible. That was the only hope.

I had made Major Dubov's acquaintance during the war. Even a brief comradeship at the front binds men together more strongly than many years of acquaintance in normal conditions. That may have been the reason why we greeted each other as old acquaintances when we met again as fellow workers in the S.M.A.

He was over forty. Outwardly stern and incommunicative, he had few friends, and avoided society. At first I regarded his reserve simply as a trait of his character. But after a time I noticed that he had a morbid antipathy to anybody who began to talk politics in his hearing. I assumed that he had good reasons for his attitude, and never bothered him with unnecessary questions.

It so happened that I was the only person Dubov introduced to his

family. He had a charming, well educated wife, and two children. When I came to know his family, I realized that he was not only a good husband and father, but a rarely decent fellow morally.

His one great passion was hunting. That brought us still closer together. We often drove out of Berlin on a Saturday and spent all day and all night hunting, cut off from Karlshorst and all the world. On one occasion, tired out after hours of wandering through the dense growth of thickets and innumerable little lakes, we flung ourselves down to have a rest. The conversation happened to turn to discussion of an officer we both knew, and I casually remarked:

"He's still young and stupid . . ."

The major gave me a close look and asked with a queer smile:

"And are you so old and wise?"

"Well, not quite," I answered. "But I've learned to keep a still tongue in my head."

He again looked at me fixedly. "Tell me, has anything ever happened to you ... of ... you know what?"

"Absolutely nothing," I replied, realizing what he was hinting at.

"Then why aren't you in the Party?" he asked almost roughly.

"I've simply not had the time," I answered shortly, for I had no wish to go further into details.

'Now listen, Gregory Petrovich, it's not a joking matter," he said slowly, and I caught an almost fatherly note in his voice. "For a man in your position it smacks almost of a deliberate demonstration. It might even have serious consequences for you."

"I'm doing my job as well as any Party man!" I retorted. He smiled, rather sadly. "That's how I argued once," he said with bitter irony.

Then, without my prompting him, in an objective sort of tone he told me his story: how he had come to join the Party, and why he avoided people who talked politics. In 1988 Dubov was an engineer working in a Leningrad factory producing precision instruments. He was a capable engineer, and held

a responsible post connected with the construction of instruments for the air force and the navy. He liked his job, devoted all his free time to research, and bothered little about politics. Despite his responsible post he remained a non-Party man.

One day he was summoned to the director's room. From that moment he was not seen in the works again. Nor did he return home. His wife found out what had happened to him when the N.K.V.D. men turned up at their apartment in the middle of the night, made a thorough search, and confiscated all her husband's personal property. Next day she went to the N.K.V.D. to ask for news of him. She was told they knew nothing about him, and was advised not to worry, nor to worry others. If there was any need, she would be informed.

Dubov spent more than a year in the investigation cells of the N.K.V.D. He was charged with sabotage and counter-revolutionary activity. The sentence was the standard one: ten years' imprisonment, to be spent in one of the camps in Central Siberia, where new war factories were being built. There he continued to work as an engineer.

He discovered the real reason for his arrest only two years later. Among a fresh batch of prisoners he recognized the former chief engineer at the Leningrad factory for precision instruments. Dubov was delighted to see him, but the man seemed restrained and avoided Dubov as much as possible. But as the months passed the two engineers struck up a friendship based on their common memories of freedom. One day the conversation turned to the reasons why they had been sent to the camp.

"Someone denounced me," Dubov said.

The chief engineer looked away, then sighed, and laughed bitterly. "Would you like to know who it was?" he asked. Dubov stared at him distrustfully.

"I did it," the other man said, and hurried on without giving Dubov a chance to comment: "We regularly received orders from the N.K.V.D. to provide them with so many persons possessing such and such qualifications. The lists had to be drawn up by the Party organizer and confirmed by the chief engineer and the director. What could I do? I too had a wife and children"

"But why was I put on the list?" Dubov asked.

"Because you were not a Party member," the former chief engineer said. "The Party organizer put you down."
Dubov said nothing for some time, then he looked wearily at the other man and asked:

"But how did you get here?"

The engineer only shrugged his shoulders helplessly. Dubov spent four years in the camp. But during all those years he did not suffer as much as his wife and children. Under Soviet law a political prisoner's guilt extends to include his family. His wife was morally and physically shattered. Their children grew up in the knowledge that their father was 'an enemy of the people', and felt always that they were not like other children.

In 1948 he was released before the expiry of his term. With no explanation given, he was completely rehabilitated and the conviction quashed. He was called up straight from the camp into the army. That was the real reason for his premature discharge. Without seeing his family he went as an officer directly to the front. At the front he was an exemplary officer, just as he had been an exemplary engineer in Leningrad and an exemplary prisoner in the Siberian camp. He was just to his men and ruthless to the enemy. And he was devoted to his native land, with all its Party organizers and prison camps.

Shortly before the end of the war he received another battle decoration, and in addition was singled out for the honour of being invited to join the Communist Party. This time he did not hesitate. Without a word he filled in the questionnaires. And without a word he accepted the Party ticket which the corps commander's political deputy presented to him.

In the S.M.A. Major Dubov was regarded as one of their most reliable and knowledgeable engineers. He was given the responsible task of transferring the German industry in the Soviet zone to new lines, but his rank and position remained unchanged. Why? Because, although he had been completely rehabilitated and the conviction had been quashed, in his personal file was a curt note: 'Conviction under article 58.' That was enough to cast a shadow over all his future life.

During my stay in Karlshorst I formed a close friendship with Captain Belyavsky. Little by little I came to know his story too, though he talked about himself very reluctantly, and only dropped hints.

In 1936 Belyavsky was in Spain, where he was a lieutenant in the staff of the Republican forces. This was about the time that the Yezhov terror was at its height in the Soviet Union, and one night his father was arrested, to vanish without trace. Belyavsky was immediately recalled from Spain and demobilized. Until 1941 he shared the fate of other relatives of 'enemies of the people'; in other words, he was outside the pale. All those spheres of Soviet life in which the first requirement is a completed questionnaire were closed to him. Only a Soviet citizen can understand all the significance of such a situation.

When war broke out in 1941 he was not called up for the army, since he was 'politically unreliable'. But when the German forces began to lay siege to his native city, Leningrad, he went to the military commander and volunteered for service. His request was granted, and that same day, as an ordinary private, he was flung into the fight in a punitive battalion. In other words, straight to his death. But fate was more merciful to him than the Soviet regime, and he escaped with a wound.

He spent the next three years as an ordinary soldier, going right through the siege of Leningrad. His service was exemplary, and he was recommended again and again for officer's rank, but each time the questionnaire put an end to the story. In 1944, when the Soviet armies were suffering from a very serious shortage of officers, he was summoned to the staff once more.

The colonel who interviewed him pointed to the entry: 'article 58' on his questionnaire and asked: "Why do you always mention that?" Belyavsky did not reply.

"Is it that you don't want to fight?" the colonel asked sharply; he avoided looking at the decorations on Belyavsky's chest. Belyavsky only shrugged his shoulders. The decorations rattled a little, as though answering the colonel's question.

"If you continue to make such entries, I must regard it as an attempt to avoid military service," the colonel said. "Take a new form and fill it in properly. Leave a space for your service rank." Private Mikhail Belyavsky did not return to his company. But next day First-Lieutenant Belyavsky was on his way to Moscow. In his pocket he had an order to proceed to the Military Diplomatic College of the Red Army General Staff. Men were needed in wartime, and there was no bothering about a thorough

examination of questionnaires. There would be plenty of opportunity for that after the war. And so Mikhail Belyavsky entered one of the most privileged military colleges in the Soviet Union. He was discharged from the college in the autumn of 1945 with the rank of captain, and was sent to work in the Soviet Military Administration. That was nothing extraordinary. Many of the students were freed from further study even in the middle of their second-year course, in order to take up a post.

Captain Belyavsky's personal file, which was kept in the S.M.A. Personnel Department, was in spotless order. All through his documents the phrase occurred again and again: 'Devoted to the Lenin Stalin Party'. That was a stereotyped remark and was to be found in almost every officer's personal file, but it was truer of him than of the majority.

Certain days were set apart for political instruction, and on one of these days Belyavsky went to his office two hours earlier, as was his custom, and unfolded his papers. The educational circle to which he belonged was of a rather higher level, for it consisted exclusively of men with advanced education. With earnest faces they pored over the pages of the Short Course, though they must have known that the book was full of lies and falsifications.

The leader of the circle, who normally was one of themselves, began proceedings by asking:

"Well, who's prepared to open on the third chapter? Any volunteers?"

They all bowed their heads even lower over their books. Some of them began to turn over their papers hurriedly, others fixed their eyes on the table as though collecting their thoughts with a view to speaking later. There was no volunteer.

"All right, then we'll follow the list," the leader proposed. There was a sigh of relief.

The majority of the circle leaders kept alphabetical lists of their circle members. Each member knew whom he followed. And so the question was settled quite simply. The first on the list began to deliver a summary of the chapter, while the one who was to follow him read farther, underlining passages with red pencil. In this way the majority of circles got through their course without difficulty. All the members of Belyavsky's circle had worked through the Short Course several times already. They were all bored to tears. When each had done his duty he sat gazing out of the window,

smoking, or sharpening his pencil.

Everything went off as usual. The speakers droned away monotonously. The leader sat with his eyes on his notebook, not even listening. It was a hot day, and everybody felt sleepy. And in that drowsy kingdom something happened to Captain Belyavsky that he himself would have had difficulty in explaining.

When his turn was reached he had to expatiate on the passage which deals with the Entente's three anti-Soviet campaigns. The theme had an heroic quality and there were parallels to the experiences of the war just ended. As soon as Belyavsky began to speak the leader raised his sleepy eyes and stared at him in astonishment. And one by one all the others began to gaze at him in bewilderment.

For he spoke as though addressing a meeting. His voice had a note of unusual conviction. It sounded a note of faith, of challenge. He depicted the three foreign interventions in Soviet Russia after the 1917 revolution, and cleverly linked them up with the invasion and destruction of the Nazi armies in 1941-5. He did not summarize the Short Course, he spoke extemporaneously, from a heart burning with conviction. The bewildered looks of his fellows expressed the mute question: 'Has he gone mad? Why all this unnecessary bother?'

It happened that the circle that day included the Instructor from the S.M.A. Political Administration, who was there as observer. Belyavsky's speech attracted his notice; obviously he had not often heard anyone speak with conviction in these circles for political education. He made a note of the name. Next day Belyavsky was summoned to the Political Administration.

"Listen, Comrade Captain," the instructor said to him. "I'm amazed at you. I've been looking through your personal file. An exemplary officer, the finest of testimonials, and yet you're not a Party member. That simply won't do. The Party must interest itself in men like you ..."

"No, no, no . . ." he raised his hand, as though afraid Belyavsky might make some objection. "You made a very remarkable speech in the political circle yesterday . . . And yet you've never been drawn into Party work. We shall assign you to the task of giving political instruction to the officers' wives. That to begin with. And secondly, you must put in your application for Party membership at once. No objections! Get that?"

Belyavsky had no thought of objecting. Membership of the Party

connoted a full and valid position in Soviet society. His heart was filled with joy, he shook the instructor's hand with genuine gratitude.

The November revolutionary celebrations were drawing near. In addition to having charge of a political education circle, Belyavsky was entrusted with the preparations for the festival. He plunged headlong into social and political activity, and devoted all his free time to it. Spiritually he was born again. But above all he rejoiced because the Party had forgotten his past, because he was no longer a lone wolf. Only now did he fully realize how bitterly he had felt his alienation from society.

Just about then an insignificant incident occurred which had unexpected consequences.

Belyavsky was a keen motor-cyclist. While working in the S.M.A. he had had innumerable specimens of motor-cycles pass through his hands, and in the end he had picked on a very fine BMW sports model for himself. All Karlshorst knew that machine, and many a young officer stood to admire it as it flashed by.

One evening, as he was riding past the house where Valia Grinchuk lived, he saw a light in her rooms, and decided to drop in and see her. He leaned the motor-cycle against the railings, but did not lock it UP, as was his habit, for he did not intend to stay long. Valia had guests, the company was a merry one, and he stayed longer than he thought. He left about ten o'clock. When he got outside his motor-cycle had disappeared. He looked about him, thinking someone must be playing a practical joke. But there was no sign of it anywhere.

He broke into a string of curses. Obviously someone had stolen the machine. But what infuriated him most was the knowledge that the thief must be one of his own, Soviet, people. No Berlin thief would ever have dared to take anything from Karlshorst, least of all a motor-cycle.

The Karlshorst commandatura was only a few paces away. He went and reported the theft to the officer on duty. The lieutenant sympathized with him and promised to find out whether the theft had been committed by one of the commandatura guards. He knew well enough who were responsible for the majority of the thefts that took place in Karlshorst.

Belyavsky had no great faith in the commandatura, and he decided to go straight to a German police station situated just outside

the sealed-off Soviet area. He returned accompanied by a German policeman and a police-dog. At the spot where the motor-cycle had been left the policeman put the dog on the scent. It made directly

for the next wicket gate and began to paw at it. Belyavsky knew that the Party organizer for the Administration of Justice, Major Yeroma, and his deputy, Major Nikolayev, lived there, and he thought the dog was completely on the wrong trail. But each time they tried out the animal it persistently led them to that wicket gate. In the end Belyavsky shrugged his shoulders hopelessly and let the German policeman go.

Next day he happened to be passing the gate at which the dog had pawed, and he decided to go in and make inquiries. He found four young women sitting in the sitting room. One of them was the wife of Major Nikolayev, another was the wife of the head of the S.M.A. Political Administration, General Makarov. All the women were rather problematic wives, wives only within the bounds of Karlshorst. Almost all the high S.M.A. officials had exceptionally young wives. Marshal Sokolovsky's wife was several years younger than his daughter. Such things were the result of the war.

Belyavsky apologized for troubling them, explained why he had called, and inquired whether they had noticed anything suspicious the previous evening. They exchanged embarrassed glances and expressed their indignation at the theft. They seemed bored, and they invited him to stay &while. Quite an animated conversation followed, a conversation which played a large part in the further developments, chiefly because he made a very good impression on those young women.

After searching fruitlessly for a week he had resigned himself to the loss of his favourite machine, when one evening he was called to the telephone. He was astonished to hear a woman's voice: "Is that Comrade Captain Belyavsky?" the unknown asked, and went on hurriedly: "You mustn't mind my not mentioning my name. I'm one of the ladies who ... you remember, you called to inquire about the motor-cycle I phoned up to let you know that your machine is in the cellar of the house you called at. Go at once and you'll find it. You can guess who took it Please don't tell anybody how you found out. I wouldn't like. . ."

He hurriedly thanked her and put down the receiver. He sat for a moment considering what he should do next. For the thief could be

no other than the S.M.A. Party organizer for the Administration of Justice, Yeroma himself. Finally he decided to ask a Lieutenant Colonel Potapov and Major Berko to go with him as witnesses. On their way to Major Yeroma's house they picked up the officer on duty at the commandatura.

Major Yeroma was not at home. At the commandatura officer's request the cellar was opened. There they found the missing motor cycle. The commandatura officer drew up an official report on the theft and discovery of the machine. In his simplicity he wrote: 'The thief is Major Yeroma, of the Administration of Justice, and Party organizer to the Administration of Justice.' The report was signed by all the witnesses, including Major Yeroma's wife.

As the four officers struggled to haul the heavy machine up the stairs, between their groans and pants the officer could not help remarking: "One man couldn't have got it down there by himself. He must have had at least two others to help him."

It transpired that the day the machine was stolen Major Yeroma was returning late in the evening from the Political Administration, accompanied by two other officers of the Administration of Justice. As he approached his house the Major noticed the machine and, without stopping to think, persuaded the other two officers to help him put it in his cellar. Probably it would not have been found if Belyavsky hadn't chanced to call on the young women. They knew that Major Yeroma had got hold of a motor-cycle the previous evening, but they had no idea where he had obtained it. When Belyavsky told his story they put two and two together, but they did not tell him what they were thinking, for obvious reasons. After he had gone they quarrelled among themselves. The young wife of the head of the Political Administration took Belyavsky's side and declared that the machine must be returned to him.

In his indignation he decided to take steps to bring the culprits to justice. He wrote reports of the affair to General Dratvin, the S.M.A. chief of staff, to the Political Administration, and the S.M.A. Military Prosecutor. If justice were done, Major Yeroma should be expelled from the Party, stripped of his officer's rank and sentenced to imprisonment for theft. So the law prescribed.

When Major Berko heard what Belyavsky intended to do he advised him not to be in any hurry. A charge against Yeroma involved much else besides him, and in such cases it was advisable to be prudent. He suggested that Belyavsky should first go and see Yeroma personally, and they decided to call on him during lunch-time.

They found him at home. He was sitting at the table, with his tunic unbuttoned and unbeited. Before him was an aluminium dish

of steaming beetroot soup. He did not even look up when the visitors were shown in, but went on spooning up his soup.

"Well, Yeroma," Belyavsky said, "how did my motor-cycle get into your cellar?"

"I found it," the major answered with his mouth full of food, and not batting an eyelid.

"I shall send a report to the Political Administration." Belyavsky was so taken aback by the Party organizer's impudence that he didn't know what else to say.

Yeroma went on eating, or rather guzzling his soup; the sweat rolled down his face. When he had finished the dish he picked it up and poured the last few drops into his spoon. Then he licked the spoon and smacked his lips.

"You'll never make any impression on him with a report," Berko said in a rage. "Spit in his plate and let's go!"

They went, slamming the door behind them.

The same evening Belyavsky went to the office of the head of the Political Administration and handed the adjutant on duty his report. While the adjutant was reading it with some 'interest General Makarov himself came out of his room.

"Another case relating to Yeroma, Comrade General," the adjutant reported with a smile.

"Ah ! that's good !" the general observed. "He's already on our list for bigamy. . ."

The adjutant afterwards explained to Belyavsky that, following his superiors' example, Yeroma had taken a new wife to himself . But in doing so he had made one tactical error: unlike others, he had registered his marriage at the Soviet register office in Karlshorst. But he had not taken the trouble to obtain a divorce from his first wife, who was in Russia.

Belyavsky then went to the S.M.A. military prosecutor, Lieu tenant-Colonel Orlov. Orlov knew Belyavsky personally, and he told him frankly:

"We can't take him to court. In this case it all depends on the

Political Administration. You know yourself it's a Party matter." If Belyavsky had had more experience in Party matters, he would probably have avoided measuring his strength against the Party. Meanwhile, the Political Administration had received a resolution from a local Party group recommending Captain Belyavsky's acceptance as a Party member. His application was accompanied by brilliant testimonials to his conduct during the war. But now the affair of the stolen motor-cycle was beginning to be talked about all over Karlshorst. In order to smother the scandal the Political Administration decided that it must close the mouth of one of the two antagonists, and the choice fell on Belyavsky.

Quite unexpectedly he received the order that he was to be demobilized and returned to the Soviet Union. He knew at once what was behind that order. What he did not know was that on his return he was to be brought to trial. The explanation was quite simple. Not long before the motor-cycle incident he had filled up one of the regular questionnaires. This time, in accordance with new, strict instructions, it was sent to the local M.V.D. departments in all his previous places of residence, to be checked. It was returned from Leningrad with the comment: 'father sentenced under article 58.' So he was demobilized and sent back to the U.S.S.R., where he was tried for making a false statement which he had been forced into making under threat of court-martial.

Belyavsky's collision with the Party in the person of Major Yeroma was not a decisive factor in his recall to the Soviet Union. He belonged to a category of people whose fate was predetermined. That was shown by the fact that almost at the same time Major Dubov also was demobilized and recalled. Only the S.M.A. Personnel Department and Major Dubov himself knew what was behind that order. He, too, had to take his postwar place in life.

Two men in my close circle of acquaintances had been cut out of life and thrown overboard. I respected them as men and liked them as colleagues. Others, too, thought of them as fine exemplars of the new Soviet society. Neither of them had anything in common with the old classes, which, according to Marxism, were destined to be eliminated. They had both been created by the Soviet world and were, in the best sense of the words, true citizens of Soviet society.

Yet they were condemned, irrevocably condemned to death. To spiritual death at the least. And there are millions of similar cases. That can easily be proved. During the thirty years of the Soviet regime at least thirty million people have been subjected to repressive measures on political grounds. As the families of all such

people are automatically classified as politically unreliable, if we

assume that each of them had only two relatives at least sixty million people must be on the black list. If ten million out of the thirty million died in prison camps, and at least another ten million are still in the camps, while ten million have served their time and been released, we get a figure of eighty million people whom the Soviet State has turned into its enemies, or, at least, regards as its enemies. That explains why in every section of the Soviet state apparatus there are personnel departments charged with the scrutiny and check of questionnaires. Today it is indubitable that the main class of the new Soviet society consists of millions of automatic enemies of the Soviet State.

This invisible class of enemies who are also slaves permeates all society from top to bottom. Is it necessary to cite examples? One could mention the names of many marshals of the Soviet Union, as well as Stalin prize-winners, who have been in N.K.V.D. prisons; and these would be names known all over the world. Of the millions of petty collisions between State and individual who can speak? State and individual Involuntarily I think of Valia Grinchuk, an undersized girl, a partisan fighter who in the fight for her freedom took up arms. She fought bravely. She not only defended her freedom against the foreign enemy, she climbed the ladder of Soviet society. She raised herself out of the grey mass and became an individual. And hardly had she achieved this when she felt the heavy hand of the State.

Her duties often took her to the Allied Control Commission. There she came to know a young Allied officer. There could be no outward objection to this acquaintance, as she visited the Control Commission in the course of her work. After some time the acquaintance developed into a personal friendship.

One day she was summoned to the Party organization. She was given to understand quite amiably that the Party knew of her acquaintance with an Allied officer. To her astonishment, that was all that was said, and it seemed that the Party leaders were quite sympathetic in regard to the friendship. Some time later this incident was repeated, and she had the impression that they were even encouraging the acquaintance.

Time passed, and this friendship between a Soviet girl and an Allied officer developed into a genuine attachment. But now she was once more summoned to the Party organization, and, as a Party member,

was confronted with the demand to harness her love to State interests.

Next day she was taken to hospital. The doctors found she had a very high temperature and blood pressure, but could find no visible reason for her condition. Weeks passed without any change for the better.

One day an elderly, experienced neuro-pathologist came to her ward, studied her case history, and shook his head as he asked her: "Have you met with any great unpleasantness . . . in your personal life?"

"No!" she curtly replied.

She spent more than two months in hospital. When she was discharged she applied on health grounds to be transferred to work which did not bring her into contact with the Control Commission. Through acquaintances she informed her lover that she had been recalled to Russia. Valia had the heart of a soldier.

Only very few people knew the connection between these incidents. Everybody continued to regard her as a fine officer who was assiduously doing her duty in Soviet society. And only a few noticed that she began to leave off wearing her officer's tunic with its decorations, and took to ordinary feminine clothes.,

All these things happened to people who were close acquaintances of mine. They affected me personally because sooner or later I, too, would have to join the Party. There was no other choice, except to face up to a future which for Major Dubov and Captain Belyavsky had become the present.

Today there is no Communist Party in the Soviet Union. There is only Stalin's Party with its obsolete facade. The aim and end of that Party is power, indivisible power. The ideal Party member should not have any independent thought, he must be only a dumb executive of the higher will. A striking example is provided by Party organizer Major Yeroma, a bestial brute and an ideal Bolshevik of the Stalin school.

I was wearing Soviet officer's uniform and I was a child of the October Revolution. If I had been born twenty years earlier, I would perhaps have been a convinced Marxist and revolutionary, active in the October Revolution. Today, despite everything, I was still not a member of the Communist Party. If I had not been faced with the necessity, the indubitable necessity, it would never even

have entered my head to join the Party which was called the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A Member of the Politburo

Before me lies a yellowing sheet of coarse paper, which looks as though it has been torn out of one of my old school exercise books. Large writing, like a child's, written in faint ink, which has been watered again and again. I have difficulty in reading the carefully formed letters written with a rusty nib:

"My dear grandson ... I am sitting by the light of a paraffin wick, just like it was in 1921, to write to you. The electricity is switched on for only two hours a day, and that not every day. I have pushed the table over close to the oven, where it is a little warmer. There's a terrible drought coming from the window, though I've stopped up all the cracks with wool"

No electricity No coal for the stove! And this two years after the victorious close of the war. And in the heart of the Donietz Basin, the richest coalfield in Europe.

Yet it is not surprising. Before the war the students at our Institute attended lectures all the winter in fur coats and fur caps. Our fingers froze, but we couldn't put our hands in our pockets because we had to take notes. The boiler for the central heating of the Novocherkass Industrial Institute was intended to burn Donietz anthracite, but now it was fueled with useless shale. We were amazed when we saw that the German periodical, *Der Bergbau*, which was in the Institute library, contained advertisements offering Donietz anthracite for export at cheap rates.

A friend of mine, Vassily Shulgin, once achieved a temporary fame in the Faculty for Energetics. Somehow or other he got hold of an electrically heated airman's suit, such as is used by arctic flyers. From the laboratory for electro-technics he obtained a transformer, which he placed under his desk, and it was easy enough to get hold of a long piece of cable. At one touch of a switch he became a celebrity. The first day he tried it out we were more interested in seeing whether he would go up in smoke and flames than in listening to our professor. To be on the safe side, one of his close friends brought in a fire-extinguisher from the corridor and put it close to hand.

Vassily's triumph was a nine-days' wonder. Sometimes he proudly switched off the heat, and then the freezing students realized that he was too hot. We were all as proud of that baggy figure on the back bench as if we had shared in his ingenuity.

To the general consternation, one frosty morning in January he turned up in his old overcoat. When we insisted on knowing the reason why he curtly replied that the works had gone wrong. He confided the bitter truth to only a few intimate friends. He had been summoned to the Special Department, the N.K.V.D. representative in the Institute, where he was ordered to stop his 'anti-Soviet demonstration', otherwise his case would be passed to the 'requisite organs'. To tell the truth, the Special Department showed him a great favor in, this instance. Here were all the students freezing and suffering in silence, and one of them tried to get warm: counter-revolutionary agitation and undermining socialist economy. That sort of thing continued all through the years before the war. That was the system. The people simply got used to it and didn't even notice it.

Now, after the war, the Germans were freezing in their unheated homes. Naturally they cursed the Soviet officers, who had no need to count every briquette. But it did not occur to them that in Russia these same officers' families were freezing even more than the Germans.

". . . But I keep going. I'm on my feet all day, I manage all the housework. It's a pity I haven't got much strength, and my old bones ache. I can have only sweet tea, with a biscuit sometimes dipped in it. I only have two teeth left and I can't chew anything. "Your mother goes off to work every morning at seven. In the evening she can hardly crawl home with the aid of a stick; she helps herself along by the fences. It isn't so much that she's tired with work as her nerves. Everybody's so irritable, they swear at the least thing and won't listen to you. She's afraid to go to the post now to get your parcels. Robbers are on the look-out for people receiving

parcels from Germany, and they break into their homes at night and kill the people. And in the daytime young boys- craftsmen' - hang around the post office and snatch the parcels in broad day. light."

Mention of the 'craftsmen' recalled to my mind the Molotov automobile works in the town of Gorky. I worked there at the beginning of the war, and I saw these so-called 'craftsmen', the young recruits to the Soviet proletariat. Soviet industry began to experience difficulty in getting new hands, because the Soviet youth were not prepared to become ordinary workers, so the President of the Supreme Soviet issued a decree: 'On the mobilization for factory-works and crafts schools'. In these schools millions of

adolescents between the ages of fourteen and seventeen were enrolled.

At Gorky these 'craftsmen' attending the trade school attached to the works ate in the canteen. Their food was poor enough, but it was better than that issued to the older workers; after all, adolescents are not so class-conscious as adults and you can't feed them only on slogans. In addition, many of the 'craftsmen' were sent from the villages where most of them had been recruited. So sometimes they left their rations, and even, boylike, littered the inedible food about the tables.

As soon as the 'craftsmen' had left the dining hall the workmen rushed in for their meal. Some of them hurried to the queue for food; others sat down at the table, for otherwise they would not have got a place until the more energetic proletarians had eaten others went to the tables and surreptitiously ate the remains which the youngsters had left.

On one side of the hall was a small room from which came the smell of eggs and bacon. That room was the canteen for the factory management: the director, the Party organizer, and other leaders. The workers were not particularly envious of the leaders.

bosses changed so often that the workers hardly had time remember their names. And they were just as little interested in their further activities after they had gone. The workers knew that the stork brought them and the crow, the black N.K.V.D. prison van, took them away.

During those war years a group of British sergeants and technicians worked at the Gorky Automobile Works, supervising the assembly of tanks sent to the U.S.S.R. under lend-lease. Of course they got a very favorable impression of the works.

Yesterday your mother bought two glasses of Indian corn in the market. I crushed them in a mortar and we've been having maize porridge. It would have been very tasty if we could have got some butter to go with it. But it is cold now and the peasants aren't bringing much to market. Potatoes, peas and milk are dear, and we mustn't even think of meat or butter." Here followed several lines blacked out by the censor.

Two glasses of maize

In the early spring of 1945 I graduated from the Military College,

and as I had exemption in certain subjects, I got through my state examination quickly and managed to obtain a week's leave. I spent this at home, on the pretext that I was carrying out official duties in my home district. I went to the Kazan railway station in Moscow and, with a ruck-sack on my back, wandered about trying to find a way of getting a seat in a~ train. That was pretty hopeless, for some times people tried for weeks, and even then had to give it up. I began to study the lay-out of the station, to see whether I could get a seat by a trick. My only advantages were that I had no heavy luggage, but plenty of youthful energy and all a Soviet citizen's experience in such matters.

"Brother, if I'm not mistaken you've got a T-T." I heard a hoarse deep voice behind me, and a powerful hand clapped me on the shoulder. I looked round and saw a brawny sailor in the usual black blouse, his cap thrust to the back of his head. Despite the cold, his shirt was wide open at the chest, and his breast was gay with all the decorations of a sailor's life; he was tattooed right up to his chin. One of those who 'don't care a damn for anybody' and always fall on their feet. He smiled at me as if we were old acquaintances and pointed to my pistol holster.

"Yes, it's a T-T. What about it?" I asked.

"What train are you going by? The 11.20?" he inquired. When I said yes, he gave me an even broader grin. "Well, then, everything's okay! Let's go!"

"Go where?"

"When I say 'let's go', we go! You keep in my wake. Have you just dropped out of the moon, brother?" my new relation demanded. To sailors all men are brothers.

We went out of the station, crawled in the darkness over a roof or two, and through some fences. At last we reached the farther side of the station and the tracks. Guards were patrolling the platforms.

Like diversionists we stole up to a train standing on the lines. All the carriages were locked.

"Now let me have your T-T, brother," the sailor ordered.

"You're not going to shoot?"

"Of course not ! You hold the magazine. And now look: here's your railway ticket to all the world."

He drew back the pistol hammer, and fixed it by the safety catch. Then he thrust the barrel into the carriage door lock. One turn, and we were inside.

"I've used this ticket more than any other," my 'brother' proudly explained, as he handed the pistol back to me. After that I, too, had more than one occasion to exploit this unusual means of unlocking carriage doors.

On the threshold of my home I halted and looked about me. All the walls were sinking and slanting; the fences had gone; they had all been used for fuel. One could walk right through the town from house-yard to house-yard unhindered. As I opened the rickety door with its rusty hinges and ingenious latch, I had very mixed feelings.

In my heavy boots I stepped prudently over the creaking floorboards in the kitchen. Everything was rickety, neglected, rotting, like the old cottage in the fairy-story. I had to stoop to avoid knocking my head against the lintel as I passed into the next room.

In one corner of the room, a little, hunched old woman in an apron was sitting by the stove. At one time she had carried me in her arms; now I could have picked her up with ease. Her grey hair was neatly arranged under her white kerchief, she had the same old shawl round her shoulders. At the sound of the door being opened, she turned.

"Grisha!" That one brief word conveyed all the experiences of the long war years: her hopes, her fears, her expectations and joys. "Grannie!"

I put my arms round her shoulders; I was afraid she would fall. We remained standing a long time, with her head pressed against my chest; she wept like a little child, but they were tears of joy.

I gently stroked her back under her old flannel blouse. I felt her fragile bones, and was afraid my rough hands would hurt her. "Where's mother?" I asked.

'She's at work. She gets home at six.'

'I'll send a boy to tell her I'm home,' I suggested as I took off my greatcoat.

"No, don't, Grisha! For God's sake!" my old grandmother murmured fearfully. "She'll be so glad she'll leave her work and come home, and then they may take her to court."

I felt my collar suddenly grow tight as the blood rushed to my head and roared in my ears. So that was how a Soviet mother was allowed to welcome her soldier son after four years of separation!

My mother came home from work late in the evening. Grannie had prepared a festive table in honour of my homecoming. She proudly brought out a tiny tin of honey and set it on the table, then a tiny medicine bottle of home-made cherry wine. When I went to my ruck sack and began to hand out all kinds of cans of American preserves my mother's eyes lit up with joy and relief. They were both hungry, but that was not so bad as the realization that they had nothing to make a feast for their son who had come safely home after a long absence. Now they had American cans of conserves on the table!

Whenever Russian people hear mention of the words 'lend-lease' they think of cans piled up like mountains. Those cans were to be found in the wildest and loneliest parts of the famous Bryansk forests, in the marshes of Leningrad, wherever the Soviet army passed. Russia is undoubtedly a very rich agricultural country, with inexhaustible natural resources. Yet from 1942 to 1945 that country lived and fought exclusively on American products. We officers were all profoundly convinced that we could have held out without American tanks and planes, but we would have died of starvation without the American food. Ninety percent of the meat, fats, and sugar consumed in the Soviet army was of American origin, and almost the same can be said of life in the rear. Even the beans and the white flour were American. The one article of Soviet origin was the black bread-apart, of course, from water.

A word or two on water. People in Moscow seriously believed that the American embassy received even water in cans from America.

Probably this was due to the amount of grapefruit and other fruit juices the Americans drank from cans. After the war it was said that the Kremlin had provided itself with American foodstuffs for many five-year plans ahead.

There was one time at the beginning of 1943 when all the shops in all the large Soviet cities were stocked to the ceiling with sacks of coffee beans. Before the war coffee in the bean had been a luxury article in the Soviet Union. But now all the empty shelves of the

shops were stocked with sacks bearing foreign inscriptions in red paint. Coffee to be bought off the ration, at 500 roubles a kilo. At that time bread cost 150 roubles a kilo on the free market.

The people began to buy the coffee by the sack. It wasn't that the Russians had acquired a foreign taste. Not at all They cooked the beans, threw the fragrant liquor away, then dried the beans, pounded them in a mortar or a coffee-grinder, and made bread of the flour. Bread from coffee. Previously they had played the same sort of trick with mustard powder! Bread from mustard

During the war all the metal utensils in the U.S.S.R. were made from American cans. It will be many years before the Russians forget those cans with their labels: 'pork meat'.

In an endeavour to diminish the effect of this propaganda by food conserves, the rumor-mongers of the N.K.V.D. spread stories that the Americans were canning the flesh of South American monkeys to send to the Soviet Union.

". . . Dear Grisha, perhaps you have a cup or something of the sort where you are. I broke mine recently and haven't any thing to drink my tea out of. If you can send me one I shall be very glad and will always think of you when I drink my tea, my dear boy.

"You always sew up your parcels in very good canvas, and we don't throw it away, we make towels from it. Don't be annoyed with' us if we ask you for anything, you're all we have, in the world. I live only for your letters. And I haven't much longer to live.

"Keep well, my dear boy. Look after yourself.
Grannie."

I got hold of a sack in which to pack a parcel. I stuffed it full with ladies' lace underwear, silk stockings, lengths of material, until it weighed the permitted 10 kilograms. In the very centre I packed several china cups. And what else could I put in?-The~ needed absolutely everything. They would sell what I sent and buy meat, and would go on wearing rags. You can't fill a bottomless barrel.

That evening I had planned to go out, but grannie's letter robbed me of all inclination. I sat at my desk, and scenes from my past life arose before my eyes.

1921. At that time I was quite an infant. Perhaps the only memory I haire is of the jackdaws. Daws hopping about the floor, in the light of the paraffin lamp. One of them was dragging its wing awkwardly leaving a trail of blood. The lamp flickered, the dark corners were very mysterious, and wretched daws hopped about the floor.

In the winter they flew about in great black flocks. When they flew over the roofs in the evening dusk, the people said as they heard them call: "That's a sign of frost.,It'll be still colder tomorrow." Raspberry streaks left by the sunset on the horizon, the lilac, frosty mist, and the calling daws. They settled like bunches of black berries on the bare poplars in the orchards, and chattered away before retiring to rest.

My uncle thought of very ingenious ways of getting close to the daws with his gun. Normally they won't let you come anywhere near them. But he went hunting them to shoot them for a ragout. I've forgotten what it tasted like. Older people say it doesn't taste any worse than ragout made from other wild birds. Every wildfowl has its own specific flavor.

In those days children wrapped in rags sat in the snow in the street and silently held out their hands. They no longer had the strength to ask for 'bread'. If you returned that way a few hours later you found they were no longer holding out their hands: they were frozen corpses.

People don't remember 1921 to any extent nowadays. It was followed by many other years which have been fixed more definitely in the mind. 1921 was something quite elemental, the result of war and the post-war ruin. So it did not seem so terrible. 1926. The later years of the New Economic Policy. "The period of temporary retreat in order to organize a decisive advance along the entire front," as we can read in the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

In those days, when my father gave me ten kopeks I was a rich man and could satisfy all my childish desires. The years 1925 and 1926 were the only time in all the existence of the Soviet regime when the people did not think of bread.

I don't remember tsarist Russia. People of my generation regard the NEPI period as the equivalent of a normal and affluent life. I heard various stories told by older people, but at this time I was a Young Pioneer and was more interested in playing a drum. Some museum-piece of an old man, would throw his arms wide and say rapturously and regretfully: "Under Nicholas a dried fish that size

(NEP: New Economic Policy-involved a partial return to a free market exchange of commodities.-Tr.)

cost three kopeks; and now. . He swallowed back his spittle and waved his hand resignedly.

1980. I was attending school. The name of the school was changed every three months; the curriculum changed accordingly. I was not greatly interested-I hadn't time to be, for I spent most of the day queuing for bread. Queues stood outside the bakers' shops day and night. Six hundred, seven hundred Often the number written in indelible ink on my hand was over the 1,000.

We boys regarded it all as a kind of game. When the cart drove up to the shop and the loaves were unloaded there was a bit of a riot. Women screamed as they were half crushed to death, one heard curses, groans, and tears. Meanwhile we boys tried to find a way into the shops through a window or some other opening. In other countries the children played 'Red Indians', but we fought for our lives to get bread. That was how the youthful builders of socialism were reared, that was how the steel was tempered.

We went to school in two shifts; it was as cold inside the building as outside. It was much more pleasant in the street, where you could run and keep yourself warm. What point was there in our teacher telling us stories of the Paris Commune? We stormed not the Bastille but the bakers' shops.

1982. General collectivization. People starved to death, their bodies lay about the streets. The living had difficulty in dragging themselves about, for their legs were swollen with famine dropsy. My elder brother, who was in the Young Communists, was called up to perform special duties. He and his comrades were given weapons, and they mounted guard all night over the church, which was being used as a transit camp for prisoners. There were not enough prisons, there were not enough guards. Of an evening, hundreds of ragged men and women peasants, arrested as kulaks, were driven into the church. Mothers carried babes in arms. Many of the prisoners could hardly shift their feet. The youngsters who had been issued arms went hungry to the church to guard hungry people.

Each morning the ragged class enemies were driven on north ward. Many dead bodies were left lying on the stone flags inside the church. So far as they were concerned, the problem of liquidating the kulaks as a class was already solved.

Winter passed, spring arrived. The campaign for collecting the State grain fund began. The peasants were baking bread made from tree bark, but men armed with pistols demanded that they should hand over corn for the spring sowing. During the winter the peasants

had eaten tree bark, cats, dogs, even horsedung. Cases of cannibalism were not unknown. Nobody can say how many millions of people died of hunger in 1933: possibly one-third or one-fourth of the agricultural population of southern Russia.

During the summer the few half-savage dogs still left alive wandered through the deserted villages, devouring human flesh. First man ate dog, then dog ate man. Many fields were left uncultivated; there was nobody to harvest those that were sown. Day after day we scholars of the higher classes were driven out to harvest these fields. The road ran past the town cemetery. Each morning as we went to work we saw dozens of deep, freshly dug pits. When we returned in the evening they had been filled and levelled with the ground. Some of the more inquisitive scholars tried digging up the loose soil with their boots. They lost their curiosity when they came upon human 'hands or feet beneath the shallow layer of earth. Sometimes as we went past the cemetery we saw swollen corpses being thrown from carts into the pits; they had been brought from prisons and hospitals. The wild steppe grass rapidly covered these graves, and nobody will ever know the exact cost of that resounding word 'collectivization'.

The artificial famine of 1982-3 was a political measure taken by the Politburo, it was not an elemental disaster. The people had to be shown who was the master. The decision was taken in the Kremlin; the result was the loss of millions of human lives. From that time hunger became a new, full member of the Politburo. Yet at that same period the Soviet government was dumping! They offered wheat at very cheap prices, much cheaper than the world market price. The principle was simple: grain taken from the collectivized Soviet peasant at 6 kopeks a kilo was sold to the Russian workers at 90 kopeks a kilo. In such circumstances it was easy enough to indulge in dumping.

The Soviet Union offered its grain at knock-down prices on the world market. The greedy capitalists rushed to buy it. But the Canadian and Australian farmers started to burn their grain, while the Moscow radio howled in delight: "Look what is happening in the unplanned capitalist world." But after burning their grain the Australians and Canadians had no money to buy the British industrial goods, consequently British factories began to close

down and unemployment increased. The British workers had no money to buy the cheap Russian grain. But over the sea, in the marvelous land where communism was

being built, there was no unemployment, and bread was so cheap that it was being sold abroad for next to nothing. And so there was a wave of strikes and revolutionary movements in the West.

"The revolution is continuing, Comrades," they said in the Kremlin, rubbing their hands.

In Denmark the pigs were fed on cheap Russian sugar. In the U.S.S.R., people drank their tea with the sugar on the table to look at, or on Sundays and holidays they nibbled a knob as they sipped their tea. The Soviet workers and peasants went hungry, but there was money enough for financing capital construction, while machine tools and machinery were imported. Heavy industry increased proportionately to the rest of the country's economy. The workers and peasants were told that heavy industry would make the machinery for light industry, and this in turn would make cloth and boots. But meanwhile tanks and aeroplanes were the chief production. There was nothing to be done about it: it was all due to the capitalist encirclement.

Now there was no room for bourgeois sentimentality. Statistics show that fertility and population increase are in inverse proportion to the living conditions. The worse people live, the swifter they multiply. On the one hand there are India and China, where thousands die of hunger every year, but where millions are born in their place. On the other, the well-fed, enervated countries in the decline of civilization, such as France and Britain, with their falling fertility curve, and where the age-groups past the prime of life play a predominant part. Given these circumstances, Stalin had no need to fear the consequences of the famine policy; whatever happened, he was assured of soldiers and labor. In every respect the State would show an active balance.

September 1939. Signature of the Hitler-Stalin Pact of Friendship. Trainload after trainload of Soviet grain, Soviet butter, Soviet sugar steamed off to Germany. Simultaneously all these articles disappeared from the Soviet shops, which in any case had never had any remarkable stock of them.

To explain the change of political course the N.K.V.D. rumors spread the story that Ribbentrop had brought to Moscow the photo-copy of a document which had been signed by fourteen foreign powers. These powers had offered Hitler aid if he attacked the U.S.S.R. Hitler preferred our friendship: we desire peace. But for that we have got to pay!

1941. War. Hunger passed into its final, perfected form. The ration-card system. No longer under-nourishment, but out-and-out

starvation. In the winter of 1941-2 a kilo of potatoes cost 60 roubles on the free market: the equivalent of a week's wage. A kilo of butter cost 700 to 800 roubles: three months' wages. The worker received sufficient on the ration card to keep him on his feet and capable of working. In practice the main, indeed the only food issued was bread-600 grams daily-the same bread that caused the German prisoners of war to suffer from gastric ulcers and to die off like flies.

One day I had called on the director of the Lenin radio factory, to discuss some business. A knock at the door interrupted our conversation. His secretary put in her head and reported: "Serdiukova is here; is she to come in or wait?" Serdiukova came nervously into the room. Her face was dirty, and it was difficult to tell her age. She was wearing a black, greasy jacket, and her stockings were of sailcloth; she had men's boots on her feet. She stood at the door, silently waiting. Her expression seemed despondent, yet indifferent, stamped with the apathy of infinite weariness.

"Why didn't you come to work yesterday, Serdiukova?" the director asked. "To stay away's a serious crime, punishable under war legislation. You know what the punishment is for it." "I was ill, Comrade Director. I couldn't get out of bed," she answered in a hoarse voice. She shifted from foot to foot. A pool of water formed on the parquet; it was dripping off her boots. Absence from work without good reason involved the punishment of forced labor even in peacetime. In wartime it might bring ten years' imprisonment, on a charge of sabotaging war industry. "Have you got a doctor's certificate?" the director asked. "No. I hadn't anyone to send for the doctor. As soon as I could get up I came to work." '

Serdiukova was one of those typical Russian women who uncomplainingly endure all the difficulties of life, who accept every thing as inevitable, as sent from above. In this silent humility there is a kind of religious quality. It is not weakness; it is a source of the Russian's enormous spiritual strength.

As I looked at her I recalled an old soldier who was returning from hospital to the front after the latest of his many wounds. As he carried a machine-gun tripod on his back he quite calmly gave expression to his secret desire: "Ah, if only I had lost an arm or a leg! Then I'd be going back to my village." I was shocked not so much by his words as by the composure with which he said them, his genuine

readiness to lose an arm or a leg in exchange for return home. Yet he was an exemplary soldier.

"You must know the law," the director went on. "Absent without good reason. I'll have to send your case to court."

She began to mutter in a broken voice: "But, Comrade Director ... Day after day, fourteen hours at the bench ... I haven't the strength ... I'm sick. . . "

"I can't help it. It's the law. We're all sick like that."

Her face twisted with anger. "You're all sick like that?" she shouted, stepping closer to his desk. "But have you ever seen this?" Tears streamed down her face as, in an uncontrollable impulse or fury, she snatched up the edge of her skirt. She was no longer a human being, no longer a woman, but a creature mastered by the courage of despair. "All of you? All as sick as this?"

I saw her white body, all the whiter against the grey background of the office wall. She did not have a woman's shapely legs, but two deformed pillars with no curve to the calves, with the knees touching. Two garters of red automobile inner tubing cut deeply into this swollen mass of her bluish flesh.

"Have you ever seen that, Comrade Director? Have you got legs like this?" she screamed, beside herself with indignation and shame.

"For five months I've not had a period. I've dropped unconscious at the bench again and again

"Is there really nothing to be done?" I asked him when she had gone.

"What can I do?" he answered, and stared hopelessly at the papers on his desk. "Half the women are like that. Pills are of no use in such cases."

"I don't mean that. I mean referring it to the court. Can't you overlook it?"

"Concealment of absenteeism is punished as heavily as absenteeism itself. If I overlook this case the N.K.V.D. will put us inside. You can't hide anything from Luzgin," he answered.

I had not made Luzgin's acquaintance, but I had heard a great deal about him. He was the head of the works Special Department: the eyes and ears of the Party.

While working in the town of Gorky I was crossing Sverdlov Square one day in March. There were puddles of snow and mud lying in the roadways. Just in front of me two young girls, probably students,

with document-cases under their arms, were trudging through the water. Suddenly one of them dropped her case; it fell into the muck of the side-walk and flew open. Books and exercise books were scattered in the mud. The girl took a few staggering steps towards the wall of the nearest house, but then her legs gave way under her, and she slowly sank to the ground. Her blue kerchief slipped off, the strands of her chestnut hair were mingled with the melting snow and mud. She had a deathly- white face, with blue under the eyes. She had fainted.

Her friend hurried to her aid. One or two passers-by helped to pick her up and carry her to the gateway of the nearest house. The crowd excitedly asked her friend what had happened, but she answered in some embarrassment: "It's nothing, only a faint." An elderly woman in huge boots asked her: "Where've you come from? From the centre?" Without waiting for the answer she began to lament with all the commiseration of a simple woman: "Poor kids! You're hungry, hardly able to stand on your feet, yet you're giving your last drop of blood. You can't go on like this. You'll be in your grave before long."

A large proportion of the donors attending the blood-transfusion centres consisted of girl students and mothers with little children. In exchange for 450 cubic centimeters of blood they received 125 roubles, which would buy not quite a kilo of black bread. After each transfusion they received an extra ration card entitling them to 200 additional grammes of bread each day for a month. They also received one supplementary ration consisting of 250 grammes of fat, 500 grammes of meat and 500 grammes of sugar. These mothers and girls knew their patriotic duty well enough, they knew the blood was for their husbands and brothers at the front. But it was chiefly hunger that drove them to the centres. The mothers tried to feed their hungry children at the price of their own blood; the students preferred to sacrifice their blood rather than their bodies. Special letter blanks were obtainable at the blood transfusion centres, and many of the girl donors used these to send letters to the front, to the soldiers for whom they were donating their blood.

Frequently these letters marked the beginning of a correspondence and friendship. After the war there were quite a number of cases of the writers meeting and marrying: a marriage sealed in blood. In the centre of the town of Gorky there is a square: 'The Square of the Victims of 1905.' One side of the square is bounded by the walls of an old prison, in which the heroes of Gorky's novel *The Mother* were imprisoned. On the opposite side is the Municipal Opera and Ballet Theatre. One evening I stood with a group of comrades

in the foyer during an interval. Dancing was going on in the hall, to the music of an orchestra. A slim, good-looking girl dancing with an officer attracted my notice. Her slender form was clothed in a grey dress of matt silk, her hair was arranged in a simple yet original style. Her toilet and all her bearing indicated her good taste, and a sense of her own value.

"Who is that girl?" I asked a comrade who was well acquainted with life in the town.

"A student; she's in the last year of the medical faculty," answered curtly.

"An interesting girl," I said.

"I'd advise you not to go running after her."

"Why, what's wrong?"

"I just advise you not to, that's all!" He would not say more. His words aroused my curiosity, and I asked another acquainted the same question.

"The girl in grey?" he said, taking a glance at her. "If you're terested in knowing her for a night, it's very simple: one can of conserves or a loaf of bread."

I stared at him incredulously. I was fond of student lite, and still thought of myself as belonging to it. His words seemed like a personal insult. In pre-war days the students had been the, morally cleanest and most spiritual group in society. Could one year of war have brought about such a change?

"Don't talk bosh!" I retorted.

"It's not bosh, it's the mournful truth. She lives in a hostel, in one room with five other friends. They have two or three visitors every night. Chiefly officers. Who has anything to spare these days apart from officers?"

Before the war there was practically no prostitution in the Soviet Union. The average Soviet man's budget did not include this item of expenditure. There was only prostitution for political purposes under N.K.V.D. protection, in the neighbourhood of the Intourist hotels and restaurants and wherever foreigners congregated. And some commerce in human bodies went on, to a small extent, among

the higher circles of the new ruling class, who had the means to buy such articles.

But now, during the war, hunger was driving women on to the street. Not for silk stockings, Parisian perfumes, or luxury articles. Only for bread or a can of preserves. And worst of all, the first victims were the students, who would form the future Soviet intellectual and professional classes. They paid a high price for their higher education.

Two old men, Nikanor and Peter, were employed in the constructional department of Factory No. 645. They had both been pensioned off long before, but hunger had driven them back to work, for they found it impossible to live on their pensions. At one time Nikanor had been a well-known engineer aircraft constructor. Before the first world war he had worked at the B16riot works in France, where he had helped to build the first aeroplanes in the world. He had known all the fathers of Russian aviation personally: Zhukovsky, Sikorsky, Piontkovsky. Under the Soviet regime he had worked hard in the field of aviation and was proud of his many letters of congratulation and praise, his awards, and newspaper cuttings in which his name was mentioned. Now he was only a helpless ruin of a man. He had been taken back into the works mainly out of pity, for he was really too old to work.

From early morning Nikanor and Peter would sit at a table in a quiet corner and barricade themselves off with a drawing-board, while they talked about all the various kinds of food they had had in their long lifetime. Every day they told each other of some new dish which they had recalled out of the mist of the years. Thus they sat, hour after hour, day after day, capping each other's stories, and sometimes even quarrelling over the method of preparing some sauce or the details of a recipe for mushrooms. The other members of their department thought them a little funny in the head. One day I happened to overhear Nikanor complaining to Peter: "This is the third day I've gone without porridge. We've eaten all the mallows in our street, and I shan't find any more anywhere else. Porridge made from mallows is very tasty, I assure you, Peter. Just like sucking pig with chestnut stuffing. Now I shall have to look up the books again; they say there are other edible roots to be found."

Two hours before the midday break Nikanor took a pocket watch on a heavy silver chain, two more tributes to past services, out of his waistcoat pocket and laid them on the desk before him. Every few minutes he looked expectantly at the slowly moving hands. Fifteen

minutes before the break he began to rummage through his drawers
r
in search of his spoon and fork. Then he made sure his goloshes were
firmly over his boots. All this was in preparation for the start,
for
at the age of seventy he was not very fit for the coming race. At last
he even obtained permission from the factory management to go to
dinner five minutes before time.

After all these preparations he trotted across the yard to the
dining hall, with one hand holding his pince-nez on his nose. There
he would have his dinner: a first course of boiled green tomatoes,
and a second course of water-gruel made from oatmeal, and without
seasoning-a serving only sufficient for a cat. He scraped his
aluminium plate thoroughly, licked his spoon carefully, then back to
work and after work the search for edible roots. 1944. The Soviet
army struck like a battering ram at the most important sectors of
the- German front. Soviet territory was almost completely freed of
German troops. The tank wedges thrust towards the frontiers of the
Reich. The soldiers in the reserve regiments waited impatiently to
be sent to the front-not out of patriotism but simply because of
hunger. In the reserve regiments the rations were so low that many
of the men went rummaging in the dustbins in search of cabbage
leaves or a frozen potato.

"The way to the soldiers' hearts lies through their stomachs,"
Napoleon said. Stalin modernized the remark to meet his own needs.
In the Soviet army there were twelve ration standards: front ration
No. 1, front ration No. 2; immediate rear ration No. 1, immediate
rear ration No. 2; and so on, down to the twelfth, called the
sanatorium ration. Only the first and last of all these ration scales could
be regarded as normal; the others simply connoted various stages
of hunger.

The difficulties of wartime! Again and again I have tried to find
this justification for all the misery that was to be seen at every step.
I was a Soviet officer, I should know what I sent men into battle for.
In those days I often asked myself what would happen after we had
driven the last German off our soil. Everything as before? I had no
wish to recall the 'heroic workdays of socialist construction.

In Soviet Union hunger has been elevated into a system. It has
become a means of influencing the masses; it is a full member of
the Politbureau, a true and faithful ally of Stalin.

Leningrad. It is a proud name. I was there shortly after the city
was freed from the blockade. Nobody knows the exact total of

victims from hunger during the siege. As the Germans advanced, all the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside flocked into the city, swelling its population to almost eight millions. At least three million died of hunger.

One day I and another officer were walking along the shore of a lake just outside Leningrad. Right beside the water was a small cemetery; young grass was growing among the neglected graves. A block of red granite attracted my attention. 'Flight-Lieutenant ... died the death of a hero in the battle for the city of Lenin.' I read the inscription carved in the stone.

"Lucky blighter!" said my companion, who had taken part in the defence of the city from the very beginning. "Those who have survived the blockade are only husks of men today."

"I'm a passive murderer," another inhabitant of the city once told me. "I saw a man lying in the snow in the street; he had fallen and was too weak to get up. He asked me to help him, otherwise he'd freeze to death. But I couldn't, I'd only have fallen myself and been unable to get up again. I'd only have frozen at his side. I staggered on, leaving him to freeze in the snow."

I would give every citizen of Leningrad the highest decoration possible. Since the days of Troy, history knows no similar case of mass civic heroism. Was it all a strategic necessity, or simply a question in which Stalin's prestige was involved? 'When one man dies, it is a tragedy; when millions die, it's only statistics.' Especially when the death of millions is contemplated from behind the Kremlin walls.

Shortly before the end of the war I travelled back to Moscow from Leningrad by train. At every station, every wayside halt, crowds of ragged women were standing with children in their arms. The infants' faces were translucent, bluish white, their eyes were glittering with hunger, their faces were aged, joyless, serious. Other children stretched out their thin hands and asked for 'Bread, bread!' The soldiers undid their rucksacks and silently handed their rations of hard tack or bread through the windows. Each of them was oppressed by thoughts of his own wife and children. They gained a momentary feeling of relief as they handed out their food, but they

were left with a nagging sense of shame and bitterness. Can you feed a whole starving land with bits of bread?

As the German prisoners return home from Russia they will

doubtless tell of the desperately low food rations in the Soviet prisoner of war camps. And as they see it they will be justified.

By European standards the prisoner of war conditions were murderous, the soggy black bread was simply poison to a European digestive system. I myself have been in camps for German prisoners of war, and have seen the conditions. But I can only ask: did the German prisoners notice that the Russian people on the farther side of the barbed wire were fed on even lower standards? Did any of them think that these so-called 'Russian' conditions were the result of the Soviet system and that in due course they will flourish in Eastern Germany? Moscow. The last days of the war. A lively trade was going on in the city markets. Pale, exhausted women huddling in corners, a few knobs of sugar or one or two herrings in their extended hands. They were selling their meagre ration in order to get milk or bread for their children. Bread, bread! In all eyes was the same mute cry.

The article that sold best was the Russian home-grown tobacco called 'mahorka'-15 roubles a glass. The markets swarmed with war-wounded, without legs, without arms, in front-line greatcoats and tunics, with red wound stripes on their chests. The militiamen turned a blind eye to these violators of the Soviet trade monopoly

If any of them did try to take away one of the war-wounded, the air rang with indignant shouts: "What did he fight for?" "What did he shed his blood for?" His comrades came hurrying up, waving crutches and sticks.

Berlin capitulated. A few days later all Germany unconditionally surrendered. People thought that things would be easier literally the very next day. That was the hope of people who had nothing but their hopes.

Now the first post-war year had passed, the second was drawing to its close, and we members of the Soviet occupation forces in Germany were reading our letters from home. As we read they acted on us like poison. Our bitterness was intensified by all that we saw around us. One day Andrei Kovtun and I were discussing the situation in Germany. Little by little the conversation turned to comparisons between 'here' and 'there'.

"The Berlin Underground is really rotten," Andrei said. "When I compare it with the Moscow Underground I feel really good.

These days I often catch myself looking for things in Germany that

tell in our favour. It's difficult to get used to the idea that all our lives we've been chasing after shadows." "Yes," I commented; "here people live in the present, whereas we have lived all our lives in the future. Or rather, for the future. I quite understand how you feel. It's a violation of the inward harmony, as the psychiatrist would say. The only remedy is to recover faith in the future."

"Look, Gregory!" Andrei replied. "We've got splendid acroplanes and tanks, a powerful heavy industry. Let's leave out of account the price we've paid for all these things, let's forget all the blood, the sweat, the hunger. You'd think that now the time's come to exploit all these achievements for our own benefit. After all, we haven't seen anything of life yet. It's always been nothing but aims and ideals for us: socialism, communism. But when shall we really start living?"

D'you remember what Professor Alexandrov said at the Higher Party School of the Party Central Committee? 'If the proletariat of other countries cannot achieve their own emancipation, we shall stretch out our hands to help them.' We know what that 'helping hand' means. What if all the promises of wartime are only unsecured bills of exchange? I didn't know what fear was during the war, but I do now. Yes, I'm afraid all right now."

He was expressing the same thoughts and fears that possess the majority of the young Soviet intellectuals and professional people. We are proud of our country's achievements, we are proud of our victory. We do not regret all the difficulties and deprivations we have experienced, the price we paid for the victory and for our country's glory. But we who were living in the West were beginning to feel keenly that all the things which Soviet propaganda claims as the exclusive achievement of the Soviet regime are colossal lies. We used to have our doubts, but now the doubts have been transformed into certainties, and we cannot fight them.

We have come to the realization that we haven't started to live yet, that we have only continually made sacrifices for the sake of the future. Now our faith in that future is shattered. As the post-war situation develops we are increasingly filled with alarm. What is it all leading to?

In those early post-war years Berlin was the political centre of the world. And we were sitting in the front rows at the chess tournament of international politics. More, we ourselves were pawns in

the tournament play. The post-war experience showed that there was no basis whatever for the hopes and expectations which Russian soldiers and officers possessed in the war years. And what now?

"Politics is politics, but life is life." Andrei's voice sounded in my ears. "But what have we got out of life? The Germans are having a thin time at present, but they have a past they can recall, and they still have a hope of the future. They can at least hope that one day we shall clear out and they'll be able to live again. But what can we hope for ... we victors?"

Two years had passed since the end of the war. Now our worst fears were being confirmed. Once more hunger was stalking our country, a still worse hunger than in wartime. Once more the Party had decided to take the people firmly in hand, had decided to make the people forget and turn from the illusory hopes which the Party itself had cleverly stimulated and encouraged in the critical period of the war. The Party had once more decided to show the people who was the real master, and had summoned its first servant, famine, to its help.

In past days famine had been an elemental disaster; today it is an instrument deliberately wielded by the Kremlin.

A clock struck; I rose and looked round my room, at my feet, shod in leg-boots, at my blue breeches with their crimson stripes, My gaze passed over the gilt buttons of my green tunic. I had gold epaulettes on my shoulders, It was all so close and so well known yet it was all so alien.

The walls of my room dissolved to reveal the dark, starry night over Europe. And somewhere beyond, far to the east, was the frontier of my native land. But there it was dark and still, like a leaden tomb.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Wings of a Slave

At the beginning of 1947, Mikoyan, member of the Politbureau and plenipotentiary extraordinary of the Soviet Council of Ministers for the economic assimilation of the occupied areas and the satellite countries, made an exhaustive inspection tour of the Soviet zone.

Afterwards he had a long conference with Marshal Sokolovsky and his deputy for economic questions, Comrade Koval.

This conference discussed the results of the economic reorganization of the Soviet zone. The land reform which had been accomplished shortly after the capitulation had not achieved any decisive economic effect. This fact did not disturb or even surprise either Mikoyan or Marshal Sokolovsky. With its aid certain necessary tactical results had been achieved; in particular, a basis had been laid for an offensive against the peasants, as well as the prerequisites for the final collectivization of agriculture.

In the industrial sphere, after the mass dismantling process and the socialization of the small enterprises as Landeseigener Betrieb (district-owned works), the S.M.A.'s biggest measure was the practical unification of all the Soviet zone basic industry in an enormous industrial concern known as 'Soviet Joint Stock Companies'. This measure, which had been dictated by Moscow, came under special consideration at the Mikoyan-Sokolovsky conference.

Late in the summer of 1946, Comrade Koval, the commander-in-chief's deputy for economic questions, had returned from a visit to Moscow, bringing with him new secret instructions. Shortly after, mysterious documents began to circulate between the Administration for Industry, the Administration for Reparations, and Koval's office. These documents were referred to in whispers as 'List of 216'

or 'List of 285'. The figure changed continually; it indicated the list of enterprises which it was proposed to transform into Soviet Joint Stock Companies. The lists were sent to Moscow for confirmation, and they returned in the form of appendices to an official decree concerning the organization of an 'Administration for Soviet Joint Stock Companies in Germany'. This administration, which took over the former Askania Company's building in Berlin-Weissensee for its headquarters, controlled thirteen Soviet joint stock companies in the more important industrial spheres, and these thirteen included some

250 of the larger industrial works in the Soviet zone. By the statutes of the new concern 51 per cent of the shares of the works thus included were to be Soviet-owned. Thus practically the entire industry in the Soviet zone came into Soviet hands, not only by right of conquest and for the duration of the occupation, but for all future time.

At the 1945 Potsdam Conference, in which Stalin had taken an active part, great attention had been paid to the question of decartellizing German economy, and it had been decided to liquidate the big German industrial concerns, which were regarded not only as an important economic factor, but also as a political factor frequently aggressive in its nature. As a result, one of the first items on the agenda of the Allied Control Commission was this question of the liquidation of the German concerns, and in his time General Shabalin was active in pressing for the matter to be tackled. But now, again on orders from Moscow, the largest industrial concern not only of Germany, but perhaps of the whole world was founded

Its economic and also political importance surpass anything of the kind existing hitherto in Germany or in Europe. And this superconcern is no longer in German but in Soviet hands. In the present struggle for Germany and Europe the S.A.G. (Sowjet Aktiengesellschaften) will be a strong weapon in Kremlin hands.

All the economic measures taken by the S.M.A. in Germany, like the Kremlin's economic policy generally, pursue far-reaching political aims. The object of this transformation of the Soviet zone is to fetter it with powerful economic chains. It provides a necessary economic basis for a further political advance.

Mikoyan was not the only member of the Politbureau to visit Germany about this time. Beria, the Soviet Minister for Home Affairs, made a similar tour of inspection through the lands of eastern Europe and eastern Germany. He, too, had a long conference with Sokolovsky and the head of the S.M.A. Administration for Internal Affairs, Colonel-General Scrov. This conference discussed measures to strengthen the internal political front. The sequence of events was logical enough: the master for economic exploitation was followed by the master for extermination affairs.

One of the results of Beria's visit to Karlshorst was a further purge of the S.M.A. personnel. A growing number of the officers who had been with the S.M.A. from the beginning were recalled to the Soviet Union. Their place was taken by new men from Moscow; they were recognizable at first glance as the purest of Party-men. The change of personnel in Karlshorst was in full accord with the Kremlin's post-war policy, which was directed towards placing all the key

points in Party hands. Once more one could not help being struck by the difference between 'nominal Party-men' and 'pure Party men'. Almost every Soviet officer was a Party-member, but the Party was far from regarding them all as 'pure Party-men'. More than eighteen months had passed since Karlshorst had been transformed into the Berlin Kremlin. Since then both the world and Karlshorst had been subjected to many changes. Many of these changes had been the result of Karlshorst's own activities as an advanced post of Soviet foreign policy. Parallel with this there had been a change in the international atmosphere, and the people in Karlshorst had been the first to become conscious of it.

We were left with only the memory of the time when Russians had been welcomed everywhere as liberators and allies. The Kremlin's post-war policy had left not a trace of the sympathy which Russian soldiers had won in the world. The Russian people's heroism and self-sacrifice in the fight for their native country had assured the Soviet Union a leading place among the world powers, and had led to unexpected results. The Kremlin had decided to exploit this situation for the aims of their foreign policy. Instead of the breathing-space which the Russian people had hoped for and expected, they now had to carry all the burdens involved in the Kremlin's risky political game. Menacing clouds were again beginning to gather on the horizon. It was the people in the Karlshorst outpost who saw those clouds most clearly. We were not fond of talking about the danger of a new war, but we thought of it, and our hearts sank.

As events developed, we were more and more forced to think about this danger. It seemed stupid and unnatural, but the facts spoke for themselves. Many people tried to convince themselves that the Allies' post-war dissension were simply in the nature of disputes

over the division of the spoils. But that was a poor pretext. We Soviet officers were too well grounded in the Marxist-Leninist theory of world revolution to believe it. We, the Soviet men who stood on the bounds of the two worlds, and who had lived through all the development of relations between the Allies since the capitulation, we who had been personally convinced that the West was genuinely striving, and still is striving, for peace, and who had seen the sabotage of every attempt to achieve friendly co-operation with the Soviets—we knew a great deal that our people at home did not and could not know.

We well remembered the first few months after Germany's capitulation. The Western Allies demobilized their armies as swiftly

as transport conditions allowed. Meanwhile the Soviet command as swiftly brought up its shattered divisions to fighting strengthening completing their complement of men and officers, and supplying new tanks and aeroplanes. We racked our brains over the question: what for? Perhaps it was necessary to have an armed fist when negotiating at the diplomatic table? Subsequent events showed what it was all for. The Kremlin regarded the will to peace as a mark of weakness, and democracy's demobilization as providing all opportunity for further aggression. What else could the democracies do but re-arm? That meant a new armaments race instead of, Russia's peaceful economic restoration; it meant all that we had known so well before the war. And where would it all lead to?

When political passions begin to play on national sentiments-something the Kremlin particularly desires-when the armaments race is at its height, it will be difficult to determine who began it all and who is to blame. And then, quite naturally, each side will accuse the other.

But this time, we members of the Soviet occupation forces know one thing perfectly: no matter what comes, all the blame for the consequences will lie solely and simply on the shoulders of the men in the Kremlin. This time we know who started to play with the gunpowder barrel. This time we have no doubt of the prime and original cause of the new war danger.

The more the atmosphere darkened, the more monotonous grew life in Karlshorst. The days dragged past, grey and boring. On one

of these grey days I went to do my usual twenty-four-hour tour of duty on the staff, which I had to perform once a month.

The officer on duty in the S.M.A. staff headquarters had to spend the daytime in the commander-in-chief's waiting room, and during this time he acted as assistant adjutant to the marshal. During the night he was alone on duty in the marshal's office, and acted as adjutant.

At six o'clock in the evening I took my place as usual in the waiting room. Marshal Sokolovsky was in Potsdam, so the place was empty. The adjutant left at half-past seven, leaving me in charge, alone. To inform myself on current matters I glanced through the files on the desk and all the documents. The time passed imperceptibly, my only interruption being telephone calls.

At midnight, in accordance with regulations, I took the marshal's seat at the desk in his room, in order to be ready if direct calls came

through. It was quite common for the Kremlin to ring up in the middle of the night, and then the telephonogram had to be taken down and passed on to its destination.

As I sat at the desk I began to order the papers littered over it. Among them was a duplicated Information Bulletin. This bulletin was intended only for the higher staff, and was a top secret document, with every copy numbered. I began to look through it. The contents were very illuminating: they were a detailed collection of all the things that the Soviet press carefully ignores or even flatly denies.

If a Soviet citizen dared to speak of such things aloud, he would be accused of being a counter-revolutionary, with all its consequences. But this was an official information bulletin for the use of the S.M.A. commander.

It is a serious mistake to attempt to justify the Soviet leaders' conduct by arguing that they are not acquainted with a particular problem, or lack information on it. At one time peasant representatives made a habit of traveling from remote villages on a pilgrimage to the Kremlin gates. They naively thought that behind the Kremlin walls Stalin did not see what was happening all around him, that they had only to tell him the truth and everything would be altered.

The peasants' representatives sacrificed their lives, and everything continued as before. The Soviet leaders are fully informed, and are entirely responsible for anything that occurs.

In the middle of the night I resolved to ring up Genia. I made contact with the Moscow exchange, and waited a long time for an answer. At last a sleepy voice sounded: "Well?"

"Genia," I said, "this is Berlin speaking. What's the news in Moscow?"

"Ah, so it's you !" I heard a distant sigh. "I thought you'd dropped out completely."

"Oh no ... not completely. What's the news?"

"Nothing. Life's a bore..."

"How's your father?"

"Gone off again.9~

"Where to this time?"

"He sent me a silk gown recently. So I expect it's somewhere there ... But how are things with you?"

"I'm sitting in the marshal's chair."

"Are you intending to come to Moscow soon?"

"When I'm sent."

"I'm so bored here alone," she said. "Do come soon!"

We had a long talk, and dreamed of our future meeting, thought of all we would do, discussed plans for the future. It was a dream to which we resorted in order to avoid the present. At that moment I regretted that I was not in Moscow, and sincerely wanted to go back.

The sleepless night passed. The day arrived, and with it generals from the provinces fussed around, German representatives of the new democracy lurked timidly in corners. Just before six o'clock in the evening, when my turn of duty ended, an engineer named Sykov came in to talk over a proposed hunting expedition with me. We were interrupted by the telephone. I picked up the receiver and replied with the usual formula: "Officer on duty in the staff." It was Koval, the commander's deputy on economic questions, and my immediate superior.

"Comrade Klimov?"

'Yes.

"Come and see me for a moment."

'He asked for me personally,' I thought as I went to his room

'What's the hurry?'

He greeted me with the question: "I suppose you don't happen to know what this is all about?" He held out a sheet of paper bearing an order from the S.M.A. staff headquarters. I took it and read:

'The directing engineer, G. P. Klimov, being a highly qualified specialist in Soviet economy, is to be demobilized from the Soviet Army and freed from duty in the Soviet Military Administration to

return to the Soviet Union for further utilization in accordance with his special qualifications.'

For a moment I could not grasp its import. It left me with a decidedly unpleasant feeling. There was something not quite in order here. A certain formal courtesy was always observed towards responsible personnel; in such cases there was a preliminary personal talk.

"You haven't yourself applied to be transferred to Moscow?" Koval asked.

"No," I answered, still rather preoccupied.

"It's signed by the chief of staff, and there was no prior agreement with me." Koval shrugged his shoulders.

Five minutes later I walked into the office of the head of the Personnel Department. I had had frequent opportunities to meet Colonel Utkin, so he knew me personally. Without waiting for my question, he said:

"Well, may I congratulate you? You're going home. . .

"Comrade Colonel, what's at the back of it?" I asked. I was interested to discover what was at the bottom of the unexpected order. Workers in Karlshorst were not recalled to Moscow without good reason. As a rule, when members of the S.M.A. applied to be returned home the staff turned down the request.

"I'm disturbed not so much by what the order says, as by its form," I continued. "What does it mean?"

Utkin was silent for a moment or two, then he said with some reluctance: "The Political Administration is involved. Between ourselves, I'm surprised you've held out here so long as you're a non-Party man."

I shook hands with him gratefully. As I turned to leave he advised me: "Bear in mind that after your frontier pass has been issued you must leave in three days. If there's any necessity, hang out the transfer of your work."

I left his room with a feeling of relief. Now everything was clear.

As I went along the dimly lighted corridor I was gradually possessed

by a queer feeling; I felt that my body was receiving an influx of strength; my soul was mastered by an inexplicable feeling of freedom. I had had exactly that same feeling when I first heard ' of the outbreak of war. And I had had it when I first put on my military uniform. It was the presentiment of great changes to come. It was the breath of the unknown in my face.

Now, as I walked along the corridors of the S.M.A. headquarters I again felt the breath of this unknown. It slightly intoxicated me.

I went home through the empty streets of Karlshorst. Behind the fences the trees were swinging their bare branches. The harsh German winter was in possession; darkness and stillness. A passer-by saluted me-I answered automatically. I was in no hurry. My step was slow and thoughtful. It was as though I were not taking the well-known road home, but standing at the beginning of a long road. I looked about me, I took in deep breaths of air, I felt the ground beneath my feet as I had not felt it for a long time. Strange, inexplicable feelings swept over me.

Hardly had I shut the door of my apartment when Sykov came in. By my face he saw at once that something had happened.

"Where are you being sent to?" he asked.

"Moscow," I answered briefly.

"What for?"

Without taking off my greatcoat I went to my desk and silently drummed on it with my fingers.

"But why?" he asked again.

"I haven't provided myself with the red book soon enough," I answered reluctantly.

He stared at me commiserating. Then he put his hand in a pocket, took out a long piece of red cardboard and turned it over in his fingers,

"What would it have cost you?" he asked, gazing at his Party ticket. "You shout your 'Hail!' once a week at the Party meeting, and afterward you can go to the toilet and rinse your mouth." His words made an unpleasant impression on me. I instinctively reflected that that piece of cardboard must still be warm with the

warmth of his body. As though he had guessed my thoughts, he went on: "I myself remained at the candidate stage for six years, Until I couldn't keep it up any longer."

His presence and his remarks began to irritate me. I wanted to be left to myself. He invited me to go with him to the club. I refused,

"I'm going to have a game of billiards," he remarked as he went to the door. "A cannon off two cushions, and no ideology about it.

I remained standing by my desk. I was still wearing my greatcoat. The coat round my shoulders strengthened my feeling that I was on my way. I tried sitting down, but jumped up again at once. I couldn't sit quietly. Something was burning inside me. I wandered about the room with my hands in my pockets.

I switched on the radio. The cheerful music plucked at my nerves, and I switched it off. The telephone bell rang. I did not bother to answer it. The German maid had prepared my supper; it was waiting on the table for me. I didn't even look at it, but paced from corner to corner, my head sunk on my chest.

The order had burst the dam which had long been holding me back. I felt that inside me everything was shattered, everything was in turmoil. And at the same time something was slowly crawling towards me from afar. Something inexorable and joyless.

Today I must cast up accounts.

Today only one thing was clear: I did not believe in that which

I had at the back of me. But if I returned to Moscow I must at once join the Party, a Party in which I did not believe. There was no other way. I would have to do it in order to save my life, to have the right to exist. All my life thenceforth I would lie and pretend, simply for the sake of the bare possibility of existence. Of that I had no doubt. I had examples before my eyes. Andrei Kovtun, a man in a blind alley. Mikhail Belyavsky, a man beyond the pale. Major Dubov, a man in a vacuum. But wasn't I a man in a vacuum too? How long could that continue?

I would have a home, and wait for the nocturnal knock at the door. I would get married, only to distrust my own wife. I would have children, who might at any time betray me or become orphans ashamed of their father.

At these thoughts the blood rushed to my head. My collar choked me. A hot wave of fury rose in my throat. I felt so hot that my greatcoat seemed too heavy for me. At the moment I still had my greatcoat round my shoulders and a weapon in my hand. I didn't want to part from that coat, or from that weapon. Why not?

If I returned, sooner or later I would go under. Why? I had no belief in the future. But what had I had in the past? I tried to recall that past. When I first saw the light of this world the flames of revolution were playing in my eyes. I grew up to be a restless wolf cub, and those flames continually flickered in my eyes. I was a wolf cub of the Stalin generation; I fought with teeth and claws for my life and thrust my way forward. Now the Stalin wolf-cub was at the height of his powers, surveying the point he had reached.

Today I had to confess to myself: all my life I had forced myself to believe in something I could not believe in, even from the day of my birth. All my life I had only sought a compromise with life. And if any one of my contemporaries were to say that he believed, I would call him a liar, a coward. Did such men as Sykov really believe?

I strode about my room, my eyes on my boots. They had trodden the earth from Moscow to Berlin. I remembered the flaming and smoking years of the war, the fiery font in which my feeling of responsibility to my native land was awakened. Once more I saw the Red Square and the walls of the Kremlin lit up with the fiery salutes of victory. Days of pride and glory, when one cried aloud with excess of emotion. In my ears sounded once more the words that had throbbed in my breast: 'Among the first of the first, among the finest of the finest you are marching today across the Red Square.'

Now I was marching from one corner of my room to the other, like a 'caged wolf. Yes, the war had knocked us off our balance. Blinded by the struggle for our native land, we forgot a great deal in those days. At that time it could not be otherwise, there was no other way.

Those who took another way With a bitter pang I recalled the early days of the war. I am deeply grateful to Fate that I was saved the necessity of making a very difficult decision. By the time it came to my turn to put on the soldier's greatcoat I knew clearly that the way of the Russians was not with the Germans. And I fought to the end. I fought for something in which I did not believe, I fought, consoling myself with hopes.

Now I no longer had those hopes. Now I felt that we had gone wrong, we had not accomplished our task, but had trusted to promises. That was why I did not want to take off the greatcoat. It wasn't too late yet!

Now menacing clouds were again gathering on the horizon. If I returned to Moscow, I would once more be confronted with the same bitter decision as in June 1941. Once more I would have to defend something I had no wish to defend.

Still more, now I was convinced that the men in the Kremlin were leading my country along a road to perdition. Nobody was threatening us. On the contrary, we were threatening all the world. That was an unnecessary and dangerous game. If we won, what good would it do us? If we were defeated, who would bear the guilt, and who would pay the Kremlin's accounts? Every one of us!

I had passed through days of anxiety for my country, through battles and through victory. And in addition I had seen with my own eyes all the bitterness of defeat. Germany in the dust was a good example of that. Germany was writhing in the convulsions of hunger and shame-but where were the guilty ones? Were only leaders guilty, or the entire nation?

If the war broke out, it would be too late then. War has its own laws. Those whom the Kremlin had turned into enemies would regard us as enemies. They did not want war, but if war was inevitable they would wage it to defend their own interests. So what was left for us to do: be again a chip in the hands of criminal gamblers? Hour after hour I walked about my room, with my greatcoat round my shoulders. It was long past midnight, but I had no thought of sleep. There was a void behind me and a void before me. I had only one conscious and definite realization: I could not go back. One thought hammered continually in my head: what was I to do?

Not until early in the morning did I feel tired. Then I lay down on my bed without undressing. And I fell asleep with my greatcoat drawn over my head.

During the next few days I began to hand over my work, bit by bit. Following Colonel Utkin's advice I deliberately dragged out the process. Without yet knowing why, I sought to gain time. And continually I was oppressed with the same tormenting thoughts and the one inexorable question: what was I to do?

On one of these days I stepped out of the Underground station on Kurfurstendamm, in the British sector. I was wearing civilian clothes; my boots squelched in the damp ooze of melting snow. The familiar streets seemed strange and unfriendly. I walked along aimlessly, running my eyes over the name-plates at the entrances to the houses. My finger played with the trigger of the pistol in my coat pocket.

Finally I made my choice of name-plate and went into the house. It had been a luxurious place-it still had a broad marble staircase.

Now the stairs were unlit, a chilly wind blew through the unglazed windows. After some difficulty I found the door I was seeking, and rang the bell. A girl with a coat flung round her shoulders opened to me.

"Can I see Herr Diels?" I asked.

"What about?" she asked pleasantly.

"A private matter," I curtly answered.

She showed me in and asked me to wait a moment. I sat in the lawyer's cold, dark reception room, while the girl disappeared. A few moments later she returned and said: "The Herr Doctor will see you."

I entered an enormous, unheated office. An elderly gentleman in gold-rimmed spectacles rose from his desk to meet me. "What can

I do for you?" he asked, offering me a seat. He rubbed his frozen hands, probably expecting some ordinary case of divorce.'

"My request is rather unusual, Doctor," I said. For the first time in my intercourse with Germans I felt a little awkward.

"Oh, you needn't feel any constraint with me," he said with a professional smile.

"I am a Russian officer," I said slowly instinctively lowering my voice.

The lawyer smiled genially, to indicate that he felt highly honored by my visit. "Only the other day another Soviet officer called on me with a German girl," he said, obviously seeking to encourage me.

I hardly listened to his explanation of why the other Russian officer had visited him. I was thinking with chagrin: 'I've made a bad

start .]But it wa's too late to retreat, and I decided to speak out.

"You see, I'm being demobilized and sent back to Russia. I shan't burden you with explanations as to the why and wherefore. To put it briefly, I want to go to Western Germany."

The smile vanished from his face. For a moment or two he did not know what to say. Then he prudently asked: "Ah ... and what can I do about that ?"

"I must get into contact with the Allies," I said. "I wish to ask for political asylum. I can't do that myself. If I'm seen with anY Allied official, or if I'm observed coming out of an Allied office ... that's too great a risk for me to run. So I'd like to ask you to help me.

The silence lasted some minutes. Then I noticed that Herr Diels was behaving in a queer manner. He fidgeted restlessly on his chair, searched for something in his pocket, turned over the papers on his desk.

"Yes, yes ... I understand," he murmured. "I, too, am a victim of the Nazi regime."

He took out a letter-case and hurriedly ran through innumerable letters. At last he found what he was seeking, and with a trembling hand held out a paper to me. It had been carefully reinforced at the folds and obviously was in frequent use.

"You see, I've even got a certificate testifying to that fact," he said.

I glanced through the document. It stated that the possessor was a victim of Nazism, and almost a communist. I again had the un pleasant feeling that I had come to the wrong address. I realized that the lawyer was afraid of something and was trying to secure himself.

"Herr Doctor, to be frank I'd rather deal with the most rabid of Nazis at this moment," I said as I handed back his document.

"Who recommended you to come to me?" he asked irresolutely. "No one. I took a chance. I have to act in the knowledge that I cannot trust anybody in my immediate surroundings. I hoped you'd be in a position to help me. But if you can't for any reason, at any

rate there's no reason why you should do me any harm."
Herr Diels sat sunk in thought. Finally he appeared to come to some decision. He turned to me again. "But tell me, what surety can I have that you . . ." He concentratedly turned the pencil over and over in his hand and avoided looking me in the face. Then, as though making up his mind, he raised his eyes and said a little hesitantly:
G.P.U?"

The former name of that well-known organization jarred in my ears. Apparently the Germans didn't know its present name yet. Despite the seriousness of my position, his question made me smile. The very thing I feared in others I was myself suspected of. I simply shrugged my shoulders and said: "I haven't had an opportunity to think that one out as yet, Herr Doctor. All I'm concerned with at the moment is with saving my own head from that ... G.P.U."

He sat very still, thinking aloud: "You speak German well ... too well ... And besides, this is all so abnormal. . ." He stared at me fixedly, as though trying to read my thoughts, and said: "Good!

I'm an old man and I have experience of men. I believe you're speaking the truth. Where do you want to go?"
"To the American zone."
"But why the American zone?" He raised his eyebrows in astonishment.
... that you're not an agent of that ... of the

"Herr Doctor, when a man takes such a step from political considerations it's natural for him to seek refuge with the strongest enemies of the people he's escaping from."

"Yes, but this is the British sector. I have no contact with the Americans."

I realized that this was tantamount to a refusal, and I made one last attempt:

"Perhaps you could recommend me to one of your colleagues who has got contact with the Americans?"
"Oh yes, I can do that," he answered, reaching for his telephone book. He turned up a name in the book, then rose heavily from his desk and went to the door, remarking: "Excuse me a moment. I'll write out the address for you."

He went into the reception room. I heard him speaking to his secretary. Then he exchanged a few words with another visitor. The telephone bell rang more than once. Somebody came and went, The minutes dragged past. It was very cold in that unheated room and I began to shiver. I felt a perfectly stupid feeling of utter dependence on the decency of someone who was a complete stranger I settled deeper in the armchair, drew my coat closer round me and put my right hand in my pocket. I slipped back the safety catch of my pistol, and turned the barrel to cover the door. If a Soviet military patrol came in I would open fire without taking my hand out of my pocket.

At last the lawyer came back, and held out a slip of paper to me. On it was an address, typewritten. I could not help wondering: 'Is that from prudence, or simply the German habit of always using the typewriter?'

Suppressing a sigh of relief, I left the house. The street-cars and automobiles were noisy in the grey dusk of the winter evening, People were hurrying along on their way home; each one had some where to go. I felt a wretched feeling of loneliness. I drew my cap down over my eyes and plunged into the Underground. After a long journey and long wandering through unknown streets at night I found the address Herr Diels had given me: a villa on the outskirts of the city. Dr. von Scheer occupied quite a high position, and it was not easy for me to get a personal interview with him, When at last I was alone with him in his study and explained the reason for my visit he at once got down to business. He took a photocopy of a document from his desk drawer, and showed it to me,

It stated that he had official relations with the Soviet central comandatura. I was confronted with all the familiar seals and signatures. I pulled such a face that he could not help smiling. "What surety have I that you're not an agent of this ... well, you know!" he asked. He winked and gave me a friendly slap on the knee.

I could only shrug my shoulders.

Dr. von Scheer proved to be a businesslike man. After a brief talk he agreed to have a chat with some Americans he knew, and asked me to call again in two days' time. I went home wondering whether he was at that moment telephoning to the Soviet commandatura to inform them of my visit.

Two days later I went to keep the appointment. I had very mixed feelings: hopes of success, and expectations of an ambush. He curtly

informed me that his talks had been fruitless. The Americans didn't wish to have anything to do with the matter. Evidently for the same reason: 'What surety have we ... ?'

I thanked the doctor for his kindness, groped my way down the steps of his house, and strode through the darkness of Berlin. I could not use my automobile with its Soviet registration number, and I had to go home by street-car. So once more I stood on the rear platform, surrounded by bustling people on their way home from work. At one of the stops close to the Control Commission a Soviet officer got on, and stood beside me. He was an elderly, benevolent looking man, with a document-case. Evidently he had been detained in the Control Commission and so had missed the service omnibuses. At the sight of the familiar uniform I felt a touch of anxiety. Suddenly he turned to me and asked me some question in German. I answered in German. As I did so I felt a clutching at my heart. Here was the beginning of it all! I no longer trusted anybody; I did not even dare to admit that I was a Russian.

As I changed from one street-car to another I noticed a German policeman not far off. With no clear idea of what I had in mind I went up to him and asked where I could find the American consulate. He evidently guessed I was not a German, and shone his lantern over me from head to foot.

In post-war Germany foreigners who were not wearing Allied uniform or did not possess an allied passport were beyond the legal pale. I had often seen such people wandering aimlessly about Berlin. The policeman evidently took me for one of these, and stared at me

suspiciously. He was used to such individuals avoiding the police like the plague. "We don't give such information," he answered at last, and shone the lantern at me again, evidently half minded to ask me for my documents. It was well that he didn't, for I would have been in an awkward predicament: German police were under orders to salute Soviet officers.

The policeman walked away. I had a feeling of breathlessness in my chest. This incident marked the beginning of the road I had decided to follow. Where I was going I would have neither a pistol nor a valid document assuring me a place in life.

As I opened the door of my Karlshorst apartment I heard the telephone ringing. I did not bother to answer. I didn't want to see or speak to anybody. I felt that I must have time to think over all that had happened, and to consider the future.

Once more I began my restless wandering from corner to corner, So my attempts to make contact with the Allies had been futile. It wasn't so simple as I had thought. It had had one result: now I saw clearly that I had got to act at my own risk.

In thus attempting to make contact with the Allies I had been concerned not so much with the formal aspect of the matter, as with its principle. I knew there was a secret agreement between the American military governor and the Soviet command, under which both parties bound themselves to hand over deserters. The British had been more far-sighted, they hadn't made such an agreement. But this foresight was not much of a guarantee to a man who was familiar with the ways of the military secret service. Although I had been demobilized, and so could not be regarded as a deserter, I had nothing to show that I was a political emigre. The Soviet military authorities had ways of dealing with the situation in which I was placed. They simply made serious criminal charges against any Soviet citizen who attempted to flee, and demanded his extradition on the ground that it was international practice to hand over criminals. Close acquaintance with Lieutenant Colonel Orlov, the S.M.A. chief military prosecutor, had enabled me to know a great deal about such matters.

This explains why I attempted to make contact with the West before going over. It was a point that would occur to anyone. but this was only a superficial aspect of the problem which confronted me. There was another, deeper aspect, which had not occurred to me until now.

As I walked from corner to corner, reviewing my conduct during the past two or three days, what I had done began to seem an unpardonable stupidity. I simply must not lose all sense of reality. The powerful thought of my break with the past had dominated my mind too much. I had cut myself loose from my past life, and now I was like a blind kitten in a new world. My rejection of half the world had engendered the erroneous idea that the other half was immaculate. I must look the facts soberly in the face.

I regarded myself as an engineer, and I had forgotten that I was an officer on the Soviet General Staff, one who had been trained in the highest of Kremlin schools. Even at this stage I could still make a triumphal return to Moscow, and travel abroad a month or so later to take a post in a military attaché's office, to command a whole staff of secret agents, buying and selling those with whom I had just been seeking refuge. And I, who trusted nobody, was

demanding trust in myself. Who would believe me, when I myself didn't know what was going on within me? I was conscious of only one thing: a spring had snapped, and the former mechanism was useless. Had I any right to expect trust? I, an erring Stalin wolf-cub? As I strode about my room I heard the words: "An unforgivable stupidity, Comrade Klimov!" I started as I realized that I was talking aloud.

To think of making contact with the Allies! It was just as well that nothing had come of it! I should know, better than most, the generally accepted rules of the secret war. The other side welcomed only those who had gained its confidence. I knew exactly how that confidence was to be won. A man was of interest to them so long as he brought some benefit. If he were regarded as stupid enough, he was used for propaganda purposes, and finally was flung on the rubbish heap. At times refugees are exchanged against agents who have been caught. It is all done quietly and without fuss. Was that the road I wanted to take?

"You haven't learnt my teaching well, Comrade Klimov!" I heard General Biyasi's voice in my ears.

I knew that the Soviet intelligence service often sends agents to the West in the guise of refugees. They are covered so well that they remain undiscovered for years. The West is fully aware of this trick. It is true that a Soviet instruction had laid down that, as a rule, people of Russian nationality were not recommended for such activities. On the one hand, Russians arouse suspicion at once; on

the other hand, the Soviet regime trusts its own people least of all.

But that was a detail the West did not know.

My inward break with the world of lies had quickened a terrible longing for the truth. I sought trust. But what did I need their trust for? I wanted only one thing: to be left in peace. I had no idea what I should do next. All I had achieved so far was renunciation of the past. In my soul there was now a vacuum. I must have a breathing space in which to find new sense in life. I was slowly but surely I must disappear, must lose my identity until I found a new identity.

I had drawn a line beneath the past. But I had not thought of the future. My first attempt to make contact with the other world had compelled me to think of it. Now I tried to systematize all the possibilities open to me.

As I was demobilized, I was freed from my oath, and by the rules of international etiquette I was free to go where I liked. I wanted to renounce my Soviet passport and become a stateless political emigre. Let me say that I would never advise any of my comrades to take such a step. If you wish to become a political emigre, you must renounce your Soviet passport, but not your country. That means that you renounce all legal support from a powerful state. You stand naked and disarmed in this imperfect world, which reckons only with him who is strong, whether his strength consists in firearms, or money, or tanks. Today the Kremlin has raised all the world against it. Concealing their distrust and fear, the people of the outside world will smile hypocritically and shake the hands of those who possess Soviet passports, but will vent their impotent feelings on you, the political emigr., because you haven't one. That is one aspect of political emigration.

Life in a strange land is not easy. I have seen living examples. In Berlin I frequently came across certain people who deserved the utmost commiseration. They spoke Russian, but they were afraid to talk to me. Sometimes they minded my car while I was at the theatre and were grateful when I gave them a packet of cigarettes, That is another aspect of political emigration.

Until long after midnight I wandered about my room. The house was as still as the grave; Karlshorst was asleep. All around me was the infinite sea of an alien world. I felt its cold, indifferent breath. At last I lay down on my bed without undressing, thrust my pistol under the pillow, and fell asleep.

Several more days passed. All this time I was living a double life. I spent the first part of the day in Karlshorst, handing over my work, putting my papers in order ready for the return to Moscow, receiving the congratulations and good wishes of my acquaintances. I had to give the impression that I was glad to be going home. I exchanged addresses, I promised to write from Moscow. During the second part of the day I wandered about wintry Berlin, visiting my German friends and cautiously sounding the ground. I must find out the road by which people went to the West.

Day after day went by without result. The normal period of preparation for departure to Moscow was three days. I had already taken two weeks.

As time passed it became increasingly difficult for me to play this double game. With every day my stay in Karlshorst grew more dangerous. I must reckon with the possibility of a showdown, and take pre

cautionary measures. Like many of the Soviet officers in Germany, I had quite a collection of trophy weapons. Now I thought of them, and took out a German automatic pistol from behind the cupboard.

After loading it I hung it on the hatrack at the door, and covered it with my greatcoat. Then I put several spare clips and a box of cartridges close at hand. This, in case there was an attempt to arrest me in my rooms. Next I loaded my large-caliber parabellum, my officer's pistol, which I had kept from the front-line days.

Next day I drove out of Berlin, stopped my car in a dense wood, and began to test my weapons methodically, as though engaging in firing practice. The brief bursts of the automatic shattered the frosty silence of the winter evening. The heavy bullets of the parabellum tore into the young pines. There must be no let-down ! Anything you like, except being left helpless. I did not think much - I feared only one thing: a let-down.

Each night, after my long and fruitless wanderings about Berlin, I would return home tired and depressed. I was sunk in apathy. Evidently there was nothing else for it but to go off on my own to the West, and hope to be lost in the flood of German refugees.

I sat down at my desk. I had no desire for food or drink. But I terribly longed to have some living creature with whom I could share my thoughts. I felt utterly weary and exhausted. Suddenly I remembered that I had not cleaned my weapons after my drive to the woods. To escape from my thoughts I began to oil the pistol.

That gave me some measure of relief.
The night peered in at the window. My room was half in darkness.

My only light was the desk-lamp, burning brightly beneath its shade. In the yellow light the oily pistol gleamed coldly. I stared without thinking at the lifeless metal. That gleam drew me, held my eyes.

I tried to tear my gaze away, and looked about me. I caught sight of a dark, hunched figure standing on one corner of my desk. Just where light and darkness met a black monkey was crouching. Crouching and gazing at me.

This large bronze statuette had been given me by one of my acquaintances. On a square pedestal of black marble were scattered rolls of parchment, books, retorts, the material symbols of human intellect. Over them crouched a repulsive black ape, squatting with an important air. It held a human skull in its hairy paws, and was

staring at it with doltish curiosity. The sculptor had conveyed in bronze all the vanity of human wishes. I set the statuette on my desk, and took little notice of it as a rule.

But now as I looked at the figure it seemed to stir. I felt mad with myself: was I beginning to suffer from hallucinations? I tried to think of other things, of the past. Once more I recalled the years of war, the Red Square, the Kremlin. Once more the intoxicated cry of inflamed emotion roared in my ears: "First of the first, among the finest of the finest."

"Tomorrow you will be last among the last, defeated among the defeated," I heard a voice.

Now I tried to think of the future. But before me opened a grey void. I saw that I had to renounce all my past life; I must lose my identity and vanish into the nothingness.

Into the nothingness Perhaps there was an even simpler way of doing that. I looked at the shining barrel of my pistol, reached for it, and played automatically with the safety catch It was so simple

The emptiness of these days I was passing through pressed me down. All my life I had done my duty, even when I had doubted that it was my duty. I had regarded duty as being the result of faith in the infallibility of the fundamental principle, and had searched obstinately for that central core of rational existence. Today I was convinced that the principle was false. So what?

Yet again my thoughts turned back to the past: I thought of the impatience with which I had looked to the end of the war, of the passion with which I had dreamed of peaceful life. And now, just when I could return to that peaceful life, just when my dreams would come true, I was throwing it all behind me and going off in the opposite direction. Why? I felt instinctively that the reason sprang out of the danger of a new war. I felt that otherwise I would have returned home despite everything and would have continued to share my joys and sorrows with my country. The possibility of a new war aroused deep and conflicting feelings in me. But where was the connection?

There are feelings buried so deep in the heart that one cannot trust oneself to speak them out. I had the fate of Germany before my eyes. Now I felt convinced that a similar fate awaited my own country. I knew the criminals who were leading my country to perdition, and I did not wish to share in their crime. I was going out today in order to fight them tomorrow. I didn't want to admit to

these thoughts: they seemed like treachery. And yet to betray a traitor is to be faithful to the fundamental principle. To kill a killer is a praiseworthy deed.

I lit another cigarette from the dying butt and flung myself back in my chair. I felt an unpleasant, bitter taste in the mouth. In the chilly silence the words beat through my head monotonously: 'It is not enough to love your country and freedom, you have to fight for them. Now you see no other possibility of fighting than to go over to the other camp and fight from there. That is your way back to your fatherland.'

On the seventeenth day I was issued my frontier pass. It was valid for three days, and before the end of the third day I must cross the Soviet frontier at Brest-Litovsk. Whatever happened, I could not remain more than another three days in Karlshorst.

The dusk was settling in Berlin when, after another day of fruit less wandering, I decided to call on a German acquaintance, the director of a factory which I had visited from time to time on official business. During these visits I had had many quite frank political conversations with him. That evening, too, we quickly turned to discussion of the future of Germany. I gave expression to my view that the Germans were too optimistic about it.

"You underestimate the internal danger," I said. "You're blindly waiting for the end of the Occupation.]But even if the Soviet forces are withdrawn from Germany, there will be very little change in the situation. Before that time comes Germany will have been bound hand and foot, she will have been sold wholesale and on a long-term lease !"

"By whom?" the director asked.

"That's what the Socialist Unity Party (S.E.D.) and the People Police are for."

I knew he had recently joined the S.E.D., and so my words could not be very pleasant for him to hear. He looked at me sidelong was silent for a moment, then said slowly: ". Many of the members of the S.E.D. and the People's Police have different thoughts from what the occupation authorities would desire." ,

"So much the worse, if they think one thing and do another."

"At present we have no other way out But when the decisive moment comes, believe me' the S.E.D. and the People's Police will not do as Moscow hopes."

"I wish you success!" I smiled.

After a momentary silence the director turned the conversation into another channel:

"Well, and how are things going with you?"

Weary and cold, I only waved my hand hopelessly and sighed:

"I'm going back to Moscow"

He evidently caught the disillusionment in my tone, and stared at me in astonishment. "Aren't you glad to be going back home? I

In your place 1.

"I'm quite prepared to change places with you," I retorted.

He threw me another swift glance and interpreted my words to his own satisfaction. "So you like Germany more than Russia?" he asked.

"I could do, if I were not a Soviet officer," I replied evasively,

"The victors are envious of the vanquished" He shook his head thoughtfully. He rose and began to walk about the room. Suddenly he halted in front of me and asked:

"Then why don't you remain here?"

"Where's here?" I asked indifferently.

"Why, go to one of the other zones!" he exclaimed. He made

vague gesture, surprised that I had not myself thought of such A simple idea.

"But is that so simple?" I asked, pricking up my mental ears, but remaining outwardly unconcerned.

For some time he said nothing. Then, apparently coming to a decision, he turned and said in a rather lower voice: "If you wish to remain in Germany there's nothing simpler than to get across the green frontier."

('Green frontier'-a common phrase for crossing frontiers illegally.-Tr.)

I listened still more closely, and asked:

"Maybe, but what is the American attitude to you if you do?"

He made a contemptuous gesture. "Oh, spit on the swines! They're no better than He bit his lip.

I smiled involuntarily. I had the impression that this director, this member of the Socialist Unity Party, was prepared to go to any lengths to reduce the Soviet Army by just one fighting unit!

I knew him well; I had no reason to suspect that he was acting as a provocateur. I sat silent. If he was so anxious to win me, let him talk a little more!

"I have many acquaintances in Thuringia," he went on. "If you like, I can give you letters of recommendation to people of trust.

They'll willingly help you to get to the other side."

"But how about documents?"

He shrugged his shoulders: "Today every third man in Germany has false papers."

"Where can you get hold of them?"

"I know a man who'll be very glad to help you in that direction."

He smiled a little smile, and added: "And by the way, he's an officer in the People's Police."

Now I decided to show my hand. I changed my tone; my words sounded strong, almost harsh. "Herr Director, you must pardon my reserve. The question we're discussing has been decided long since. If I hadn't met you I'd have had no other choice but to make my own way to the West."

He was silent for a moment; then he said:

"Even when I had only business relations with you I noticed that you were different from the others. They have only one word: 'Hand over! Hand over!'" (He used the Russian word: 'Davai ! Davai!

We got down to discussion of the details. He promised to provide me with documents in case I found it necessary to remain in Berlin and against the possibility of my being stopped on the road. After

we had arranged to meet next day, I left his house and went into the street. It was still as dark and as bitterly cold as two hours before. But now I did not feel the cold; the air seemed to have a vital freshness to it.

Next day I met him again. With true German reliability he set a German identity card on the desk in front of me. At the window a young, fair-haired German with a military carriage was standing

The director introduced us to each other. Two men in civilian dress shook each other's hands, and clicked their heels from sheer habit

We filled in the identity card. A bitter smile crossed my face as I read my new name: my German sheepdog had had the same name.

For the first time in my life I had my fingerprints taken. A German police seal was stamped over my photograph. I had a feeling that after stamping it the German looked at me with different eyes.

The officer of the People's Police went so far in his kindness as to say he would himself accompany me to the frontier. He had already obtained a few days' leave, and would take the opportunity to visit relations in Thuringia.

To provide against all contingencies I decided to take with me one of my old official authorizations for a visit to Thuringia, stating that

I was traveling on a special commission for Marshal Sokolovsky, If the German police checked my papers on the road they would see Soviet documents, and these had the same effect on them as a snake on a rabbit. If a Soviet patrol made a check, in the car would be a man who had lost his identity.

We arranged that the police officer was to drive to a street just outside Karlshorst at one o'clock the next afternoon, and then would ring me up.

As I was saying goodbye to the director, he asked me:

"But tell me, in reality, why have you, a Soviet officer, decided

to turn your back on the Soviet Union?"

"On the same ground that you, a member of the S.E.D., have decided to help this Soviet officer," I replied, warmly shaking his hand.

Next day I sprang out of bed before daylight had fully come. I felt an unusual influx of strength and energy. Today, whatever happened, I had got to leave Karlshorst. Twenty days had passed since I had been given the fateful order. My frontier pass expired today, and before its close I must be in Brest-Litovsk. If I were found in Karlshorst, I would have great difficulty in explaining my presence.

Every unnecessary minute that I remained here increased the danger.

I had ordered a ticket and reserved a seat in the Moscow train. Before I left Berlin I would call on the military commandant at the Schlesische station and register my departure. Now I must leave my apartment in a state indicating that I had gone back to Moscow. I made my final preparations. Lighting the stove, I destroyed the contents of my desk. I was possessed by an inexplicable feeling of freedom. Packets of documents, authorizations bearing the S.M.A. seal, flew into the stove. Photographs of myself were melted in flame: myself against the ruined Reichstag, among the marble statues of the Siegesallee, in the Tiergarten, with Marshal Zhukov and General Eisenhower on the Tempelhof airfield. Letters from dear and loved friends were consumed to ash. My last spiritual bonds with the past went up in smoke. I was seized with a passion for destruction. The feeling that I was cutting myself off from all my past life, together with the absolute emptiness of the future, left only one gnawing desire alive within me: to destroy everything with my own hands.

It did not even occur to me that these documents and papers might be of use to me some time or other, that it might be better to put them somewhere in safe keeping. I was quite indifferent to what might happen to me in the future. Today I was a man who had lost his identity, a man without a past, without a name, without a native land.

I sat down at my desk and wrote letters, which I intended to post in the Karlshorst post-box. In all probability I would never have another opportunity of writing to these people. Every letter consisted of only one brief sentence: 'Today I am traveling to Moscow', together with a last greeting, and my signature. In all my personal letters my signature always clearly revealed the mood in which I had written. Today the signature was clear, firm, and sure, like a judicial sentence. It would tell the recipients everything.

My mind went over all the possibilities of a failure in my plans, and all that must be done in each instance. I had enough weapons and cartridges. The one thing I knew for certain was that I would not be taken alive.

I shaved and dressed with unusual care; I even scented my handkerchief. At that moment I realized why sailors have the custom of putting on their best underwear and uniform when going into

battle. The long days of inner conflict, of tormenting search for a way out, the consciousness of continual danger, had left their traces, Now I felt that my nerves were strained to breaking point. I knew that sooner or later there would come a reaction, a discharge of tension. I must get to the frontier and across, and then I could lie down and close my eyes. There I would be indifferent to all the world One way or another, at that point I would be only a corpse, living or dead.

I looked at the clock, and suddenly had the alarming thought supposing my guide should change his mind, or was afraid to drive right up to the Berlin Kremlin? Then there would be nothing for it but to go out, thrust my hands in my pockets, and make my way westward with the aid of a map. But again I thought that it would all be settled today, and that comforted me.

With my greatcoat flung round my shoulders I began to wander once more from corner to corner. The room was cold and empty My footfalls sounded very loud on the bare floor. The clock struck twelve. Still another hour. I was emptied of all thought. I only waited for that ring.

There was a sharp ring at the doorbell; the sound cut through the tense silence. I stood listening. For days I had not answered any telephone calls and had not opened the door to callers. The bell rang again: long, insistently. I put my right hand in my coat pocket and listened. The bell rang still more imperatively. With a deliberately unhurried step, my hand still in my pocket, I went to open it. I opened it with my left hand.

In the grey twilight of the wintry day I saw a man in M.V.D uniform. I stared at him with unseeing eyes, and felt my pistol barrel slowly lifting the lining of my pocket. The man stood silent and motionless. I made an effort and looked into his face. Then I realized that he was Andrei Kovtun. He did, not enter as was his usual habit, but stood stockstill, as though he could not make up his

mind.

"May I come in?" he said at last.

I did not answer. How had he known that I was still here? What had he come for? I did not want anybody to see my apartment at this moment; there was much in it that contradicted the impression of a man about to leave for Moscow. I looked at him again. All his face expressed an unusual, mute question.

"Come in!" I said curtly.

I placed myself so that he could go only to my study. He went ahead of me and tried not to look about him. His step was listless and irresolute. I glanced out at the staircase, then closed the door. My heavy pistol knocked against my thigh, so I shifted it to my tunic pocket.

He dropped heavily into his usual chair. I had no idea what to say to him, and switched on the electric fire, simply for the sake of doing something. As I did so I glanced through the window, and noticed that his car was empty.

"So you're off?" he said in a peculiar tone.

"Yes."

"When?"

"Today."

"And so you didn't want to say goodbye to me?"

There was a painful silence. He did not expect any answer. He leaned his head against the back of his chair, stared up at the ceiling, then closed his eyes. He sat in his greatcoat and cap, not even drawing off his gloves. Only now did it occur to me that we hadn't shaken hands.

I glanced at the clock, at the telephone, then again at Andrei. I had not seen him often since our journey to Moscow. I had the impression that he was avoiding me. Now I realized how much he had changed since that time. His face was haggard, aged; the shining skin was drawn tightly across his forehead. His features were set in the expression common to people incurably ill. All his bearing expressed hopeless weariness.

The minutes passed. He sat without stirring, his eyes closed. I stared through the window into the street, and aimlessly tapped my foot on the floor.

"Am I in your way?" he asked quietly. For the first time I caught a tone of uncertainty, almost helplessness, in his voice. I felt a wave of pity for him. He was only the empty husk of a man. But I did not trust him, his M.V.D. uniform forbade that. I glanced out into the street again. If they were to come for me now, Andrei would get my first bullet.

At that moment the doorbell sounded again. A short, uncertain ring. Only a stranger would ring like that. I went out and opened the door. Two small, mute figures were standing outside. I saw their white, childish faces, their hands blue with the cold. Refugee children.

"Khlepal "-the Russian word for bread sounded queerly distorted in the mouths of these German children. "Khlepal" The word Was quietly repeated. In their eyes was neither entreaty nor expectation only childish helplessness. I felt a lump in my throat. These wretched figures seemed like a spectral premonition of that which awaited me.

Without speaking I beckoned to them to enter, found my 01 military kitbag in the kitchen, and filled it with everything I could They had difficulty in dragging it to the door. I saw them out.

As I closed the door I heard a vague muttering behind me: "That wasn't just chance "That's a sign..." I stared at Andrei 'amazement. He drooped his head, avoiding my gaze, and whispered "God sent them."

He dropped back into his chair. The clock said half-past twelve

I realized that I had not had anything to eat all the morning. I must have strength for whatever lay ahead. I cut some bread and butter, and forced myself to eat. I put a second plate in front of Andrei. As I leaned over the table I saw that his eyes were fixed on my coat. The greatcoat had swung open, and the butt of my pistol was poking out from my tunic pocket. I felt my mouth go dry.

Before returning to the U.S.S.R. Soviet officers had to hand over all their weapons. Any attempt to smuggle a weapon across the frontier was sternly punished. A major in the State Security Service would know that best of all. I drew my greatcoat round me as casually as

possible and gave him a sidelong look. There was no astonishment in his eyes, his face was quite tranquil. The hands of the clock crept nearer to the appointed hour.

"In all probability we shall never see each other again." Andrei broke the oppressive silence. His words were not said in a questioning tone, but rather as an answer to his own thought and you didn't want to say goodbye," he added sorrowfully.

I was silent; I pretended I had not heard his remark.

"All my life I've never trusted you." His words came slowly and quietly. "When I did begin to believe in you, you did not believe or trust me. . .

His words cut me to the heart, but I could not say anything in answer. I knew only one thing: in a moment the telephone would be ringing, and if anybody got in my way I would shoot. Again I caught myself wondering: how had he known I was still here, and that I was going today? During these latter days there had been many possibilities ... Perhaps he had learnt the news in the course of his official duties? Perhaps in his Pocket he had an order for my arrest? I forced that thought away from me, and got up and walked about the room. Andrei's voice, the voice of a major in the State Security Service, came as an answer to my thoughts:

"Don't be angry at my coming here..

The clock ticked like falling drops of water. Quietly, almost inaudibly, he went on:

"If I hadn't come, others would have. .

I wandered about the room, glancing from time to time at the clock.

"Perhaps you'd like to borrow my car?" he asked.

"No, thanks..."

"So you're going, and I remain." IR spoke again. "I can be of more use if I remain at my post ... If you ever think of me, Grisha, then remember ... I do what I can." Once more the silence filled the chilly room-broken only by the

clock ticking.

"Won't you give me something as a keepsake?" He spoke again.

His voice sounded strangely unsure, almost unhappv.

I looked round my empty room. My gaze rested on the black monkey crouching on the desk. I stared at it fixedly, as though expecting it to move.

"Take that." I nodded at the bronze statuette.

"A black ape is sitting on the world," he muttered. "And a man strives after the good, the pure ... and then you see that it's all filth ... 11

The telephone bell rang out like a pistol shot. Unhurriedly I picked up the receiver. I heard the words in German:

"The car is here."

"Very good!" I answered, also in German.

"Well ... now I've got to go." I turned to Andrei.

He rose heavily from his chair and went with a wooden step to the door. I followed him. With a forced movement, as though he were mortally weary, he drew his greatcoat down. The collar caught in the gold epaulette of his tunic. He stared at his shoulder, then pulled on his greatcoat so violently that the epaulette was ripped away.

"The wings ... of a slave!" the words sounded heavy and slow in the silence. They were uttered with such a depth of bitterness that involuntarily I shivered.

ago

"I wish you a good journey !" he said, and held out his hand. I took his hand and shook it. He stared into my eyes, tried to say something, but only gave me another firm handshake and went down the stairs. I gazed after him, but he did not turn round.

I stood listening until the sound of his car died away. Several minutes had passed. It was time I was going.

I had already handed in the keys of my apartment, and now i had only to shut the door. For a moment I hesitated on the

threshold, then slammed the door hard behind me. The lock clicked home

Now there was no way back.

I turned and walked out of the house: to face the future.

- END -

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