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On the second day of the German occupation a public meeting was held in the town square in which a German officer, Major Vital, announced that the very first task of the population was to form a new local government. The German interpreter translated the word "to form" incorrectly. Since German *bilden*, "to form," can also mean "to educate," he announced that the first task was to educate the self-administration. People started to ask each other, "Whom are we supposed to educate? We don't have anyone!" and Vital snapped, "What's going on here?" I spoke up, "Major, the interpreter made a mistake," whereupon the officer asked me to render the order in proper Russian. First a Russian was elected mayor, and then the Karachais elected their own nationality committee. They elected Kazi Bairamukov, who had been hiding in the mountains since the uprising in 1930, as president of the committee. His deputy was Aliev, a well-educated Karachai teacher who also spoke Russian very well. The committee also included a certain Karakotov and Totorkulov. Totorkulov had studied in Istanbul and spoke excellent Turkish. The chief of police of the Karachai area was Laipanov. He was related to the area's party committee secretary who had fled with the other party officials, before the Germans arrived. I asked a Karachai student at the Pedagogical Institute, by the name of Ali, what he thought of the elections. He replied, "The Germans are certainly preferable to the Soviets, but what we Karachai would like best of all is to get back our Ak Padishah (White

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Tsar)." The student was alluding to the fact that in Tsarist times the Karachais were exempt from taxation and the military draft.

After the meeting a small celebration was held. I was invited to the officers' table, and they asked who I was and why I spoke German so fluently. After I introduced myself, one of the officers said, "My ancestors also lived in St. Petersburg. Have you ever heard the name Koenig?" "Yes," I answered, "if you mean the 'Sugar Koenig,' he was my great-great-grandfather." "He was my great-great-grandfather, too!" the officer exclaimed. Thus I met in the Caucasus my remote relative, Captain Walter Koenig, whom I was to meet again in Germany after the war. Later I was asked several times to act as interpreter between the Russian mayor and the German commandant, Lieutenant Ott, a general's son and a very nice young man. He was later killed in action and succeeded in Mikoyan Shakhra by Captain Ratgeber.

I also became acquainted with Captain Schuster, the chief of the C-1 (intelligence) section of the 49th Corps, who invited me to his office. There I also met Major Hromatka, who was very much interested in the passes leading across the mountains into Transcaucasia. In order to get to Schuster and Hromatka, I simply walked into corps headquarters without a pass and through several rooms where maps were lying around unguarded. The Germans considered anyone who declared himself an enemy of the Soviets to be their friend. It would have been quite easy for any "friend" to steal a map or plant a time bomb. The Soviets had undoubtedly left many undercover agents behind. G. G. Leonov, the director of the Pedagogical Institute in Mikoyan Shakhra, and his deputy had told me before leaving that they were going to join the local partisans. I am certain that they often entered Mikoyan Shakhra in disguise.

The Germans greatly impressed the Karachais when they distributed copies of the Koran in Arabic. The books were only about six by four centimeters in size so that it was necessary to hand out a magnifying glass with each copy. This was a clever ploy to win support among the Karachais, Kabardinians and other Muslims in the Caucasus, but whatever good will this gesture generated was lost soon after the German SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*, security service),

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a branch of the notorious SS, began to exterminate the Jews. Mikoyan Shakhhar had very few Jews, but there were many in Pyatigorsk and Kislovodsk who had recently been evacuated from western Russia. The Germans lost no time in divesting them of all their property and redistributing it among the non-Jewish population. Greed encouraged the local riffraff to denounce Jews, and without this avid collaboration, the Germans would have had a difficult time identifying Jews in the Caucasus because nearly everybody there was dark-eyed and had a dark complexion.

One day an SS officer arrived who wanted to inspect the children's sanatorium in Teberda, a health resort for tuberculosis patients. I was asked to accompany him as his interpreter. As soon as we arrived at the sanatorium, the manager rushed up to us and said in Russian, "We also have some Jewish children here." I translated this statement as "We have children of various nationalities here." "Oh, I'm not interested in that," the officer replied, "just find out if the hospital needs any medical supplies, so I can have them delivered." I translated this for the manager but, in order to cover myself, I added that the problem of nationality would be discussed later. This incident proves that, with a bit of adroit manipulation an interpreter can influence the fate of many people. I ran a risk, of course, by not knowing whether the director of the sanatorium understood enough German to detect my alterations.

After the SS officer and I returned to Mikoyan Shakhhar, he suggested that I move to Kislovodsk because a German agency was there to provide accommodations, food, and other help for people of German descent. I accepted his offer and moved with my family to Kislovodsk where we got two rooms in an apartment and bought food in a special store reserved for ethnic Germans. I also learned that a primary school had been organized by my old schoolmate, Professor A. G. Sorgenfrey, and his wife Renate, née Steininger, a teacher of German at Leningrad University. We enrolled Nicholas in that school while Valerian worked part-time as an interpreter. Although he had not graduated from high school, he could not attend any school in Kislovodsk because the Germans allowed only elementary schools to remain open.

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In November I was called to Nal'chik in the Kabardinian region where a problem arose with the so-called Mountain Jews. These people were Jewish by religion but ethnically Iranian. The German occupiers were of two opinions. The SS, true to form, wanted to annihilate the Mountain Jews. The army officers, however, were opposed to this plan and called on me as kind of expert witness in their dispute with the SS. In Nal'chik I met Professor Deeters, a professor of Bonn University and a well-known specialist in Caucasian languages, and Captain Theodor Oberländer, the commandant of Nal'chik, who was very sympathetic to the Mountain Jews and opposed to the gassing of all Jews. Oberländer was a former minister in the Weimar government and after the war the refugee minister in the Adenauer government and then professor at Bonn University. I wrote a memorandum about the Mountain Jews in which I pointed out that Tsarist laws had not treated them as Jews but as Caucasian mountaineers. Furthermore, their real name was Tat, and scholarly literature had indicated that the Tat were people of Iranian origin who spoke an Iranian language. I also suggested that the Tat leaders invite the Germans to a party with wine, song and dances. All spectators including the SS Obersturmbannführer (Major) Pesterer, enjoyed themselves immensely and agreed to a man that the Tat were not Jews. Pesterer himself said, "We're not interested in their funny religion. If they want to be Jewish in religion, we don't care. It's the racial Jews we're against." I was happy that I was able to help save the Tat people from annihilation. Otherwise, the Tat might have gone the way of the Krimchak in the Crimea. The Krimchak were also of Jewish religion, but racially Turkic, and were exterminated by the Germans.

A second but much more tragic event occurred during my stay in Nal'chik. One day a man went to the local German military headquarters and introduced himself as a former NKVD chauffeur. He reported that for several weeks before the Germans conquered Nal'chik, every night he had transported people from the local NKVD jail to a certain place outside the city, and each time he drove his empty truck back to Nal'chik. He took the Germans to the place that was his nocturnal destination, where a probe about three feet

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into the ground revealed some corpses. The Germans then ordered a full-scale excavation and mobilized many men from the local population. A pit was revealed, about 150 feet long by 50 feet wide, in which hundreds of corpses were stacked like cordwood. Many people recognized their friends and relatives among those corpses which were not too badly decomposed. The Germans arranged a solemn mass funeral at which a Russian Orthodox priest and a Muslim mullah officiated, and a German military band played funeral marches. The nationality committee of the Kabardinians, headed by an intellectual by the name of Beshtokov, attended the services. This, then, was another Katyn, that infamous place where the Soviets had murdered thousands of Polish prisoners of war. The discoveries at Katyn and Nal'chik proved that the Soviets murdered their prisoners en masse whenever the enemy came too close.

This is not an assumption but a fact. A student at the University of Washington told me that her parents had been arrested and confined in the jail at Khar'kov. Shortly before the Germans reached the city, NKVD (secret police) officers doused the entire jail with gasoline, and all inmates were burnt alive. She was a little girl at that time who was taken in by some friends. Later, her friends fled with her to Germany and ultimately emigrated to the United States.

I stayed on in Nal'chik through December, and my wife and younger son joined me. Valerian had to stay in Kislovodsk to work as an interpreter. Food in Nal'chik was more plentiful, and we had a Christmas feast for the first time in many years: a fried goose, some cakes made of flour, and even a bottle of wine. The military situation, however, was not at all peaceful, and there was a rumor that the Germans were about to evacuate. Indeed, the German retreat was officially announced on January 1, 1943.

I decided to leave with the Germans for three basic reasons. I remembered the annual tedium of filling out questionnaires asking, among many other questions, whether I had ever been on the territory occupied by the White Army. I was now on German-held territory, and it would have been extraordinarily risky to state this on a questionnaire after the Soviets reoccupied the area. Besides, the

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local population collaborated with the Germans, and my few stints as interpreter *in the interest of the local people* could be called collaboration. Finally, if we followed the retreating Germans we would have a God-sent opportunity to leave the Soviet Union and migrate to a country where people enjoyed freedom, such as the United States or Great Britain.

Nataliya, Nicholas and I, together with our dog Johnny, left Nal'chik by truck and headed north. There was not enough time to get Valerian to come with us. Another translator, one who had worked for the local German civilian administration, was on the same truck, as well as a woman with her son. This woman had been a typist in the local NKVD, and when the Germans came she gave them all carbon copies which, contrary to regulations, she had saved. With the aid of these carbon copies the Germans were able to discover many Soviet agents and execute them. We went by truck to the Mineral'nye Vody (English: Mineral Waters) railroad station. From there all the ethnic Germans as well as Russian and Caucasian refugees were to be transported farther west by train. An uninterrupted stream of refugees was moving along each side of the highway all the way from Nal'chik to Pyatigorsk, a distance of about 120 kilometers. Assuming an interval of about two meters between marchers in each of the two columns, I would guess that about 120,000 people were fleeing from the Soviets. A grim scene of thousands of German guns, tanks, and even personnel carriers bogged down in the swamp-like ground on both sides of the road provided the backdrop for this terrible evacuation.

We waited for a train in Mineral'nye Vody for two days, and all that time we were constantly bombarded by Soviet planes. The Germans then decided to truck all of us to Kursavka where another attempt would be made to put us on a train. A large band of partisans was rumored to be operating near Kursavka, but we finally managed to leave in a boxcar. Our dog was not permitted into the car, but a very nice polite young officer by the name of Kefinger took care of him in another car. Unfortunately Johnny was a very disobedient dog, and during one of our stops at a station, while the officer was walking him without a leash, the dog ran away. When we

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reached Nevinnomysskaya we had to wait a long time while once again Soviet planes bombarded us. Some bombs fell so close that the sides and roof of our boxcar were peppered with sand and pebbles. Finally the train resumed its journey, first to Kavkazskaya, now called Kropotkin, and then, after much delay, to Rostov. The moment we crossed the Don River the Germans blew up the bridge behind them, for the Soviets were closing in fast. If our train had been slightly delayed we could never have crossed the Don, and we would have fallen into the hands of the Soviet army.

After a few more days we reached the Ukraine. There were many Italian and Rumanian soldiers in that region; the Rumanians even looked rather picturesque in their tall fur caps. Finally, on February 1 we arrived in Khortitsa on the Dnepr River. We had already spent one month jammed together with thirty to forty other passengers in a boxcar. With only straw to lie on and no opportunity to wash, we had all become infested with lice. The air inside the car was atrocious, what with constant coughing and sneezing and children crying day and night. In addition, we were terribly hungry because we had only been able to stop at a few stations, and food had been virtually unattainable. The only other passenger in our boxcar whom I remember was an ethnic German with the strange name of Zehzahn. One day a brown-shirted SA (*Sturmabteilung*) storm trooper boarded our train and examined everyone's identification cards. When Zehzahn showed him his card, the storm trooper yelled, "You Communist swine!" and slapped him. Zehzahn retorted that he had never been a Communist, but he was dragged off the train, and I never learned what happened to him.

In Khortitsa we were sent to the city bathhouse where we washed and deloused ourselves and changed our clothes. Two days later, on February 3, we continued on to Nikopol', farther on the Dnepr River. There, Nicholas, Nataliya and I were assigned to a room and were given a few sacks of sunflower seed shells to burn in our stove. We stayed until March 23 when we, along with many other refugees, were put on a train and shipped westward to Lemberg, now called L'vov.

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An organization in charge of ethnic German refugees accommodated us in an excellent hotel where several other scholars were also staying. After examining my credentials, the organization decided that I should proceed immediately to Berlin where specialists on Soviet nationalities were badly needed. I was assigned to the Wannsee Institute, located in the Wannsee suburb of Berlin. I went alone to Berlin, arriving there in about thirty-six hours. After a night's rest I took the elevated train to Wannsee where I met the director, Professor Achmeteli, who was an Armenian and a member of the Nazi party (NSDAP). I also met Dr. Wagner, an ethnic German from Russia, who was the secretary, and Dr. Emil Augsburg, a graduate of Marburg University in Slavic languages and literatures. All three men spoke very good Russian. One research scholar, Dr. A. P. Svechin, was Russian but a German citizen.

The institute's task was to study various aspects of the Soviet economy, politics and science and make reports to the German government. It probably had one of the best Russian-language libraries outside the Soviet Union. The institute was an intelligence organization that collated materials from openly published sources but did not engage in covert activities. Germany had at that time several such institutes, including one each for East Asia, America, and the Soviet Union proper (as opposed to its minority peoples, who were studied at Wannsee), the latter located in Breslau, now called Wrocław. All of these institutes were supervised by the so-called Stiftung für Länderkunde (Geography Foundation), headed by an SS officer by the name of Krallert. The foundation, in turn, reported to the Amt VI (Intelligence) of the SS (State Security), headed by Count Schellenberg. Although Amt VI was part of the *Sicherheitshauptamt* (Chief Security Office) headed by Kaltenbrunner, it was sufficiently far removed from the Gestapo and other branches so that after the war it was not labeled as a criminal organization. My task consisted of compiling a large work on Siberia to include such aspects as history, ethnography, culture, and natural resources. This work was never finished.

I had to return to L'vov immediately to take Nataliya and Nicholas back to Berlin. For the first month in Berlin we lived as

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the institute's guests at the Hotel Roxy on the Kurfürstendamm, which was still operating at the same location when I later visited Berlin in 1957. Afterwards we moved into two large rooms in an apartment at 58 Uhlandstrasse. This apartment belonged to a woman who spoke Russian rather well even though she had emigrated from Russia when she was a child. She was also rather critical of conditions in Germany and expected Germany to be defeated. She had many acquaintances among intellectuals and once invited me to give a lecture to a group of them in her sitting room. She also wanted me to meet Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister, and explain to him the tragic situation in which Germany had placed itself but that, of course, proved to be impossible. Even high-ranking German officials failed to get an audience with him. Needless to say, I was not keen on meeting Goebbels because he would have hardly appreciated my firm opinion that Germany had already lost the war.

Around June 1, 1943, we had a joyous reunion with my elder son Valerian who, as I explained earlier, had been working as an interpreter in Kislovodsk when we left Nal'chik. A boy of only seventeen, he had traveled by himself through the Kuban area in war-ravaged Russia all the way to Germany. He had somehow obtained our Berlin address and located us without any difficulty. That term Nicholas entered a Russian-German school whose principal was a certain Dr. Besseler, and Valerian enrolled at Berlin University in special preparatory courses for students who had not yet graduated from high school. These courses had been organized for the many refugees who had come to Germany and wanted to continue their education, but had not received their high school diplomas.

In Berlin I met some relatives who had emigrated from Russia right after the revolution. Among them was Willi Diederichs, my mother's cousin, whom I mentioned in Chapter 3, and my great-aunt Mathilde Boetz, my maternal grandmother's sister, whom I will mention again later. Without her help we might not have survived in Germany.

I also met Professor Erich Haenisch, the well-known Sinologist and Mongolist, whom I had first met in 1927 or 1928 in

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Leningrad when he spent a few days there on his return from China. In April 1943 I visited him at his home in the Zehlendorf district. He welcomed me as if it had been only a few days since our last meeting and ushered me into his study where, without further ado, he pointed to a large portrait of Emperor Wilhelm II and said, "I remain faithful to my emperor. I don't recognize the present rulers of my country." This was very courageous of him because I could have reported him to the Gestapo but, being a gentleman from tip to toe, he obviously assumed that I could be trusted.

He soon invited me to Berlin University to lecture on Mongolian and Turkic languages, such as Tatar, and comparative Altaic linguistics. I had an excellent group of students. One of them was the son of the well-known historian Heinrich Treitschke. Another student was Professor Haenisch's son, Wolf, who later became a professor of Japanese at Marburg University. Arash Bormanshinov, a Kalmuck, later emigrated to the United States where he obtained his Ph.D. degree and became a professor first at Princeton University and later at the University of Maryland. Another Kalmuck in the class was S. O. Stepanov who was later also to go to the United States where he is still working. Finally there was the Ukrainian Mikhail Brynjovskii who died soon after his arrival in the United States.

In August 1943 we moved into our own apartment. It had three rooms, a bath and kitchen, and was on the third floor of a house on Flensburger Strasse, just opposite the Borsig Bridge. The previous tenant had died, and with the help of some acquaintances I managed to get the apartment. Some furniture came with the apartment. I bought additional pieces from the deceased tenant's relatives, and we had already bought other household items on ration coupons. We were amazed that after four full years of war we could still buy all of these furnishings in Berlin, whereas in Leningrad such items had been unavailable even in peacetime. We were lucky to get the apartment when we did because soon thereafter the apartment house on Uhlandstrasse was severely damaged in an air raid.

The well-known Turcologist Annemarie von Gabain, a student of my deceased friend Willi Bang, arranged an appointment for

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Nataliya at the Charité Hospital in Berlin, where for the first time in many years her illness was correctly diagnosed as multiple sclerosis. Again through von Gabain's good offices, Nataliya was sent to a rest home free of charge and I was to accompany her. We spent the month of October in a rest home called Eichhof, located in Lauterbach, Hesse. It was very beautiful there and absolutely quiet. This was in sharp contrast to Berlin where we had air raids almost every day. Sometimes bombers flew over Lauterbach, but they always dropped their bombs on nearby Kassel, badly damaging that city.

Back in Berlin, the first three weeks of November were relatively quiet even though we still had our daily air raids. On the evening of November 21, 1943 there was an alarm and, as usual, I led Nataliya, who by then was greatly handicapped and could hardly move on her own, to the air raid shelter. I also took two suitcases with our most valuable belongings. Valerian had gone to see a play and Nicholas' school had been evacuated two months earlier to Niederwürschnitz in the Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains) near Chemnitz. Consequently, only Nataliya and I were at home that evening. Suddenly we heard a terrible explosion. I looked through a crack in the door of the air-raid shelter and saw that the house was on fire. We all scrambled out through an emergency exit. I ran back to the shelter to get our suitcases, and we fled across the Borsig Bridge to the other bank of the Spree River where we found a bench to sit down and rest. We were surrounded by flames. It was almost impossible to breathe and acrid smoke stung our eyes.

This was a new type of warfare. Many districts of large cities and even entire towns were bombarded which did not contain any military or industrial installations but which were purely residential. The same tactic was used in Vietnam where civilians suffered from air raids much more than combatants. It is highly questionable whether such air raids had any strategic significance. In Vietnam, at least, they did not help the United States to win the war.

After about two hours I walked back over to the heap of smoldering rubble that had once been our apartment house. There I met Valerian who had returned from the theater. The two of us

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walked to the bench where Nataliya was sitting to wait for day-break. In the morning Valerian went to stay in a friend's house until he could find other accommodations. While I was out looking for food I quite unexpectedly met Nicholas who had just returned to spend a few days' vacation with us. Sadly I had to tell him to return to Niederwürschnitz, for we no longer had a place to stay.

Nataliya and I and others who had become homeless in the air raids were taken to Cottbus in Silesia where we were put up in an emergency shelter and given food. While spending several nights there on wooden benches and bunkbeds in a large common dormitory for men and women, I tried to determine where we should go from there. The Wannsee Institute had already been evacuated from Berlin. They originally intended to move it to Passau, Bavaria, but this plan fell through. Instead it was evacuated to Plankenwart Castle near St. Oswald, not far from Graz, Austria. Since we did not have any place to stay in Berlin, Nataliya and I decided to rejoin the Wannsee Institute in Austria. Valerian found a room for himself and was to remain in Berlin to continue his preparatory courses at the university.

Plankenwart Castle had been built in the thirteenth century and had remained almost unchanged for half a millenium. Professor Achmeteli picked us up in Graz and took us there by car. It was very cold inside and the institute's library had not yet been reassembled. Books were lying about the floor in large piles. We were assigned a well-lit room with several windows in one of the castle towers. The room had a stove with beautiful pot-shaped tiles, hence called *Topföfen* (pot stoves) in German, and there was plenty of coal for heating. Food, however, was a problem. We had no kitchen, only an electric hotplate which was good for heating up coffee, tea, or soup. The nearest stores and restaurants were several kilometers away from the castle in the village of St. Oswald. It was easy for me to walk to the village, but Nataliya could not accompany me, especially since the snow was almost knee deep. I took meals from the restaurant back to the castle where we warmed them up on our hotplate. Nataliya subsisted this way from early December 1943 to the middle of March 1944. Once during our

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stay Valerian joined us for a brief time because he had been bombed out yet another time in Berlin. He returned, however, thinking he might possibly find a room in the Berlin suburbs, from where he could commute to the university.

It became quite clear that we could not stay with the Wannsee Institute at Plankenwart Castle any longer. I went to Berlin to see the director of the East Asia Institute, Professor Walter Donat, whom I had met a few months before in Berlin. Donat was a Japanologist and a member of both the NSDAP and the SS. He was, however, a very pleasant and decent man. Later, in fact, when the Third Reich was about to collapse, he told me that he would give all employees of the institute money to tide us over until we found other jobs. Donat also demonstrated his decency on another occasion. When one of his secretaries was denounced to the Gestapo for listening to American and British broadcasts, Donat had gone to the Gestapo and vouched for the girl's loyalty. Donat readily accepted me and settled the problem of my transfer from the Wannsee Institute to his East Asia Institute. This institute was located first in the Oranienburger Strasse, but after this site was destroyed in an air raid it was transferred to Dahlem, and finally to Marienbad in the Sudeten, a region of Czechoslovakia which the Germans had annexed in 1939 shortly before they occupied the entire country.

As a member of the East Asia Institute, I was commissioned to write two reports, one on Mongolia and another on the mentality of the Mongols. I do not know exactly why the Germans regarded the Mongols' shamanist and Buddhist beliefs as important. In my opinion, these beliefs were of no importance to Germany's war effort. I also wrote a book on the Mongolian People's Republic, which was to have been published in Berlin by Walter de Gruyter. I had even received the galley proofs, but Germany collapsed before the book could be printed. After the war, when I had an interview with a British officer by the name of Gottlieb, a native of South Africa, I lent him my galley proofs of that book, but he never returned it. I heard later he committed suicide. In addition to my work at the East Asia Institute, I wrote an article on the language of the Mongolian square script and the *Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih*, i.e., the

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Secret History of the Mongols, a work written in 1240, which was published in 1944.¹ In addition it was then that I wrote my Khalkha-Mongolian grammar which was eventually published by Steiner in 1951. Valerian also worked at the institute as a part-time errand boy.

As soon as I was settled at the East Asia Institute and had obtained two rooms in a house in the Marienfelde district of Berlin which belonged to an elderly lady, I returned to Plankenwart to take Nataliya to Berlin. Nataliya, Valerian, and I lived in Marienfelde for only a month, until we could no longer endure the almost nightly air raids on the nearby Daimler factory. We then stayed briefly with Professor Jäschke, a Turcologist, who lived near Berlin, and after that we found two rooms in Zehlendorf-West, a suburb of Berlin. It turned out that we did not stay there very long either. It was soon clear that Nataliya could not stay in Berlin because of the daily air raids, and so I took her to Niederwürschnitz where Nicholas' school was located. Nataliya was given board and room in an inn. Nicholas visited his mother often, but his school was soon evacuated again to Bad Luhatschowitz (in Czech Lázně Luhačovice) in Moravia. I never quite understood why his school was transferred that far east because the Soviet army was just about to enter Hungary. In the summer of 1944, a few days after the Allied landings in Normandy on June 6, I visited Nicholas there. Bad Luhatschowitz was a beautiful spa in a breathtaking natural setting.

Valerian and I soon became homeless again when the house in Zehlendorf-West was destroyed in an air raid. Valerian moved to a place in Hohenneuendorf, near Berlin, from which he commuted daily to the university, and I moved into a room in the house of an elderly lady on Lagarde Strasse, not far from our previous apartment. The air raids became more dangerous with each passing week. In March 1944 I remember that during a visit with Valerian who was staying with some friends an air raid occurred. As we were sitting in the basement shelter, we suddenly felt a strong gust of wind and heard the whistling of a bomb followed by a terrible explosion. The bomb had struck the sidewalk next to our shelter. The ceiling came crashing down, mortar fell from the walls, and we heard the sound of

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water. The bomb had broken a water main, and the basement was flooding so rapidly that we had to scramble to get out into the open in time. Valerian and I spent the rest of that night with my friend, the geologist Professor A. F. Lebedev, whom I had first met in Kislovodsk and who now lived near me in Berlin. The next morning Valerian returned to Hohenneuendorf. I knew I also had to make plans to leave Berlin, especially as the East Asia Institute had just been evacuated to Marienbad (in Czech Mariánské Lázně) in the Sudeten. First, however, I managed, with the help of the Turcologist Annemarie von Gabain who had connections, to move Nataliya from Niederwürschnitz to the rest home Sophienhöhe in the Rhön Mountains of Thuringia where she was well taken care of. When I returned to Berlin, I could no longer sleep at nights because of constant air raids. I therefore often spent the nights with some Kalmuck friends in Frankfurt/Oder and returned in the morning to Berlin by train.

Speaking of the Kalmucks, there were thousands of them in Germany. The German army even included a Kalmuck cavalry corps of several thousand soldiers. I do not remember the name of their commander. The German liaison officer was Baron von Kutschenbach and the chief-of-staff was Mukoven (in Kalmuck Müköwün) Khaglyshev, who had been a student at the Leningrad Institute of Living Oriental Languages and later had worked in the publishing house and newspaper office in Elista. I think that I was right in regarding Khaglyshev as anti-Communist, but he was denounced as a Soviet agent and shot. Most of the cavalry corps perished in battles against the Soviets. When I arrived in Berlin in April 1943, I read in a newspaper about the Kalmuck nationality committee. I went to its headquarters and got acquainted with the president, Shamba N. Balinov, an intellectual who had left Russia soon after the revolution. The committee also included D. I. Remilev, the priest Mönkin, and the Kalmuck prince Tundutov. Balinov gave me the address of my uncle's widow (the wife of Vasilii Poppe), and I visited her. I had not seen her since 1917 when she still worked as a secretary in my uncle's law office. In 1943 her son was a soldier in the German army.

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After the East Asia Institute had moved to Marienbad, I remained a few extra weeks alone in Berlin. One day I visited my friend, Professor D. V. Grishin, who had been a professor of Russian literature at the Elista Pedagogical Institute in 1941-42 and who was now living in Berlin. Grishin told me that in August 1942, a month after I left Elista, the Germans had marched in. The deputy director of the institute who had also been professor of mathematics, was immediately elected city mayor. Another professor, who taught Russian, also became an official, and one of the women on the teaching staff, who was a writer, worked with her husband in the office of a newspaper published by the Germans. In other words, most of my former colleagues in Elista had changed over to the German side and later came to Germany. At Grishin's apartment I also met a Russian in civilian clothes whom Grishin introduced as General D. E. Zakutnyi. He had been captured by the Germans and was now working in the propaganda office of the army of General A. A. Vlasov whose name I had heard before.

Zakutnyi was an interesting conversationalist who told me how he had been taken prisoner in Kiev. He condemned the Soviets not only on political grounds—he was strongly anti-Communist—but also for their total mismanagement of military affairs and interference with the commanders' lines of command, thus bearing the responsibility for some defeats. Zakutnyi placed most of the blame on Stalin's obsolete strategy of holding onto territory at all costs. Stalin did not realize that World War II was the first major mobile war. There were no fixed and well-defined front lines, and the army's main task should have been to maintain its combat strength. Instead, Stalin ordered the Red Army to rigidly defend every square foot of territory, and he even coined a new term, *stoyat' na smert'* (stand to the death). His strategy caused enormous losses. Entire divisions, corps, and sometimes even armies were engulfed by rapidly advancing German troops and then were either annihilated or taken prisoner. It was not until Marshal Georgii K. Zhukov took over in December 1941 that Stalin's ruinous strategy was replaced by a highly flexible and ultimately successful mobile strategy.

The day after my visit with Grishin, on July 20, 1944, I left

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Berlin for Marienbad to rejoin the East Asia Institute. I got up early and went to the Anhalter railroad station. I soon noticed that something unusual must have happened because Gestapo officials frequently boarded our train and checked identity cards. At one station down the line a German entered my compartment and asked me whether I had heard about an attempt on Hitler's life. I had not heard nor read anything, so he told me what had happened.

I arrived in Marienbad rather late in the evening and went to the Hotel Westend where the research scholars and employees of the East Asia Institute were housed. There, much to my surprise, I also met Mrs. Augsburg, Mrs. Wagner and other wives of my former colleagues of the Wannsee Institute which was still in Plankenwart Castle in Austria. A few days later I went via Schweinfurt and Mellrichstadt to Sophienhöhe to take Nataliya to Marienbad where the two of us were to live by ourselves, as Valerian was studying in Berlin and Nicholas was still with his school in Bad Luhatschowitz. Both sons visited us in Marienbad. Nicholas came first. We celebrated his sixteenth birthday on August 25 and all three of us went to the theater. Later Valerian came from Berlin.

During that time I received a letter from my friend, the Japanese scholar Shichirō Murayama (Illus. 19), whom I met for the first time in early 1944 when I lived on Lagarde Strasse in Berlin. He was a doctor of philology who had studied Georgian, was greatly interested in Altaic languages, and had read some of my works. He invited me to his apartment near Halensee station in Berlin. Murayama lived there with the secretary of the Japanese embassy, Dr. Sugiura. Both men were very hospitable and I visited them several times, and twice we spent many hours together in an air-raid shelter. Donat knew Murayama but did not want him to know the real purpose of the East Asia Institute. I think that the Japanese knew perfectly well what kind of an institute it was. Anyway, several months later I received a letter from Murayama informing me that he urgently needed to see me. He arrived in Marienbad some time in late fall 1944. He presented me with a small bag of rice, probably about ten pounds, and some other foodstuffs as well as about 250 Swiss francs. Murayama surprised me by openly talking

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Illus. 19. Shichirō Murayama, March 1950

about the imminent collapse of Germany. He also told me that the Japanese embassy would soon be evacuated to Bad Gastein in Austria. In case the Americans would advance into Austria, Sugiura and Murayama planned to move closer to the Swiss border and, at the last moment, slip into Switzerland. I later learned that Sugiura had made it across the border, but Murayama stayed in Bad Gastein and was taken prisoner by the Americans.

Soon after Murayama left, Nicholas returned to Bad Luhatschowitz, but from there his entire school was sent to Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, to build ditches and other anti-tank

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defenses. The military situation in the east had steadily deteriorated, so when Nicholas visited us again after his stint in Bratislava, I did not let him go back to school. He was sixteen years old and could be easily drafted into some auxiliary anti-aircraft or bazooka unit. I had heard that many boys even younger than Nicholas had already been mobilized. He stayed with us, and we did not register him as a resident with the police, which was, of course, risky, but I was determined not to sacrifice him. After the war I learned that the only son of my former schoolmate and brother of my second wife, had been drafted at the age of fourteen and killed on the front, so it was very wise that I did not let Nicholas return to school.

We managed to save Nicholas from danger, but disaster struck in December when Valerian was drafted. This was a heavy blow to us and caused Nataliya and me much worry. Valerian was sent to Denmark for basic training and was then assigned to a battalion of railroad guards. Most of his buddies, being from Lorraine, hated Germany greatly and told Valerian repeatedly that the moment they arrived at the front they would cross over to the Allies. Valerian later told us about conditions in his battalion and the cruelty with which some soldiers were treated. For instance, their sergeant sought to "cure" a soldier with a weak bladder by wrapping him into a wet sheet and making him sleep in an unheated room. Of course the soldier became so ill that he had to be discharged from military service. At the end of March 1945 Valerian sent a letter informing us that his unit was about to be sent to the front. That was his last letter before leaving, and we were extremely worried because we did not know which front he was being sent to. Only after he returned from a prisoner-of-war camp did we learn the full story. His battalion had been assigned to a Panzergrenadier (tank-supported infantry) regiment destined for the eastern front, but the Soviet army had already cut the railroad lines to eastern Germany. Consequently, Valerian's unit was sent to the western front which at that time was somewhere near Kassel. No sooner had they disembarked from the troop train at Marienhöhe, near Kassel, than they heard artillery fire in the distance. Their commanding officer ordered them to cross a bridge, but at that very

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moment an American tank appeared on the bridge, fired a round which tore the officer to pieces, and the entire battalion surrendered. The unit's entire combat service lasted less than one hour.

Valerian and his unit were interned near Compiègne in France where they were put to work in the forests. They were fed poorly and were constantly hungry, but the black truck drivers who transported them between the camp and their work site were very friendly. Each time they passed a potato field the drivers would stop their trucks and tell the prisoners by sign language to collect some potatoes for themselves. The French women working in the fields were, of course, furious and shouted horrible insults at them, but the black soldiers found the scene most amusing. In October all the soldiers in Valerian's battalion were released from the prisoner-of-war camp. This was due to the simple fact that the soldiers from Lorraine were now considered French citizens and Valerian, whose home address was listed as Marienbad, was regarded as a Czech.

I had several experiences in Marienbad which made a lasting impression on me. I witnessed two air raids in two consecutive nights against the city of Dresden. Each time it took more than one hour for the air armadas to fly over Marienbad, and shortly thereafter we heard explosions and saw the sky turn dark red with fire, even though Dresden was about 150 kilometers away. A beautiful city was destroyed, and with it hundreds of thousands of people, mostly civilian refugees. On another occasion Nataliya and I were walking to a restaurant when we passed a huge crowd of people who turned out to be Jewish women being herded by SS guards from the concentration camp in Teresienstadt to some unknown destination. One of the guards yelled at me, "Honor the flag!" meaning that I should have saluted the swastika banner. "I'm very sorry," I said, "but as you can see, I'm escorting a handicapped person." It was a frightening and revolting sight. Nataliya almost fainted when she heard whips and saw a Jewish woman fall to the ground. These were some of the most terrible aspects of everyday life in Germany.

Seeing those hapless Jewish women driven by their SS torturers to their "final destination," I was wondering how far human

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bestiality could go. Then another thought crossed my mind. Perhaps many of these women could have escaped their martyrdom if Great Britain and the United States had permitted those shiploads of Jewish refugees to land before the war. Instead they had sent them back. I have never been able to understand this action, especially in view of hundreds of thousands of Cubans, Vietnamese and other people so warmheartedly welcomed to the United States in later times. Why the change? Were not the Jews in a greater predicament? Or did the British use the same excuse as when they had refused to let in the Tsar's family: "His Majesty's Government do not think this is the appropriate time for...."?

In Marienbad I also became acquainted with General Vlasov whose headquarters was in nearly Karlsbad, now called Karlovy Vary. He still kept up a civilian administration, intended to serve as the basis for a future non-Communist government of Russia, in a hotel on Adolf-Hitler Strasse in Marienbad. I was very skeptical of the Vlasov movement's chances of ever ruling Russia. Germany was near defeat, and I had learned from my colleagues in the Wannsee Institute and from Donat, the director of the East Asia Institute, about the decisions reached at the Yalta Conference. Although those decisions were being kept secret, German intelligence had obtained photographic copies of the Yalta agreement from the Albanian butler at the British embassy in Turkey. Therefore, although I became acquainted with some people in Vlasov's military and civilian headquarters, I stood aloof from and did not participate in any of their activities.

I did, however, have a rather long conversation with Vlasov, and he struck me as a man of action and a born leader. He was over six feet tall, very intelligent, and seemed very alert. He envisioned the Russia of the future as being a federation similar to Switzerland and the United States. He wished to realize the ideal Soviet Union envisaged by the Constitution in which each republic was guaranteed full cultural autonomy and the right of secession. Private property would be guaranteed to everyone. He hoped for full religious freedom and the separation of church and state. As Vlasov regarded himself only as a military leader and had no intention of becoming

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the political head of his visionary non-Communist Russia, he expected political power to be handed over to the deputies of a constituent assembly who would, in turn, choose the future government of the entire federation. Similar assemblies were to elect the governments of each constituent state. Vlasov was also prepared to right the wrongs inflicted on other nations, like Finland and Poland, by returning territories previously annexed by the Soviets. Such facilities as industrial plants, factories, dams, electric power stations, and railroads built by the Soviets were to remain government property, but those confiscated from private owners after the revolution were to be returned to their legal owners or to their heirs. Any improvements or additions to these facilities which the Soviets had made, however, were to remain state property, and the original owners were to be fairly compensated for pre-revolutionary buildings and machinery. "Of course," Vlasov said with an air of resignation, "the first thing we have to do is defeat the Soviet Union." He knew that the time for implementing his vision had long since passed. In addition to Vlasov I met his generals F. I. Trukhin, G. N. Zhilenkov, V. F. Mal'yshkin, and V. I. Mal'tsev. Zhilenkov was the chief of Vlasov's political department. As the former secretary of the Moscow city committee of the Communist party, he was the right man for the job. Trukhin was, if I am not mistaken, Vlasov's quartermaster, and Mal'tsev was the chief of the air force.

After Germany's surrender, the Allies extradited all of them to the Soviets. Churchill and particularly Eden played an ugly role when they forcibly extradited about 40,000 Cossacks, even though some of them had left the Soviet Union before 1939, and their extradition was contrary to the Yalta agreement. When they were received by the Soviets, all of these hapless victims were tried and executed, some by hanging and others by firing squad. Churchill and Eden were anxious to please the Soviets because they wanted British prisoners of war repatriated who were in camps in eastern Germany, then occupied by the Soviet army. The British also hoped to extract concessions from the Soviets. The Soviets, however, never made any concessions, and their stock reply to any request or suggestion was "Nyet."