CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE MANURE OF COMMUNISM

I WAS awakened by the deep bass voice of Aaronovich. He was talking to the doctor.

"But, doctor," he said, "be reasonable and do not exaggerate. You cannot call these men sick; the majority of them are just slackers, trying to be let off from work. You simply cannot treat them humanely. If you pay attention to every complaint you will find that pretty soon none of them will work at all. And I am required to fulfill a definite program. Judge for yourself, what else can I do? Come, let us better drown our sorrows and have a drink."

The doctor refused.

"As you like, doctor," Aaronovich continued. "But you are making a mistake by even giving them hope. Tomorrow I shall send them all out to work again, just the same. I am looking after number one first."

The tone of his voice was sharp and confident. There was no trace of the affable geniality he had shown that morning.

The doctor lost his temper. "Look here, Aaronovich," he said, "you are the commander of the base and you are responsible for the condition of the prisoners. One does not have to be a doctor in order to see that the majority of your prisoners are sick. The thing you are doing here is a crime. The penal camp regulations do not allow you to send sick men to work. I shall not permit it. Perhaps you do not understand the situation. Please realize that you are now in the very thick of a typhus epidemic. If you do

not take precautionary measures at once, all the prisoners will be sick by next spring. Can you understand it now?"

"This is all quite clear, my dear doctor," answered Aaronovich with a growing insolence in his voice, "but you forget the instructions of Commander Boksha: 'to fulfil the plan, no matter at what cost.' And I shall fulfil it. Tomorrow all those will go out to work whom I shall order to do so, and we are not going to consult you about it at all."

He slammed the door and left the room.

The doctor jumped up excitedly and started pacing the room and heaping abuse on Aaronovich. I was sleepy, but he sought my advice and could not calm down. Our conversation was interrupted by Zakhariantz, who came in from the outside, rubbing the frost from his glasses and squinting in the bright light of the room. He stepped up to the table.

"What is this I hear, doctor, about your little tiff with Aaronovich. This isn't right. He is a very valuable worker, strict but efficient. His work is progressing in very good shape. . . "

"At the expense of the dead," interjected the doctor.

"Oh, you see, that is not so important," continued Zakhariantz in the kindly tone of a man who has had too much to drink. "We do not build the revolution with kid gloves. There must be sacrifices and if so, rather let the enemies of the revolution be sacrificed. The export plan must be completed and it will be completed even if it costs the lives of thousands. Have you really not yet come to understand that we are not afraid of the dead? For us the herd of humanity is but the manure for fertilizing the fields of socialism."

Like all chekists, Zakhariantz liked to use high-sounding phrases. He started his speech in a kindly tone of voice but ended it with loud gusto.

"You had better not quarrel with us, doctor," he resumed. "You know our slogan – 'he who is not with us is against

us.' What is your term, for instance? Three years? There, you see how it is. A three years' sentence should be understood as a sort of admonition. If you do not reform, we shall add another five, and after that we might give you some three years of exile. Be level-headed and consider whether it pays to quarrel with us."

Snickering and rubbing his hands, he looked at the doctor and then at me. His manner of thinking and his cynicism were exactly the same as that of all his counterparts in the OGPU. He meaningly pulled in his lips, got up and walked out of the room with an unsteady gait. The doctor remained quiet for a while, thinking and holding his head in his hands.

"No, I shall not be a party to such baseness," he said at last. "What a scoundrel! You don't know this man. Have you ever heard the story of the prisoner Tretiskova? This Zakhariantz forced her to sleep with him and she was infected by him. I am now giving her treatment in Kotlas. It is such a pity. She is quite young and an irresponsible sort. She told me all about it and he probably suspects it. Well, there was a certain engineer N. at the Transfer Station, a very decent young man who had known her in Moscow before her arrest. She told him the whole story and he persuaded her to come to me for treatment. Then he wrote to Monakhov, the commander of the Transfer Station and sent him a complaint against Zakhariantz. Now the unfortunate N. is kept under lock and key on a charge of 'wrecking,' and a new sentence awaits him. That's what comes from interfering with the cheka. All for one and one for all. And still, in spite of it all, I shall have to quarrel with them."

The bookkeeper came in. "Another squad has just returned," he said to the doctor. "If you want to inspect them, go right now, before they go to sleep."

It was half past twelve. The bookkeeper lowered the light of the kerosene lamp and stretched out on his bunk near the stove without undressing. Then, in a low and pleasant tenor voice, he started to hum the aria of Lensky from the opera *Evgeniy Onegin*. When he came to the phrase "I learned that life is not a romance" he stopped, repeated it once again and then remained silent. Curses and angry ejaculations came from outside. Gradually the noise calmed down. The indefinite outline of the moon could be dimly seen on the frosted window-pane. I finished my last cigarette, rolled my coat close around me, and fell asleep.

THE annoying monotonous tolling of a bell aroused me early the next morning. The doctor got up from the floor with an effort. He was tired and his eyes were swollen.

We went out into the dark yard and rubbed our hands and faces with snow. Even the office staff had no place to wash. The protracted ringing of a bell signaled the prisoners to come out into the yard after their tea.

The doctor put on his smock with a resolute air. He had evidently decided to give battle to the enemy, though he fully realized the risk.

It was just beginning to dawn. The prisoners were already forming in squares. The disciplinary squad stood in full formation, surrounded by armed guards. Prisoners came from all sides and joined the other square. Young fellows in rags were being thrown out of the barracks nearest to us; they were yelling and cursing. From the open door of the barracks came bawling and weeping. Somebody was begging to be left behind just for one single day and crying for the doctor. Nearby was a heap of saws and axes. The women stood in a separate group. Everybody waited for the commanders.

Aaronovich appeared at his door-step, buttoning his fur jacket. He was followed by the chief of the guards Ser-

geyev and by the timekeeper of the base. Aaronovich walked to the center of the yard and cried : "Prisoners of the Pitsky Base, greetings !"

"Zdrah," came the reply.

The doctor stepped up to Aaronovich and handed him a list of names of the sick. He demanded in a firm voice that the men included in his list should not be sent out to work.

Aaronovich waved him aside. "What are you talking about, doctor ? They are not sick, they are slackers. The timekeeper inspected all those who reported that they are ill. I shall leave behind five of them, but all the rest must go."

He took the lists of prisoners from the timekeeper and commanded :

"Prisoners of the disciplinary squad, march to the seventh kilometer. Attention. Go !"

The head of the column started to go.

"Stop !" cried the doctor. "In accordance with the penal camp regulations I demand that the following prisoners be excused from duty," and he started calling out the names from his list.

Sergeyev stepped in. "Disciplinary squad, go !" he shouted. There was hesitancy in the ranks. "Squad commander, what's the delay ?" he continued.

The squad commander pulled out his gun : "Column, attention, go !" he commanded.

Followed by the murmuring of the prisoners of the other square the disciplinary squad marched past us in double file. At the head of the column marched a monk in his long cassock with a rope around the waist. There were many faces of educated men among these unfortunates. Some of the prisoners greeted the doctor as they passed by and exclaimed · "Bravo, doctor." Others just shrugged their shoulders as they looked at him, as much as to say that one good man cannot conquer an army of bandits. Two priests

walked at the end of the column. Some of the prisoners had swollen faces, others looked gray and haggard with hollow eyes and sharpened features. They wore every kind of clothing, but very few of them had warm overcoats or felt boots. Most of them were dressed in light overcoats and low shoes, and the feet of some were wrapped with rags held together by strings. Almost none of them had mittens. They walked by us in gruesome procession, their axes and saws glimmering in the semi-darkness of the early winter morning.

Aaronovich began calling out names of the next list. Men stepped out of the square and formed in double file. Among those called was a pitiable-looking peasant in his middle fifties who could hardly stand up, and two young half-dressed petty gangsters shivering in the cold.

"Comrade Aaronovich," said the doctor, pointing them out, "I cannot permit that these three prisoners go out."

"It cannot be done, doctor, they are just soldiering. I know them. They will get well in the forest. Go, hurry up, you three," Aaronovich bawled at the prisoners, handing the list to the foreman. Twenty men with a foreman and two armed guards marched out of the gates.

The call of names continued. Before the departure of each detachment the doctor vainly protested, but nobody paid any attention to him. Finally only some forty men and women were left.

"The rest of you," commanded Aaronovich, "go to the third kilometer. All women are to do housework, you divide the jobs yourself," he directed the timekeeper.

There was a commotion in the remaining group. The prisoners were all huddled together and were bending over someone. We came up to them. Lying on the snow in an unnatural position was a man of about forty dressed in a short jacket. His dirty knee stuck out sharply through a big hole in his trousers. The unhealthy skin of his worn

face contrasted unpleasantly with the pure, white snow. Saliva trickled down his thin whiskers. His lips were blue, his eyeballs were rolled back in agony.

"What's the matter here, another fit?" asked Aaronovich, stepping up closer.

The doctor got down on his knee, lifted the man's eyelid, quickly bared his chest and listened to the heartbeat. We waited in tense silence.

"It is all over, he is dead," said the doctor. "This is the kind of people you send to the forest!"

"This is not the first time a man died," frantically exclaimed one of the Kiev students, shaking his fists. "Scoundrels, cads, bandits that they are, they will kill us all! We are all doomed to die here, all of us. . ."

"Into the dungeon with him," roared Aaronovich, shouting him down. "I'll show you what it means to start a riot."

Several guards rushed for the student. Zakhariantz came running up to our group. "What's going on here?" he exclaimed.

"Comrade Zakhariantz," the doctor appealed, "I insist that all the prisoners mentioned in this list be returned from work at once. They are sick and were sent into the forest in spite of it. Here's an example for you, a man just died here, at the base, during the roll-call. . ."

"Don't butt into other people's business, doctor," cried Zakhariantz. "You were sent here to inspect and not to give orders. In the name of the commander of the camps, I order you to go to the office at once. Another word and I'll arrest you."

In exasperation the doctor pulled off his smock and quickly walked towards the office. Several guards lifted the dead body. The last column of prisoners left the yard. The women scattered to their various jobs.

"Let us go in and sign the report," Zakhariantz said to me.

We went into the office. The doctor sat at the window, leaning against a desk. His face had a petrified expression and he was gazing into space, not noticing anybody.

"If you please, doctor," said Zakhariantz, pulling out a sheet of paper and starting to read it. The drunken orgy of the night before had left its mark. His voice was hoarse, his eyes dull and his skin flabby: they all testified to the amount of alcohol consumed. The report described the excellent fulfillment of the plan by the Pitsky base, the satisfactory condition of the prisoners, gave reasons for the temporary increase of illness, reported a normal percentage of mortality, praised the condition of the horses, and gave credit for all this excellent record to the commander of the base, Aaronovich, and to his faithful assistant Sergeyev, commander of the armed guards.

"Sign this, doctor," said Zakhariantz.

"No, I shall not sign this report," calmly replied the doctor. "I shall write myself to the head of the sanitation department of the camp administration, and describe the deplorable condition of the prisoners at the base. I am entrusted with an inspection of the base and of the outposts, and I shall finish my job. Good-bye."

Not waiting for any reply the doctor went out of the office. Zakhariantz looked after him and frowned, then shrugged his shoulders, smiled and, mumbling something to himself, turned to me.

"You will sign here," he said.

I refused. No; I would not sign this report, I said. I did not examine the sick, I did not take part in the investigation of the fulfillment of the plan, all of this is outside of my jurisdiction, therefore I could not sign the report. I had no right to do it. I have made a report on the condition of accounts, here it is, and here is the copy of it. It can be attached to the general report.

My refusal was unexpected. Not one of the members of

our commission wished to sign the report. It was an unpleasant situation, to say the least.

"Look here," said Zakhariantz pointedly. "I advise you to sign the report. You were present last night when I talked with the doctor. Well then, please note that all I said then also refers to you. You may sign with reservations, but sign you must."

I knew their methods of coercion and thought of all the cross-examinations I had gone through at the Shpalernaya prison. He was not a bit different from those other inquisitors. They had probably all been taught at the same OGPU school. I reiterated my refusal to sign.

"Very well, then. We shall leave here in fifteen minutes. Please get ready," said Zakhariantz sourly.

In half an hour our horse was ready for us. Aaronovich saw us off to the sleigh and was telling Zakhariantz a funny story and slapping him on the back. They both laughed and looked at each other with cordial understanding. They had already become bosom friends. Sergeyev saluted us, the sentry covered up our feet, and we started off.

Two hours passed in silence, interrupted only by our driver's outcries and yapping, and now and then by the clang of horseshoes. The sleigh glided along lightly over the crunching snow. The dark snow-covered firs and graceful pines reminded me of our jolly picnics in Finland, with a gay crowd, tasty luncheon, and lively little Swedish horses. How long ago it all seemed ! And what a contrast now, returning to the penal camp, a prisoner convicted of violating the fifty-ninth regulation of the criminal code, travelling in the company of a vulgar blackguard who was gradually sobering up and whose long, red nose was sticking out of the high overcoat collar and emitting a hissing noise.

I could not understand the purpose of our investigation. If it was intended to obtain the signatures of two prisoners to a mock report, they had made a bad choice. It was easy

to find any number of accommodating prisoners without leaving the Transfer Station. The administration was well informed through the report of Dr. Movsh of the actual state of affairs at the Pitsky base. So what was the need of an "investigation" ? I pondered on this problem without finding an answer. At that time I did not know that Dr. Movsh's report had never reached the administration and that the commission was appointed in compliance with a demand from Moscow where a few finicky communists had shown an undue interest in conditions prevailing at the penal camps of the OGPU.

"You are sentenced to four years, are you not ?" suddenly inquired Zakhariantz. I confirmed this.

"There, you see how imprudent you are. You are barely through with half your term and already you do not hesitate to make enemies. Your affair with Ulanovsky, for instance, what good did it do you ? You should make every effort to finish your term as soon as possible, even to have it shortened, and get back home. Instead of throwing monkey-wrenches into our machinery, you ought to cultivate friendship with us chekists. Otherwise you will gain nothing except a longer term. Take the doctor, for example. After today's incident we shall surely send him somewhere to the farthest corners of the North, to Ukhta, or still farther, and let him play cricket there with the polar bears. But why should you do such a thing ? Why play with fire ? Haven't you enough of four years ? Why don't you wish to sign the report ?"

I understood what he was driving at. He continued after a short pause :

"Isn't it immaterial to you how many people fold up as long as you remain well yourself ? There is no room for sentimentality here. This is no democracy. It is the OGPU penal camp. If you do not sit on others, you will be sat on and crushed, and will fold up like a worm. Does

it pay? Consider it a bit: is it better to work in the EKO office or in the forest? And you are exposing yourself to the risk of being transferred to the Pitsky base or to another camp fully as vile as that. Will you never understand that we are not to be trifled with? Use your brains a little before it is too late. You seem to have a good head on your shoulders; it was surely not put there merely to wear a hat."

After this long oration, he pulled out a bottle of diluted alcohol from his brief-case, took a gulp and followed it up with a handful of snow. Evidently the hangover from last night was still with him. Like a true drunkard, he tried to get rid of it in suitable company.

"Here, take it," he said, passing the bottle. "Have a drink with me."

"With pleasure," I said, surreptitiously rinsing the throat of the bottle with alcohol and taking a couple of swallows. The solution was very strong and burned the palate.

"Don't be backward, we'll get some more of it," said Zakhariantz, happy to have found a boon companion.

He was content, the ice was broken and opened the way to closer relationship. He lifted the bottle to his mouth again and again and followed it up with chunks of snow which he picked up from the road. A typical drunkard. Soon he was thoroughly intoxicated and his manner became familiar.

"It is too bad that you did not have supper with us last night," he said. "This Aaronovich is a capital fellow and his Lizzie is a ducky. You could have had a bit of it too. Jealousy is a silly bourgeois fad. We communists have no such prejudices. Take Aaronovich, for instance. He shared with me what he had like a good comrade. One of your kind would have made a terrible row about a woman. And what is there to a woman? Is she worth fighting about? There is no difference between them, whether they are bourgeois or communist, they have just one thing to

offer. Say, are you married?" he asked the coachman, nudging him in the back.

"Yes, citizen commander," answered the driver.

"Well, I suppose that your wife has another fellow around when you're away, hasn't she?" The cad winked at me as he spoke, for now he thought that I was in full sympathy with him.

"I don't know, citizen commander," said the driver with a slight tremor in his voice. He raised his whip and hit the horse with all his might. "Get up, you lazy hag!" he muttered.

"It hit the mark all right," whispered Zakhariantz into my ear and roared with laughter.

We again stopped at our mid-way peasant cottage. Zakhariantz had finished his alcohol and asked for vodka, but neither our host nor the neighbors had any. Perhaps they were afraid of being framed by the OGPU official and did not dare produce it from their hiding-places. His desires thwarted, my drunken companion angrily laid himself down on a bench and in another minute was snoring lustily.

Zakhariantz was a chekist of the standard type. He was half-educated, having gathered most of his knowledge from practical experience in the employ of the OGPU. His reasoning ran strictly along Bolshevist lines. He was cynical but stupid, and was dangerous chiefly because of his unprincipled villainy and his utter lack of moral restraint. He was probably about thirty-five years old. His coarse features indicated a low origin. A drunkard and a libertine, he was cunningly making his career along the line of least resistance, in the service of the OGPU. There are hundreds of OGPU henchmen just like him. They are all made of the same material, speak the same stupidly stereotyped language, and their souls are as dirty as their unwashed hands.

Two hours later our coachman came in to report that the

horse had rested sufficiently and that we could continue our journey. The alcohol still affected my companion; he was morose and uncommunicative. We did not talk any more and he slept most of the way to Solvychegodsk.

This time we were met by Orlov himself, the commander of the Uftug timber-works. He was a stocky man about forty years old with a hard, pale face and a black Charlie Chaplin moustache. He was great friends with Zakhariantz, treated him with coarse familiarity, and immediately took him into his house to have dinner. On parting with me, Zakhariantz said that we would have another little talk later on and that in the morning we would start back for Kotlas.

Early next morning I went out to take a look at the historic churches, which were really of rare beauty. When I came back I was told that Zakhariantz and Orlov were having breakfast and did not wish to be disturbed. This suited me splendidly. I telephoned to Kotlas and was instructed to return at once. My typewriter had been repaired and was waiting for me.

Upon arrival I handed my report to Bukhaltzev, who shoved it into his desk without reading, and said:

"Thanks. I know all about it. And now will you please get back to work and do something useful."

And in a few minutes I was again drumming on my typewriter.

LIFE went on as before. The prisoner-clerks worked from morning till night; the bosses got drunk; the local peasants were intimidated into teamster duty; the prisoner forest-workers suffered terrible privations, fell sick and died. Upon my return, I learned of the death of the seminarist Seryozha, whom Monakhov had ordered to stand naked in the cold.

The Transfer Station also remained unchanged. New arrivals came in, were drilled, taught submission, and sent to

the forest to take the place of those who had "gone west."

The warehouses were busy with the delivery of garlic to the various districts. It had been sent from Moscow on the theory that it would quickly stop the ravages of scurvy and would bring back to the ranks the many incapacitated forest-workers. My friend Dr. S., who had returned to the Transfer Station, made fun of this panacea and was in disfavor with Monakhov, his former protector. He was now expecting from day to day to be deported in accordance with the vengeful threats of Zakhariantz.

About two weeks after my return from the inspection trip the storm broke over my head. It was not quite unexpected, for I remembered Zakhariantz' hints and threats with reference to my not signing the report. Still I had hoped that he might have forgotten about it under the influence of liquor. Unfortunately this was not the case.

The first stroke was an order from the secret intelligence department forbidding me to correspond with my wife, who was living abroad.

This did not particularly affect me, as I was already sending and receiving letters with the aid of my town friends, thus avoiding the censor. Then came a special order, forbidding me alone of all the clerks ever to leave the office or to walk about the town. In another week this order was followed by another, instructing that I be transferred to the barracks from where I should daily walk to the office under guard. It was quite evident now that Zakhariantz had not forgotten me. Bukhaltzev refused to comply with the last request and in another week it was followed by a specific secret command for me to report at the Transfer Station in twenty-four hours.

All my plans for escape crumbled. I was faced with entirely different prospects: the horrible food of the Transfer Station, sleep on the barrack floor, hard labor in the forest. It all came when my arrangements for escape had

been completed, and I was only waiting for the necessary money. But I had no choice.

There were few changes at the Transfer Station. The barracks and tents were as overcrowded as before, only instead of gangsters they housed Turcoman and Usbek beys deported from Turkestan and Bokhara.

These Mohammedans were mostly dignified, bearded men, with calm proud faces, dressed in long padded robes of bright striped silk. They suffered dreadfully from the unaccustomed climate. At that particular time it had grown especially cold. The temperature varied between thirty-one and fifty-seven below zero.

They were pitiful to look at when they ran across the yard holding their little flasks with cleansing liquid ordained by the Koran, or to see them in the evening when they came back from work, blue and congealed. Every day some of the "Turks," as they were called, were taken to the hospital. They could not stand the cold and came down with pleurisy and pneumonia. Those few who recovered at the hospital were sent back to work in the forest and sooner or later "folded up." Later, when I was working in the central office of the camp administration, I saw the statistics of the sanitation department. They showed that seventy-six per-cent of the "Turks" had perished. This figure was reported to Moscow and after 1930 no more Turcomans were sent to the North ; this had proved inexpedient.

The "Turks" did not understand Russian and were utterly bewildered by the shouting of the raging squad commanders. They did not implicitly obey the hateful outcries of the guards such as "Get going !" or "Like a flash !" and the guards then used their clubs.

Some of them took the beating with philosophic submission, others roared like lions and attacked the guards with clenched fists. The latter were undressed and drenched

with water, and then forced to stand out in the cold, as decreed by Monakhov.

Several days after my return to the Transfer Station the life of the "Turks" changed for the better, thanks to Prince Karamanov from the Crimea, a fresh arrival in their midst. He was tall and handsome, with a huge aquiline nose and a pointed grayish beard. He possessed great suavity of manner and, speaking both languages, arranged to have all orders to the "Turks" given through him. Thus he became their leader and saved them many painful misunderstandings with the Russian commanders.

The last case of "torture by freezing" which I witnessed had for its victim a young gangster, Borisov, who was caught exacting bribes of ten kopecks for each tea-pot of boiling water which he was entrusted to dispense. The cunning lad stood there several minutes and then fell down in a faked swoon. He was kicked and hit with butts of rifles, but was consistent and showed no signs of life. They picked him up and carried him to the doctor, who poured some alcohol down his throat.

He survived and a week later was up and about. He became my "caddy" and carried my belongings during our march to Ust-Sysolsk, where I was next ordered to proceed.

One of my friends from the Lefortovsky prison had become head-accountant at the Transfer Station. Thanks to his intervention I was spared hard labor and was transferred to his office. In order to accomplish this he had devised a very urgent job which had to be completed and sent to Moscow without delay, and I was the only prisoner who could be entrusted with it. Like a clever fellow, he had this job all completed and in readiness for some time, but was holding it for emergencies. Under this pretext he and I spent two weeks in comparative idleness. My friend also procured for me a place on the sleeping-shelves in the office

workers' barracks, by declaring that my work was so difficult that it required a well-rested mental condition and therefore a chance to sleep well at night. In this manner I was protected by Monakhov's special orders from the persecutions of Zakhariantz.

Poor Dr. S. fared differently. As soon as Zakhariantz heard that there was another physician among the newly-arrived prisoners, he had Dr. S. relieved from duty, in spite of the acute need of medical help at the camps. Dr. S. was placed among the common prisoners in the awful third squadron and was included in the list of those to be deported to Ukhta. This meant a march of about six hundred and fifty kilometers in February, when it is particularly cold in the North country. The doctor had no warm overcoat, but Prince Karamanov, who was devoted to him, procured for him a padded silk robe from one of his countrymen. The stripes in the silk were particularly bright and the doctor looked magnificent as he started out on his march dressed in the long exotic robe, high boots and a felt hat.

A year later I met the doctor again at Ukhta and he told me how all during the march he was the object of curiosity and admiration in all the villages they passed. The peasant women ran out to see the "Turk," pitied him and shoved potato-cakes into his hands.

I remained at the Transfer Station for two weeks. Then I was included in the list of prisoners detached for railway construction duty at a distant point. Our detachment contained two hundred and ninety-five prisoners and we were to march to our destination escorted by fifteen armed guards.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE MARCH OF THE DAMNED

We were driven out into the yard in the early morning and kept there in formation until two P. M., in preparation for a march to Work Post No. 6. We were chilled to the bone. The criminals cursed and ran into the barracks to get warm whenever the guards relaxed their vigilance. About eight roll-calls were made. Each time one or more were missing and the camp militia had to go and find them. In warmer climes the disorderliness of the procedure might have been quite amusing, but here the cold and wind killed the last remnants of our sense of humor. The fine falling snow was slowly covering us.

Dr. I., a Leningrad dentist, who had just arrived at the Transfer Station and did not know its methods, stood there in his fur coat and kangaroo cap, and gazed in amazement at the jumble before him.

More than half the departing prisoners had no winter clothes. Lyskin, the manager of the commissariat department, came up to us on several occasions and was each time besieged by requests for warm clothing. He pacified us with the promise that "everything will be given you at Penug. Calm down, you will not freeze in the car."

Fortunately more teamsters were driving their empty sleighs back to town and we were allowed to put our belongings in them. But even here the lack of confidence in the OGPU showed itself. Many of the prisoners preferred to carry their belongings themselves.

We quickly covered the five kilometers to town. The