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Ukraine Diary

BY ADAM SMITH ALBION

Ukraine

June 1995

Mr Peter Bird Martin
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Dear Peter,

I plan to write a diary of my journey through Ukraine down the Dnieper River, with a view to presenting it as a newsletter. I will riverboat-hop from Kiev to Kherson, where the Dnieper meets the Black Sea. I expect this trip of about 800 km to take a fortnight. The journal format is a risk, not least because I must rely on the sympathy of any putative reader more than usual. Then there is the unpredictability of the undertaking — a record of it may turn out to be incoherent and shapeless, or, worse, inconsequential.

Since I have always considered diaries, written with one eye on posterity, to be a distasteful enterprise, it is ironic that I got the idea of writing a "public" journal myself from two of the most notorious of the genre. Second-hand book-shopping around Beyoglu in Istanbul, I came across, of all things, Witold Gombrowicz's and Anais Nin's multi-volume *Diaries*, shed by some overloaded traveler. Neither was what I had expected. Both authors would be gratified to hear I was shocked. But the diaries were shocking in different ways. One shocked me with its honesty. The other shocked me with its patent dishonesty, despite the author's making a show of telling the whole truth and nothing but. I leave it to the reader's imagination which diary was which.

The goal here will be to steer between Scylla and Charybdis — keep it true but without administering the shocks. The writing is a failure if by the end I have produced a diary that isn't really a diary of what I did and thought. So I enjoin myself to write with as little art (in the sense of *artifice*) as possible and to transcribe faithfully in a month's time with minimal "touchings-up."

... As I read this over, I hasten to add that, although I implicate Gombrowicz and Nin as the sources of inspiration for this journal, it is not my *intention* to describe my erotic adventures in Ukraine.

Adam Albion is an Institute Fellow writing about nations bordering on the Black Sea and in Turkic-speaking regions of the former Soviet Union.

KIEV

[June 7]

Kiev airport was surprisingly bright and efficient. Passport control was swift. The advertisements promised a capitalist playground of casinos, fancy-looking restaurants and cellular telephones for businesspeople to rent by the day. But outside the sliding doors the real Ukraine began. The sun was strong and I got impatient when the bus into town did not arrive for an hour. Here was a taste of the Ukraine I know — a basket-case economy offering Soviet/sub-standard services. But my spirits revived on the bus. We drove through miles of silver beech forest separating the airport from the city outskirts. Then I was cheered to find myself in the Slavic world again — indeed, the Slavic heartland itself. I haven't set foot in Ukraine since 1992, and that was in the western *oblast* — Uzhgorod and L'vov. I have wanted to visit central/south Ukraine (once an Ottoman vassal state) for a long time. The last time I was in Kiev, I was 14 years old! With a fresh perspective thanks to the last year, now I want to conceptualize Ukraine in relation to Turkey, its neighbor across the Black Sea. History and geography clearly point to the Dnieper as the place to start... Then the bus crossed the Dnieper, a wide, grey, lazy river with sausage-shaped islands. Its banks are remarkably wooded and untouched, even in the center of Kiev, buffered from the city by a wide swath of green. We climbed the high west bank studded with the golden domes of Pecherskaya Lavra and I got off near the university.

The Dnieper becomes this giant waterway when it debouches into the Kiev Reservoir about 90 km north of the city, but it is actually 1,400 miles [2,270 km] long and rises in Russia between Moscow and Smolensk. It was the route to the Black Sea and the Bosphorus for all sorts of Scandinavians and Slavs: the Norsepeople, the Varangians coming from Lake Ladoga and Novgorod to see Micklegard, the Kievan Rus', the Muscovites and the whole host that came to be called Russians, sailing down the Straits into Tsargrad, which they coveted from the days of Igor and Oleg, to trade furs, wax, honey, gold and themselves — that is to say, Slavs/slaves. It is exciting to be following in their wake!

Off the bus, I walked the main street, Chreshchatik, to Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti — the Turkish word *meydan*!) and changed money. The best

rates were offered, not at banks or exchange points, of which there are innumerable many, but out of white Ford or Isuzu vans parked on corners. Ukraine's own currency-play money is *karbovanets* coupons (presently at 152,000 = \$1 in Kiev, probably cheaper in the provinces) but I notice people regularly call them roubles, still the generic word for money. I lunched off *pel'meni*, meat and cabbage macaroni in sour cream, and washed it down with *kompot*, water flavored with crushed strawberries, at a stand-up buffet. Bought a map of the city.

I think Kiev is grand. It was "modernized" in the Fifties and will not be to everyone's taste. Part of the remodeling was made faithfully to the prevailing Soviet notions of gigantism. For instance, there is a mighty bend at the end of Chreshchatik Boulevard, not unlike Regent Street in London. But if Nash's architecture is rather stately and dignified, here the effect is like a leviathan sweeping its tail-flukes around. Hotel Moscow

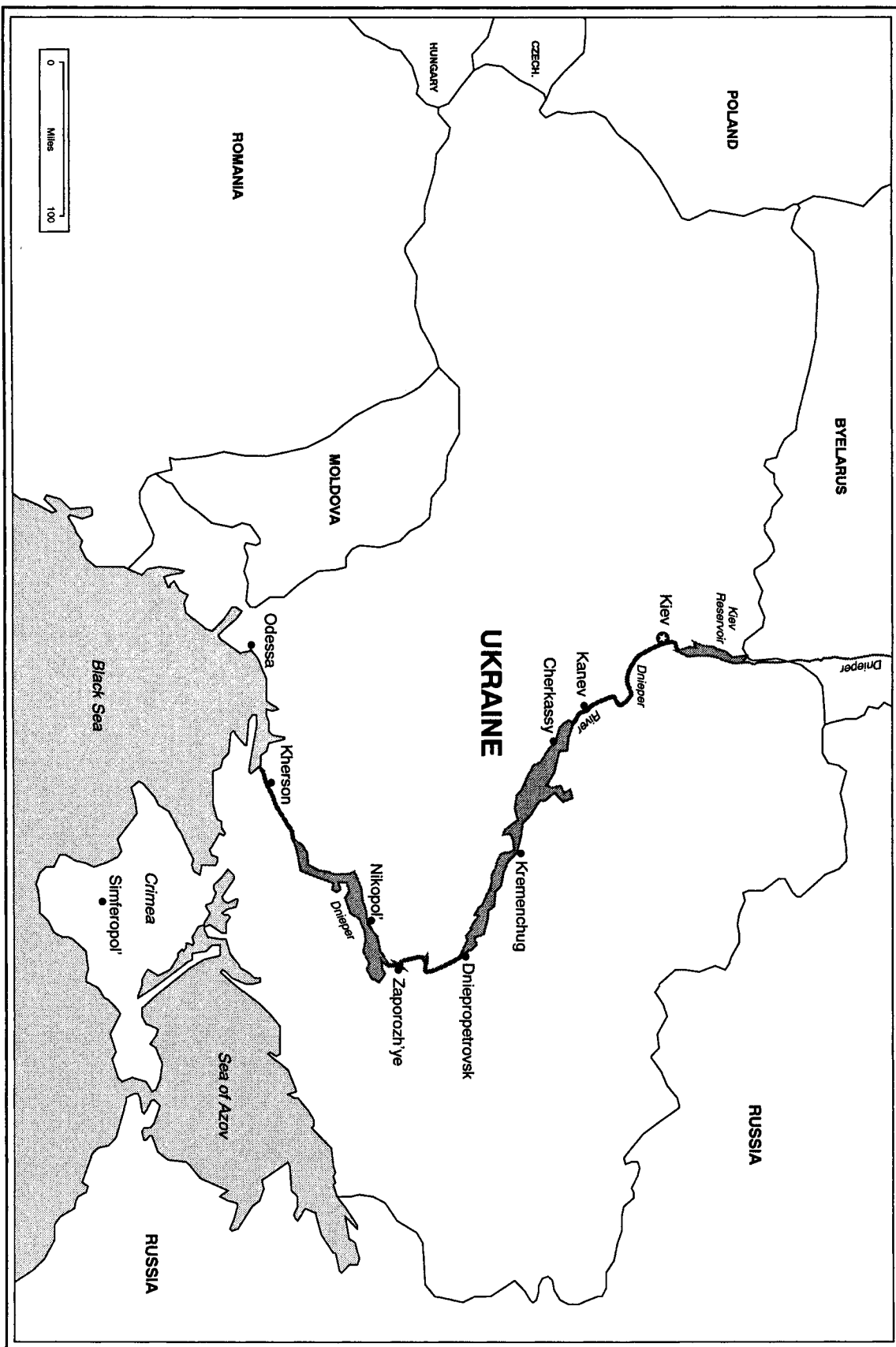
and Hotel Druzhba are typical products of Stalinist architecture, Gothic skyscrapers, of which there are seven famous exemplars in Moscow that served as models to be reproduced in all the Soviet capitals. Now I am vividly aware that when I was last in Moscow, in 1987, everybody *loathed* these buildings. They represented

the Soviet state: towering, impersonal, implacable, unshakeable. How then can I confess that their superhuman, near grotesque power — like some of Speer's blueprints for post-war Berlin — make me giddy with excitement to look at them? I remember, too, my first look at Ceausescu's Palace and triumphal roadway — built at the price of so much pain, and the demolition of a quarter of Bucharest — and thinking to myself, with horror, "It's a success — it's breathtaking. My God, do I have no moral sense? But I can't deny it — it's magnificent." Thus buildings remain, and the human passions that once swirled around them fade away. Who minds today that the pyramids were built by slaves? Or if that example is too remote, how about Jefferson's house in Monticello?

Once I felt oriented, I began to look for a place to stay.

Accommodation is going to be a problem in Ukraine. I had not anticipated the multi-tier pricing system operating in all the hotels I stepped into. Rooms costing between \$5 and \$15 for Ukrainians are opportunistically priced as high as \$130 for a Westerner. CIS citi-

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zens are quoted a median price. It is the same even at miserable pensions where I wouldn't pay above \$15 if they were in Paris or Rome. Receptionists shrugged, fiddled papers, pretended they didn't see me. It isn't their responsibility: prices are set by the Ministry of Tourism. In a word, soak the rich. At the very least, soak the West. I rode the metro across the Dnieper (the line is raised over the river) past the Hydropark but found the hotel situation to be the same in the suburbs (cheapest was Hotel Bratislava at Darnitsya, \$55).

To beat the system, my weapons will have to be charm, cajolement, creativity, shows of incomprehension, heart-rending appeals to justice, common humanity, and the end of the Cold War, attempts to conceal my identity, bribery, and stamina.

A mixture of these paid off at the Druzhba Pension at Libids'ka, where I was conceded the last bed in a room for three for \$24, but for one night only.

[June 8]

This morning I was ejected, not nicely. But I took it with equanimity, even felt jolly, and had a good appetite for a hot-dog wrapped in fried dough for breakfast, chased down with a bowl of Ukrainian *borsho*.

"Then something about the way Vadim looked at me made me correct myself, and I said, 'No, one. If I want to stay on, I'll call.'"

The Golden Gates of Kiev, preserved intact from the early medieval walls and topped by a miniature church, exercised my imagination powerfully. Perhaps that is why I was so affected to notice, on closer inspection, that modern Kiev is, if not exactly shabby, at least frayed around the edges. Busses and trams are completely unreliable, although I grant the metro works well. The shops are poor, and dark. They conserve electricity by not turning on the lights. The Central Department Store, TsUM, must be unchanged since Soviet times, selling shapeless cotton print dresses, plastic shoes, cheap imitations of Tupperware and ancient electronics.

In Kontraktova Square, quite far from the center, I came across a shop marginally brighter and cleaner than the others, calling itself Supermarcato Italiano. The manager must have thought it was the Harrod's of Ukraine because I was told to leave my bag at the door. Not likely!

Small but ubiquitous "improvisations" are signs that a city is coming apart. Kiev has this situation in spades. The door to the luxurious Ukraine Hotel was propped

open, not with a door-jam, but with an ashtray. When I asked for some soda-water at a stand, it was served in a half-liter jam jar. The post-office had run out of pre-stamped airmail envelopes, so offered me extra stamps to affix to domestic envelopes. Everyone is making do with patches and sticky tape. It is apparent from the crumbling buildings that the municipal government has no money. Also, public waste receptacles around town are all different, another form of improvisation. Even sewer lids are all haphazardly mixed up. Almost any hunk of metal can function as a sewer lid in Kiev. I believe this is worth mentioning, because I have never forgotten that in Milan the town seal is stamped on every sewer lid as a symbol of civic pride. Does New York City have homogeneous sewer lids?

At lunch time I met Mr. Popescu, head of the minorities commission, at the Parliament as arranged. He was only about 30! We talked about the latest minorities legislation, and he gave me a few pointers about the Crimean Tatars. He's from Chernovtsy in Bukovina: we spoke Romanian.

Then to search for a room. After some hunting I hit on *Express*, a newspaper wholly given over to "I Buy/I Sell/I Rent/I Seek" advertisements. Telephone listings under the sub-heading *Posutochno* ["By the day"] looked promising. I found a public telephone, but was baffled how to use it or where to buy tokens. And what did one push for a dial tone? As I stood there, the babushka behind me lost patience and elbowed me out of the cabin, shouting "If you're not going to use it but just look at it...", and started dialing. Thus I learnt the secret: local calls in Kiev are free. Public telephones used to take Soviet (*kopek*) coins, but were never converted when Ukrainian introduced coupons and so since 1992 have been without charge.

I reached an agency that gave me an address on Andreushchenka near the train station. I arrived at 2:45PM. Enclosed by a gate, guarded by a soldier, were two hideous pre-fab apartment blocks, the infamous Soviet "panel buildings." I had to climb to the eighth floor. The door was opened by a uniformed officer, a Russian aviation captain, with pale blue Yuri Gagarin eyes. He was about 40; his name was Vadim Igorievich. Behind him, wearing a baseball cap, stood Misha, about 25, the agency representative. I had understood on the telephone that I would be renting a room; instead, the whole apartment, sparsely but adequately furnished, was bring offered to me for \$20/day. I accepted. How

many days would I want it? I said two. Then something about the way Vadim looked at me made me correct myself, and I said, "No, one. If I want to stay on, I'll call." Misha said nothing. Vadim left me his telephone number. To pay, I produced two \$10 bills, and to my surprise they each took one. Vadim noted my passport details, and they retired.

I was sure Vadim wanted to communicate with me privately, so on a hunch I waited for 15 minutes. There was a knock on the door, and Vadim appeared. "Good," he said. "You're still here. I wanted to make you a proposal. If you want to stay here a second night, fine. But let's simply not tell the agency. They take too much: 50%! That's robbery. So what do you say, let's split the difference. You give me \$15, and no middlemen. That way it's better for me, and cheaper for you." I agreed to this little conspiracy. In fact, I enjoyed the intrigue. He pocketed the extra \$5 with visible satisfaction.

He confirmed my suspicions that these apartments were military housing. "Block A is air, B is ground," he said. The flat, consisting of a sitting-room, kitchen, bathroom-toilet and small hallway, measured no more than 20x15 feet in *toto*, not including a tiny balcony, and was intended for a family of three. "I consider myself lucky to be here," he said. "If I had belonged to the Northern Group of Forces [Soviet troops stationed in Germany], I'd be living today in a tent near Pskov."

The fact that this officer had an extra apartment, belonging to the state, to dispose of and earn some hard currency from, when there are soldiers living in tents near Pskov, hints at the institutionalized corruption among post-Soviet armed forces.

[June 9]

A scorching, sunny day. I thought I might look up ex-colleagues at the Center for International Security Studies, but the white poplars and chestnut trees on the avenues and the flowers in Shevchenko Park whispered in chorus, "Don't do it." On a bench I read through about a pound of Ukrainian and Russian newspapers to get a sampling of their quality. Some were excellent (the weekly, 4-section *Zerkalo nedeli* is better than anything Turkey has to offer, or the UK for that matter — I might subscribe). But as the newsagent told me, the prices of paper and print fluctuate unpre-

dictably, the supply of paper from the factories is irregular, distribution is uncertain. As a result, dailies don't get published daily, or don't arrive daily, publishers sometimes miss out numbers, or put out two days at a time to catch up. This would explain why the selection of newspapers that I had been handed was spread across a whole week, and why, instead of stating their price at the top, they all read *Tsena dogorovnaya/svobodnaya*, "Price by arrangement."

After an hour under the trees my allergies began to punish me, and I was forced to run to a pharmacy for pills and eyedrops.

I enjoyed Kiev's religious treasures today. I've been craving a good walk, and criss-crossed the town all day on foot until I was dropping with fatigue: St Sophia, St Volodimir, and the complex of painted churches within the walls of the Pecherskaya Lavra. I climbed the hill to St Andrew's but it was closed. In the

Lavra was an exhibit of "miniatures" by Syadistii. To even see his creations required microscopes. I am not sure why his work should be housed in a monastery. Perhaps his astonishingly tedious work is considered an act of worship? But what sort of man would spend his days painting a portrait on a grain of rice, or hollowing out

a hair follicle to put a tiny rose inside? Someone a little crazy. Maybe he should change his name to Myasochistii? He has set a chessboard on the end of a pin. Is there a religious significance to that?

I strolled along the Dnieper until the day had cooled off and went book-shopping between Bessarabs'ka and Tolstoy Squares. I was looking for a replacement for *Yasar Kemal Kendini Anlatiyor* (Istanbul, 1993), which I finally finished last night. It is a book of questions and answers between Alain Bosquet and Yasar Kemal: in fact, when one comes to the end, one has read Kemal's autobiography. I might have appreciated it more if I knew his novels better. My money for this year's Nobel Prize for Literature is on the Lebanese poet "Adonis," but if the Turkish courts are so pig-stupid as to imprison Kemal for "separatist thought-crime," as they are threatening to do, I'll wager Stockholm won't be able to resist the opportunity to stick a fat finger in Turkey's eye...

...Lord preserve us, is this what all the commemoration of World War II has wrought? Fifty years after the end of the Great Patriotic War, every bookstore and

street-seller is hawking *Mein Kampf* and Goebbel's diaries amidst the translations of US pulp fiction. Who would want to plow through them? It would be ironic if this year's back-to-back memorials of the war have stirred more interest in the Nazis than in the defeat of the Nazis. And I don't see anyone reading Marshall Zhukov's memoirs. Then I caught sight of a young woman, about 30, browsing *Mein Kampf* near a cash register. I pounced on her. What ever made her to want to read it? "Hitler was evil, but he was a genius. An evil genius. I want to know what he had to say," she said simply.

Well, I grant that "evil" is interesting. God the Father in *Paradise Lost* is bland and a bore, compared to Satan. Yes, attraction to "evil" is even healthy, to a degree. But without any Wiesels or Wiesenthals active in the ex-Soviet Union, and precious little sympathy for Jewry (or Gypsies) anywhere in the Slavic world, I imagine it is only a question of another century or so before the details about the Nazis get muddled and Hitler is regarded in much the same way that Raskol'nikov thinks of Napoleon, as a sort of fascinating amoralist. (I note that none of the statues of Lenin in Kiev have been touched, they are all carefully tended, and Vladimir Ilyich is well on his way to being remembered as a great man.) Mark my words, the next step in the forgetting (not the remembering at all) of WWII will be a translation into Ukrainian of A.J.P. Taylor, *The Second World War*.

I bought *Sto sochinenii* (Moscow, 1995), a hundred little essays on Russian/Soviet arts and culture for university students.

In the evening I was washing my clothes in the basin in Vadim's apartment when there was a knock at the door. I was thrown off-balance to see the agent from two days ago, Misha. He looked at me cockily. "I thought so," he said. I ushered him in. I hid my confusion and acted as calmly as possible, in fact as if I had been expecting to see him. This behavior threw him off-balance. I have to say, I was extremely curious to see how the scene would play out. He came to the point. He had had a suspicion I might try to cheat the agency. He wanted hush-money not to cause trouble by telling. Exquisite! I nearly burst out laughing, but I managed to keep countenance. I offered a reasonable compromise. I admitted that, if the agency had its commission, I would be out \$10. But none of this would go

to Misha, who is salaried. So I took a leaf out of Vadim's book: I suggested we split the difference. I produced a \$5 bill. He pocketed it with dignity and left, shaking my hand. He was happy with his \$5, Vadim was happy with his \$15. Only I was back where I started, paying \$20 for the apartment.

KANEV

[June 10]

I have written the foregoing sitting on the Meteor, a low, sleek white hydrofoil with seats for 200. I am astounded such transportation exists on the Dnieper. The Varangians did not travel in such style. It is half full. The woman beside me heard me sneeze (hay fever) and turned her back on me to protect her child from any noxious vapors I might emit. So I am watching the river go by, so wide that at times I lose sight of the banks on either side. It is more like sailing the Great Lakes than shooting down a river. This is an express service from Kiev to Kanév, taking three and a half hours...

Arrived in Kanév at 11:30am. It is no more than a large village. One small department store off a dirty, hot central square. Four long wooden tables,

piled with bonbon-sized strawberries and some baskets of sesame seeds, make up the market. But in the corner was a woman working over a grill, cooking — shish kebabs! I fell on them with joy, even though they were mainly fat, and had licked the plate clean by the time the bus came.

We rode for about 20 minutes, past children splashing along the river bank on the left, and clumps of birch and acacias on the right, until we reached the end of the line. Everyone but me took their towels and bathing suits and headed left towards their favorite watering-holes. I turned right and began to climb the hill to see Taras Shevchenko's tomb and museum.

I had to climb 357 steps in the blazing heat to reach the museum at the top, arriving more dead than alive. I consider this an unnecessary act of devotion, even to Ukraine's greatest poet and writer. On the other hand, it is an appropriate form of penance, given that I have barely heard of him! But then, I had heard of so few of the Ukrainian national figures commemorated in street names in Kiev. I confronted this fact the moment the bus from the airport set me down (on Shevchenko

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been expecting to see him."

Boulevard!) in front of the plaque of Pavlo Chubinskii (1839-1884). It seems he wrote the national anthem. Who are these people? Has Ukrainian culture simply been submerged and swamped by Russian? It would appear so. I am aware that Solzhenitsyn does not concede that Ukrainian is a separate language at all, but regards it as a Russian dialect. On this reasoning, he argues against Ukrainian independence and urges a greater Slavic union of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine centered on Moscow.

Discussions like these are shark-infested waters where only the bold dare swim. But I'll throw in my two cents. I have discovered already that I would be hard-pressed to understand Ukrainian on the basis of Russian alone. I regularly have to dip into my knowledge of Slovak or Polish to guess what words mean. [Random example from today's newspaper: "*Pratsyuvav vin, ta i zaraz pratsyue, nye shkodyuyuchi sil, nye rachuyuchis' z vlasnim chasom.*" Would Solzhenitsyn understand that? A Pole would!] I am quite willing to believe that Ukrainian is a unique and flexible tongue with contributions to make to world genius. But I, for one, have no feeling for a distinct Ukrainian culture. Since the country has been independent, more or less, for only four years, this is hardly surprising. As far as passing judgments on Ukrainian arts and letters goes, Solzhenitsyn is premature by at least a quarter of a century. That's the minimum amount of time it takes for a new nation to develop its voice. For an example of the slow starter, look at America: what's the first American literary production worthy of note after 1776? Anything before Washington Irving? Or James Fenimore Cooper, a decade later? That's already 50 years of independence, and you're still waiting for Emerson. Any important contributions to pure science before Gibb? I imagine that's the sort of time-line to expect for Ukraine, as well as the other Newly Independent States, assuming they survive. Ukraine has a lot of ingredients from its past to draw upon as a creative resource, taking in Liths and Poles, Russians, Tatars and Ottoman Turks, if it can assimilate them all first.

I wrote this at the top of the hill beneath the giant statue of Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), with his bald pate and walrus moustaches, overlooking the broad expanse of the Dnieper.

I arrived late at night in Cherkassy, two hours down-

river from Kanev. After much walking about the concierge at Hotel Central (not in the center!) put me in a dark room where a man was already snoring. I found my way to my bed in the dark.

CHERKASSY

[June 11]

Last night I had the sensation that I was a Christian being thrust into the lion-pit. So it was a relief and a pleasant surprise to wake up and discover my roommate Sasha Yegorov was amiable and thoughtful. He had a chubby face and was about my age. He shared his breakfast of bread and cucumbers with me. He went into the hall discreetly to smoke when he noticed I didn't. This gentleness was belied by the fact that he was about 6'4" and strongly built. He had played in amateur basketball leagues in his native Dniepropetrovsk. After that, he had been a sailor on a floating fish-canning factory. During his nine months in service, the ship had stopped at only two ports for two days each, the Canary Islands and Singapore. His memories of coming through the Bosphorus consisted primarily of minarets and tea-houses he had glimpsed on shore.

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I learnt these details as we strolled through town together. It was green, but flat and dull. There is a sugar refinery, as I gather this is a sugar-beet area. Otherwise the usual department store, and an outdoor market. The church was overflowing with people — today is *Troitsa*, the Day of the Holy Trinity! Fifty days after Easter — already fifty days have elapsed since I was in Romania with the Old Believers. Then, when we were approaching the town cinema, Sasha pointed at it and said, "That's where I have to go now. Let's go back to the hotel so I can pick up my papers." Yes, what did Sasha do? I had forgotten to ask.

He works for a company called Kamtex. It distributes films to cinemas along the Dnieper. Cinema managers count up their box-office receipts, and Kamtex takes 40% as its cut. At present, Kamtex has the rights to Nikita Mikhalkov's latest film, *Utomlyonnie solntsem*, "Burnt by the Sun." Sasha is on a tour of the movie-houses showing this film. First, his job is to determine that no one is showing pirated copies of the film. Second, he goes over the books to check whether managers are forking over the full 40% or holding anything back.

[June 12]

Sasha neglected to mention — but I think I can safely fill in the blank — that there is a third element to his job that kicks in if there are any irregularities in the books. In Ukraine's rough-and-tumble world, I am confident Sasha knows how to teach imprudent managers a lesson so they never try anything again. Sasha is, in short, a collector.

I must acknowledge that the Mikhalkov film I saw in December in Istanbul, "Urga," changed my life, to the extent that the pictures of vast Mongolian steppe-land gave me a push to get myself to Central Asia and beyond. So at the cinema door I said to Sasha that I was interested in the film, which had just started. He brought me to the usher and said, "My friend wants to see the film for free." The usher said, "Yes, Mr. Yegorov." The action takes place outside Moscow in a *Podmoskovskaya dacha*. It is 1936, during the Stalinist purges. Young Mitya, who has been abroad, comes to stay at the house of the woman he loved. In the meantime she has married Sergei, played by Michalkov. We discover Mitya is an NKVD agent who has agreed to betray Sergei to the purges in return for being let back into the country. In the end, realizing that it is only a matter of time before they come for him too, Mitya opens his veins in sight of Red Square. — Not the sort of movie that will get wide distribution in the land of Hollywood, although it deserves to.

At 4:30PM Sasha saw me off on the boat for Kremenchug. He didn't tell me the conclusion of his business, but he seemed in a good mood. The boat spent 30 minutes in a 45-foot lock (the second I've seen — the first was at Kanev, about 20 feet). Arrived 7:15PM. I walked until sunset trying to find a room priced at less than \$40 for an American passport. In vain. At last, a small miracle occurred. One of the two receptionists at Hotel Dniprov'ski Zori, called Olga, rose to her feet without a word and beckoned to me to follow her. We got on a bus, and she took me home to her own apartment. Olga lives alone. She showed me how the hot water worked, then wished me good night and turned to leave. "You're not staying?" I exclaimed. "No, I'm working tonight. I'll see you in the morning." Money was not mentioned. And with that she left and locked the door behind her.

I am writing this, locked in in a strange woman's apartment. What will happen?

I was up at dawn to have time to look around the flat before Olga returned. There is a bedroom, living-room and kitchen. My hostess' name is Olga Vladimirovna Popenko. She's about 50. The walls are hung with icons and reproductions of Raphael Virgins-and-Child. There are pictures of her at 20, looking blonde and dreamy, wrapped in furs like Pasternak's Lara. Last but not least, scattered through the apartment are multiple copies of a black-and-white photograph, a young man in a dark suit staring mesmerically into the camera. My best guess is that this is the son who died. The trauma broke up her marriage. Olga Vladimirovna's maternal feelings, temporarily stanchied, now find release in acts of charity to young male travelers arriving in her hotel.

"At last, a small miracle occurred. One of the two receptionists at Hotel Dniprov'ski Zori, called Olga, rose to her feet without a word and beckoned to me to follow her."

My thesis seemed to be confirmed by Olga's behavior toward me when she came in at 7:30AM. She insisted on making me breakfast of salad and fried potatoes. She didn't say much, and asked me almost nothing. But at 9AM, 21-year old Sasha arrived. He was presented to me as her son. To my surprise, it had been decided he was my guide for the day. We stepped

out into another punishingly hot day. I saw the house is situated near the brewery (Pivzavod). According to Sasha, its product, called Zhigulovskoye beer, tastes poorly for seven days and then unflinchingly goes off.

Kremenchug is an industrial town of 250,000 and a nexus for rail-to-river transshipment. A 2-km long, heavy iron bridge called Krukosvkii Most crosses the Dnieper. There is a bleak, concrete, abandoned-looking central square with a statue of Lenin. We passed what used to be the major employer of the town, the Kremenchug Automobile Factory (KrAZ). Its 20,000 workers in 1991 have been reduced to 13,000 today. It doesn't make cars now, only Kraz trucks. "Glory to the Working Class!" remains embossed over its doors.

There is also a surprisingly good sand beach, thickly populated with sunbathers. I have noticed consistently — and Sasha confirmed this — that Ukrainians wear dark glasses with the sticker *still on* — I mean the label stuck to the lens when you buy the glasses, usually reading something like "Max UV Protection" or "Italian Style." In Ukraine, you wouldn't scrape off that

sticker any more than you would take a pin to pick out the label on your Ralph Lauren polo shirt. You paid extra money for that sticker. If it's written in English, it's cool. It may obscure one half of your vision, but that's the price to pay for elegance. Something like a Veronica Lake haircut.

Sasha was a pleasant lad who worked in a hotel and had just married a nurse. He seemed to enjoy showing me his town, but he wasn't proud of it, for he was conscious that it was poor. We walked into a clothes shop but he dismissed it with a sweep of the hand: "We know what you've got in America. We've seen on television how people can live." He was referring in particular to an American soap-opera called "Santa Barbara" that seems to have the whole of Ukraine hooked. In the main department store he pointed out a tin-plate coal stove with a chimney called a *burzhuika*, viz. a bourgeois stove: "These started appearing this year," he said. "Can you believe they're selling these again? These things are pre-1917. But now that gas is getting expensive, we're back to coal and *burzhuiki*. We're becoming bourgeois after all," he joked.

We ate *chebureki* for lunch — similar to Cornish pasties, but squashed flat, filled with meat or cabbage. I wanted to wash them down with *kvas* — made of fermented bread, water and sugar — but couldn't see any. This is the first place *kvas* hasn't been sold on street corners, generally in 900-liter barrels painted yellow and mounted on wheels like artillery pieces. Sasha agreed that it is a mystery why Kremenchug is a dry town as far as *kvas* is concerned. Popular explanations include: (1) it has all been sent to the Black Sea Fleet; (2) it is siphoned off by those thirsty bastards in Cherkassy; (3) the *Kvas* Friendship Tunnel from Kiev has been closed. We went instead to a soda-water kiosk. The sign in the window read, "Gas water with lemon syrup 'Tropic,'" and that is exactly what we got. I have no doubt that if the lemon syrup runs out tomorrow, a new sign will be hand-written and posted reading "Gas water with strawberry syrup 'Leningrad.'" This pedantry and lack of fancy is a Soviet legacy. Post-Soviets strike me as still unaccustomed to the sort of advertising foolery that is the life-blood of the West. I may be wrong; they may be more sophisticated than I give them credit for. But examples such as this soda-water kiosk make me doubt it. One doesn't come across brand names any more adventurous than "Prestige" or "Elite": in fact, "lemon syrup 'Tropic'" is

pretty daring by post-Soviet standards. I doubt that the soft drink Mountain Dew would sell here because literal-minded Ukrainians would think it was just that. They call a spade a spade. The food store is called "Food Store." The female undergarments section in the "Kremenchug Central Department Store" is called "Bras and Panties." What-oh-what would the matrons of Kremenchug make of "Victoria's Secret"?

I dined *tête-a-tête* at home with Olga Vladimirovna. I was edgy — I am ashamed to say in retrospect that I was on my guard. I awaited an embarrassing proposition. But nothing of that nature happened. Olga is a very depressed woman who watches a lot of television. I still vaguely associated her depression with a tragedy in the past, related to the man in the black-and-white photographs. So I studiously pretended not to notice them. How British of me. Olga herself drew my attention to them. In fact, only then did she begin to cheer up.

"This pedantry and lack of fancy is a Soviet legacy. Post-Soviets strike me as still unaccustomed to the sort of advertising foolery that is the life-blood of the West."

"Do you know Vinnik?" "No. Who's Vinnik?" Olga smiled. "He is a man of power." I didn't understand. "He's a healer. His picture alone heals. You look at it, and it makes you better."

Olga has fallen hook, line and sinker for some sort of faith-healer called Anatolii Pavlovich Vinnik, from Kirovograd in the Bolnitsa region, 32 years old ("Christ was 33," said Olga. I did not exactly grasp the significance of this analogy. Anyway, we presume Christ was 32, too, at one point), two children. He stayed at Olga's hotel and has been a guest in her home. "He wants to give his gifts to the world. He doesn't ask for money," she said, but in such a way that I knew she *had* given him money. She has attended his public lectures and demonstrations of healing: "He teaches how to concentrate one's spiritual energies. He lays his hands on you and you can feel his power. He can give you peace of mind. He cures physical ailments."

At this point she said she had noted my allergies. It is true, it was so hot today that the eyedrops in the bottle evaporated away and my eyes were red and scratchy. She propped up a picture of Vinnik on the table in front of me. She slipped another into my pocket against my breast. "He will heal you. Look at him and feel him. And I will go grate some onions for you to breathe in. That will clear up everything." I breathed in a bowl of onions until the tears were running down my cheeks, trying to look at Vinnik. I kept assuring her

that I felt much better until she took the onions away.

"When Vinnik was here he fixed the television, although it was old and beyond repair. He also fixed my watch. The spring had broken, but he rubbed it and looked at it until it started, and it worked perfectly for six months afterwards."

To anyone who knows how many "Watch Repair" shops there used to be per block in the Soviet Union, this must seem like a miracle indeed.

"Then a friend's dog died, but she placed a bowl of water in front of Vinnik's picture. Then she poured the water down the dog's throat, and it came back to life."

Well, that was a show-stopper. Olga was in earnest. She told me exactly what I have written with dead seriousness. What could I say? There was a variety show on television and we began to watch it in silence. Tamara Gverdsitely from Georgia, the Pia Zadora of the Russian-speaking world, came on and began to belt out Edith Piaf songs as if they were Hollywood showtunes. She was awful.

DNIEPROPETROVSK

[June 13]

Olga served me chicken and cucumbers for breakfast. I handed her an envelope with \$20 for all her trouble. It was only the second time I saw her smile.

Embarked on a Meteor hydrofoil at 9:30am. "Welcome aboard" is *Laskavo prosymo*. The man serving in the ship's canteen had a pin-up of Brezhnev on the wall. Brezhnev was "his hero." *Bozhe moi*, I joked, Cindy Crawford is prettier, isn't she? But this man is not by any means the first Ukrainian I have heard praising Brezhnev. Like Olga last night, he confirmed that life was best during the Brezhnev era. If he could rewind past Gorbachov and bring Brezhnev back from the dead, he would, he said. Well, Vinnik could probably do it. Since Brezhnev is remembered in Moscow as the President of Stagnation, and I doubt the Kazakhs remember his Virgin Lands program fondly, I wonder what particular benefits he conferred on Ukraine. Or is it simply that life has been so appalling since then that the Seventies are remembered as the Golden Age of Normality?

Arrived in Dnepropetrovsk at 1:35PM. Seemed to walk endlessly on Karl Marx Prospekt, a shady, tree-

lined street with tramlines and a narrow park down the middle. When Karl Marx intersects Lenin Square, you know you've reached the center of town. Amazingly, Hotel Central gave me a room for \$8 without a fuss. I later learnt this was because the receptionist had taken me for a Balt (this is not uncommon). When she deciphered my passport and discovered her mistake (she'd never seen an American passport before) there was *quite* a scene. I was obtuse and maintained it was too late either for her to rescind or for me to move out. I also played to her insecurity by pointing out that her signature was already on the bill in my pocket, so the mistake was her responsibility. At that, she said very crossly that she would have to undertake elaborate consultations with her superiors on all aspects of this problem. Thus she saved face, because of course no superiors ever appeared and the matter was not mentioned again.

Called the Yegorovs, but Sasha's wife told me he is still roaming the country, terrorizing cinema managers.

"When she deciphered my passport and discovered her mistake (she'd never seen an American passport before) there was *quite* a scene."

Enjoyed lunch of *pel'meni* bouillon and some gingerbread at a buffet. I noticed the cashier had an electronic register, but she didn't use it properly. Instead of entering individual prices and summing them automatically on the register, she preferred to use her old, faith-

ful wooden abacus to add everything up, and then only used the register to punch in the total! Clearly she was suspicious of the machine, and trusted her abacus more.

There is a good history museum with a diorama attached showing the Battle of Dnepropetrovsk 1943, complete with soldiers shouting and artillery noises. The city had to be largely rebuilt after WWII; it became a metal and chemical works center. It was founded in 1784 as Ekaterinoslav (interesting to see in the museum the original letters of Prince Potemkin costing out the establishment of a fort). Among the exhibits were beautiful sewer covers embossed "Ekaterinoslav, Engineer F.I. Plats'!"

I spent the evening at the theater, where the "Lycee Theatre-Studio" from Moscow was offering a variety show of songs, skits and dancing. There was the indispensable soulful young man who crooned to his guitar in the style of Vysotskii, and even a ballerina! I went backstage in search of the woman who had delivered a comic monologue (*honi soit qui mal y pense*) but she had left.

I wrote this back in the hotel room, with half an eye on the television. Ostankino Channel One, beamed from Moscow, is showing the awards ceremony from the Sochi Film Festival. *Musul'manin*, "The Muslim," directed by Vladimir Khotinenko, is winning everything: best film, best actor Alexandr Valuyev, best actress Nina Usatova. A young Russian soldier is captured and held for seven years by Afghans; he returns home to tell his family he has converted to Islamic fundamentalism. Interesting to remember that Russia's experience of the muslim "other" remains rooted in far-off Central Asia and Afghanistan, whereas Ukrainians look towards the Black Sea, to the Tatars and Turks. It is noteworthy, too, that such a film should be made and capture so much attention now — at a time when nothing more than hype is shamefully driving us into a medieval Crusader mentality of Christian-Islamic confrontation.

[June 14]

It was so hot today that I wandered the art gallery on Shevchenko Street listlessly, almost despondently, despite a few treasures there — a Serov, a Repin ("Portrait of the Banker Kominki," 1908 — Repin by this time is already confident enough that his signature contributes to the attraction of his pictures that he splashes it across the foreground in black), a Bogdanov-Belskii ("At the Teacher's"). All the labels from Soviet days remain: a treatment of King David is described not as a "Biblical" but a "mythological" theme. I was amused to see a cartoon from 1812 with Kutuzov after the Battle of Borodino telling his orderly, "They'll have to cook their horses, like Turks!" — an odd slander!

As one climbs the stairs to the top floor, one is confronted by the *Rodina-mat'* with her hand aloft, the stern Slavic mother who called the Soviet boys to war. This is the first image in an exhibition of WWII and post-War reconstruction paintings: mainly ghastly pictures of Stalin in a white suit walking with children, and glowering factories in the background.

On the ground floor were paintings by local artists. One of the guards (all women) said she was the widow of a certain Victor Matyushenko (d. 1984) whose pictures covered one wall. To please her, I praised them, and then to give my approval some weight, I absurdly told her I was an art teacher in America. At this, all the guards seemed to jump up at once, and I was called upon to make favorable judgments on all the pictures

in the room — everyone was a widow of one of the artists. In fact, they pursued me like the Furies until I had written my impressions of modern Ukrainian art in the visitor's book. Is everyone so anxious for a word, a sign of recognition from the outside world?

On the subject of anxiety — the stress and worry of daily life here — it is impossible not to note how many massage parlors there are in Dnepropetrovsk. At least one per kilometer. I copied down a large billboard for "Massage-Centre, Serov Street 3, Apt. 1":

"Here, in addition to therapeutic and prophylactic massage, we offer you original methods of curing disorders of the nervous system — nervous attacks, sleep disorders, headaches, muscle problems — eliminating the after-effects of psychologically traumatic situations... The removal of negative emotions, restoration of dulled reflexes, revivification of tissue and organs, prevention of muscular atrophy — all in all a heightening and improvement of the vitality and vigor of the organism."

"On the subject of anxiety it is impossible not to note how many massage parlours there are in Dnepropetrovsk. At least one per kilometer."

"Original methods of curing disorders" caught my eye... Could it be that the methods dispensed from a single apartment on Serov Street are not particularly original, but the oldest methods of all? It was too hot to stir myself to find out.

There is also a very strange billboard hung near the entrance to Dnepropetrovsk's extensive outdoor market: *Chistota — zalog zdorov'ya*, "Cleanliness is a downpayment on health" [?]. I suppose it is an exhortation to keep the market area hygienic? — but what odd phraseology! The market did look clean, and the produce was relatively abundant and appetizing, but not cheap, keeping in mind that the women at the museum said they earned \$13/month (the minimum wage in Ukraine as of June 1), not including their tiny pensions, and the average salary isn't much over \$30:

Cabbage	0.52 (\$/kg)	Bananas	1.16
Cucumbers	0.58	Apples	1.42
Onions	0.42	Cherries	1.05
Tomatoes	1.55	Oranges	0.94
Potatoes	0.52	Lemons	1.19
Kolbasa	2.26	Generic pasta	0.42
Borshch meat	0.84	Yellow cheese	3.55
Chicken	1.94	Mayonnaise (jam jar)	0.35
Norwegian herring	1.74	Nescafe (100g)	1.74
Mackerel	2.71	Eggs (per 10)	0.45
Sturgeon fillet	10.32	Bread (loaf)	0.19
Dried roachfish	2.06		

What happened then? Vinnik did it. He led me to them. I bought two *pirozhki* from a girl at a stand in the market. As I pulled out my money from my top pocket, out came the picture of Vinnik. I had forgotten that Olga had put it there. I was about to throw it away, when the girl said, "Vinnik."

"You know this man?" "Of course, it's Vinnik... Are you interested in questions of mind and spirit?" "Well, yes," I said, with hesitation. "Then why don't you look in on the Theosophical Society? Visit our museum — Leningradskaya 11," she said. "Are you a Theosophist?" I cried in amazement. "Of course. That's why I am selling *pirozhki*. The Society has to fund itself — receipts from these *pirozhki* go towards supporting our activities."

In other words, I was eating the equivalent of Girl Scout cookies: Theosophist *pirozhki*.

Leningradskaya 11 turns out to be the birthplace of Madame Blatavsky! Who knew that the founder of Theosophism, nee Elena Petrovna Gan (1831-1891), came from Dniepropetrovsk? The house had been a school, but was taken over in 1992 by an eager group of enthusiasts, all young, and converted into a museum/ Theosophist Chapter: "The Spiritual Enlightenment Society 'Orion-M.'" I toured the little museum and bookshop, which sold everything from Bibles to the Tibetan Book of the Dead, in addition to Theosophical works. What a pity, said the attendant, that I hadn't come yesterday, when there had been an evening seance and lecture in the "Living Ethics" series. He offered me a flyer suggesting all that I am missing:

"One minute we had been laughing, getting to know one another — the next, I found myself on the street, the victim of a lightning, one-woman sting operation."

"Whoever wishes can come here and awaken one's creative potential, achieve heightened levels of activity, and find firmness of purpose, morality, and joy in life. Today the Theosophy of E.P. Blatavsky offers a scientific look at man's inner world. Only an active, creative person is capable today of solving the most complicated problems, and creating a healthy atmosphere at home, at work, and in society."

Vinnik, massage, and now Theosophy — Ukraine is awash with "original methods of curing disorders"!

ZAPOROZH'YE

[June 15]

I was excited, coming in to Port Lenin early this af-

ternoon, to be visiting the capital of the Cossacks. I was especially eager to cross to Khortitsya Island as soon as possible, but everything seemed to conspire against my reaching there today.

First, I was consistently misdirected. Since there are no maps of Zaporozh'ye to be bought anywhere, orientation was difficult in a strange city of 1 million people. I wandered. When I asked "How far?", the reply came "x bus stops." As a unit of distance, the Zaporozh'ye Bus Stop is about as subjective as the ell. When I said, "Don't tell me in bus stops. I haven't seen one for 2 km," the default unit of distance (analogous in spirit, if not in accuracy, to the Light-Year) was the "minutes' walk." The Zaporozh'ye Minutes' Walk turned out to be even more subjective, as I wandered further.

Second, when I finally boarded a trolleybus, the electricity for the overhead cables and tramlines was cut, and all public transport stood still for thirty minutes.

We started up, continued about 500 meters, lurched, and then a second power cut drew us up short again. Consumed with wrath by this time, I got off and walked all the way to the center, even when busses and trams began to pass me.

The Ukraina Hotel demanded \$80, Intourist Hotel \$100. Near the Ukraina Department Store I stumbled on a small door that said, "Hostel for Circus Professionals." (I passed the permanent circus tent on my way in.) The door-keeper was sympathetic, and took me to two men who considered it very novel that an American would want to "live with the clowns," and who seemed willing to share their room with me. I believed I was successfully installed on a hallway, and was looking forward to spending the night with a circus troupe, when an administrator woman descended on us like a harpy and had me shooed out in less than thirty seconds. One minute we had been laughing, getting to know one another — the next, I found myself on the street, the victim of a lightning, one-woman sting operation. Doubtless she was giving everyone a tongue-lashing at that very moment. Still, I wished the clowns had shown a little backbone and helped me stay.

My last chance was Hotel Dnieper, which a student on the bus directed me to. The receptionist was the most humorless, Soviet bureaucrat one could imagine. She read every page of my passport, made telephone calls — and then ignored me! As if I had become invisible. I had to harass her to tell me what the story was.

Yes, there was a free room, but to give it to me she would need signed and stamped authorization from OVIR. Then she fell silent again like an oracle that has spoken. I had to initiate a new campaign of harassment until she would tell me what OVIR was. All she would say was "Gagarin Street." I pressed her for directions, but I was wasting my breath: she stared at the ground like a mechanical toy that has spent its juice.

OVIR turned out to be the regional branch of the Interior Ministry. To cut a long story short, I got the paper from the police, got the room. But by this time my juice was gone, and I spent the evening finishing the *One Hundred Essays* and writing this.

[June 16]

An early start: Trolleybus 16 took thirty minutes to Khortitsa, stronghold of the Cossacks from the end of the 15th century on. It is a huge, wooded island in the middle of the Dnieper, a natural fortress. Toured the museum of "Cossackry," *kazachestvo*. I was the sole visitor. The exhibits are ill-lit and ill-set out, and the Soviet-era information they offer is not too helpful. But the women guards, who must have heard countless guides pass through, were a mine of interesting knowledge once I got them talking. Not only about Cossacks: one woman ranted for twenty minutes about how all her clothes were hand-me-downs and she hadn't bought anything new since perestroika.

I especially enjoyed one guard's show-and-tell lecture on Cossack costumes — embroidered cotton blouses, red felt jerkins, trimmed in black, with a wound cummerbund (*poyas*), baggy Turkish-style *salvar* trousers and jackboots. The length of the *poyas* was a sign of status. The longest one was 15 meters long. I knew that Cossacks shaved their heads, save for a single forelock, from the little compositions of Cossack Mamai and the "Bandura Player" in the museum in Dnepropetrovsk. I also remember when the Repin painting "Zaporozhians Write a Letter to the Turkish Sultan" came to America. But I certainly didn't know the forelock was generically called *chub*, but could be called *chuprina*, *chachol* or *oseledets*, depending on how it was worn — straight, or curled, or twisted around the ear, etc. The lady demonstrated to me with her own hair. I had no idea you could make so many hairstyles out of a single forelock!

What was a portrait of Suleyman I's manipulative favorite, Roxelana, doing there? I had never realized she was a Ukrainian, Nastya Lisovskaya, captured from here at the age of 15. I knew she was called La Rossa in the West, but I'd never put it all together.

Cossacks were under Ottoman suzerainty at one point, but were later part of the Dnieprovsko-Azov line to fight the Turks back. Zaporozh'ye was founded as Alexandrovskaya (after A. Golitsyn) in 1770 during the Russian-Turkish war (1768-1774). Named Zaporozh'ye in 1921.

This much I learnt from the museum. It was creepy the way the lights would be turned off in one section the moment I turned the corner into another, in order to save energy. Also, the guards would not stray from their own sections, but shook my hand on the invisible thresholds that divided one another's areas of jurisdiction, then turned off the light behind me, leaving themselves in darkness.

"It was creepy the way the lights would be turned off in one section the moment I turned the corner into another, in order to save energy."

I walked off Khortitsa across the Dnieper, passing the hideously ugly Dneproges dam and power station, which put an end to the 60 km of rapids that gave Zaporozh'ye ["Beyond the rapids"] its name.

The sun was so powerful that the pavement at the river station was soft under my feet. When the boat came at 1PM, I dozed off from heat exhaustion. As a result, I completely missed Nikopol'! I was looking forward to seeing it for its shipyards and yacht clubs. On the other hand, maybe Fate did me a favor. Newspapers have been reporting cholera there all week and particularly warned against eating Nikopol' sprats. Thus I stayed on board (without a valid ticket all the way to Kherson, 24 km from the Black Sea, arriving 9PM. Ravenous. Slept in a room at the quayside.

KHERSON

[June 17]

The first thing I saw this morning were conspicuous signs reading, Cholera!

The red signs said:

Cholera!

Observe the Rules of Personal Hygiene.

Remember! Cholera is a disease of dirty hands.

The black signs were larger and more detailed, enti-

tled "Beware. Cholera!" Hygiene tips included:

"Only drink boiled water or mineral water.

"Only drink pasteurized milk.

"Wash your hands before eating or preparing food.

"Do not purchase fish or fish products in the market.

—Medical Staff of the Regional Anti-Epidemic Mission.

If some of these things need saying, the state of public and private hygiene in Ukraine may be imagined.

Kherson did not capture my imagination, although I presume this was the site of the Greek colony Chersonesus. I paid my respects to Prince Potemkin at St Catherine's Cathedral — or rather, Fieldmarshal Prince Grigorii Alexandrovich Potemkin-Tavricheski (1739-1791), as his tombstone reads, founder of Kherson as a

naval base in 1778.

The bus station is in the far north of the city. After a long wait in the ticket line, I was told to run to Platform 8. I was lucky to catch the bus heading for the Crimea just as it was leaving.

(June 5-17, 1995)

"...The whole trip had taken only ten days. Naturally, in such a short trip, we had no opportunity to see how things were with the country or the people"

—Ernest Hemingway, *Che Ti Dice La Patria?*,
"Men Without Women"

(July 15, 1995)

Current Fellows & Their Activities

Bacete Bwogo. A Sudanese from the Shilluk tribe of southern Sudan, Bacete is a physician spending two and one-half years studying health-delivery systems in Costa Rica, Cuba, Kerala State (India) and the Bronx, U.S.A. Bacete did his undergraduate work at the University of Juba and received his M.D. from the University of Alexandria in Egypt. He served as a public-health officer in Port Sudan until 1990, when he moved to England to take advantage of scholarships at the London School of Economics and Oxford University. [The AMERICAS]

Cheng Li. An Assistant Professor of Government at Hamilton College in Clinton, NY, Cheng Li is studying the growth of technocracy and its impact on the economy of the southeastern coast of China. He began his academic life with a Medical Degree from Jing An Medical School in Shanghai, but then did graduate work in Asian Studies and Political Science in the United States, with an M.A. from Berkeley in 1987 and a Ph.D. from Princeton in 1992. [EAST ASIA]

Adam Albion. A former research associate at the Institute for EastWest Studies at Prague in the Czech Republic, Adam is spending two years studying and writing about Turkey's regional role and growing importance as an actor in the Balkans, the Middle East and the former Soviet bloc. A Harvard graduate (1988; History), Adam has completed the first year of a two-year M. Litt. degree in Russian/East European history and languages at Oxford University. [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Cynthia Caron. With a Masters degree in Forest Science from the Yale School of Forestry and Environment, Cynthia is spending two years in South Asia as ICWA's first John Miller Musser Memorial Forest & Society Fellow. She is studying and writing about the impact of forest-preservation projects on the lives (and land-tenure) of indigenous peoples and local farmers who live on their fringes. Her fellowship includes stays in Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka. [SOUTH ASIA/Forest & Society]

Hisham Ahmed. Born blind in the Palestinian Dheisheh Refugee Camp near Bethlehem, Hisham finished his A-levels with the fifth highest score out of 13,000 students throughout Israel. He received a B.A. in political science on a scholarship from Illinois State University and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of California in Santa Barbara. Back in East Jerusalem and still blind, Hisham plans to gather oral histories from a broad selection of Palestinians to produce a "Portrait of Palestine" at this crucial point in Middle Eastern history. [MIDEAST/N. AFRICA]

Sharon Griffin. A feature writer and contributing columnist on African affairs at the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Sharon is spending two years in southern Africa studying Zulu and the KwaZulu kingdom and writing about the role of nongovernmental organizations as fulfillment centers for national needs in developing countries where governments are still feeling their way toward effective administration. She plans to travel and live in Namibia and Zimbabwe as well as South Africa. [sub-SAHARA]

Pramila Jayapal. Born in India, Pramila left when she was four and went through primary and secondary education in Indonesia. She graduated from Georgetown University in 1986 and won an M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management in Evanston, Illinois in 1990. She has worked as a corporate analyst for PaineWebber and an accounts manager for the world's leading producer of cardiac defibrillators, but most recently managed a \$7 million developing-country revolving-loan fund for the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) in Seattle. Pramila is spending two years in India tracing her roots and studying social issues involving religion, the status of women, population and AIDS. [SOUTH ASIA]

William F. Foote. Formerly a financial analyst with Lehman Brothers' Emerging Markets Group, Willy Foote is examining the economic substructure of Mexico and the impact of free-market reforms on Mexico's people, society and politics. Willy holds a Bachelor's degree from Yale University (history), a Master's from the London School of Economics (Development Economics; Latin America) and studied Basque history in San Sebastian, Spain. He carried out intensive Spanish-language studies in Guatemala in 1990 and then worked as a copy editor and Reporter for the Buenos Aires Herald from 1990 to 1992. [THE AMERICAS]

Teresa C. Yates. A former member of the American Civil Liberties Union's national task force on the workplace, Teresa is spending two years in South Africa observing and reporting on the efforts of the Mandela government to reform the national land-tenure system. A Vassar graduate with a *juris doctor* from the University of Cincinnati College of Law, Teresa had an internship at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies in Johannesburg in 1991 and 1992, studying the feasibility of including social and economic rights in the new South African constitution. While with the ACLU, she also conducted a Seminar on Women in the Law at Fordham Law School in New York. [sub-SAHARA]

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