LETTERS

Dear Sir:

Marshal Tito has emerged as one of the most controversial figures in postwar Europe—sometimes wooed and sometimes deplored by the statesmen of the West. But in spite of the vast attention he gets, his career—particularly in its earliest stages—remains something of an enigma. I have discovered an isolated fact about his activities in 1919, one of the "lost years," and would be happy to learn whether any reader can substantiate or refute my conclusion.

The standard sources[1] are in substantial agreement that Tito was born some time between 1890 and 1892, named Josip (or Josif) Broz (or Brozovich). He served in the Austro-Hungarian army in 1914, deserted or was captured in 1915, was a prisoner in Russian hands from 1915 to 1917, and was freed by the Revolution. Then followed the lost years, after which he returned to Croatia as a trained Communist labor organizer not earlier than 1922 and not later than 1924.

What services did he perform in Russia between 1917 and 1923? One answer is supplied in *Harper's Magazine*[2] by an American authoress, Olive Gilbreath,[3] who wrote an article on Czechoslovak forces marooned in Vladivostok in 1919. These outlanders were given grudging permission by the Central Soviet in Moscow to remain on the outskirts of the town in deserted tsarist army barracks, until transportation out of Russia could be arranged.

In a brief preface to her article, Miss Gilbreath acknowledged her indebtedness to three officers who had acted as her guides during the time that she collected materials for her article. One of these three was a "Lieutenant Broz"—presumably young Tito, trained and indoctrinated since 1917, familiar with the language and customs of the motley crew of Bohemian men of war, and now dispatched to Vladivostok to be at the side of a visiting American journalist.

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Dear Sir:

I should like to take exception to Rebecca A. Domar's review of Chekhov's *Selected Short Stories* edited by G. A. Birkett and Gleb Struve (*American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. XII, No. 3, p. 414).

The kind of story that appeals to the language student and the kind that does not is rather a point of controversy. I have been using the above selection in my second-year Russian classes for two years and find that both "action" stories (like "Malčiki") and "atmosphere" stories (like "Krasavicy") not only please my students, but arouse quite intelligent ques-

[1] See, for example, *The International Who's Who* (12th edition, London, 1948), p. 936; *Current Biography* (1944), p. 766; and Louis Adamic, *My Native Land* (New York, 1943), pp. 50–52.

[2] Olive Gilbreath, "Men of Bohemia," *Harper's Magazine*, CXXXVIII (January, 1919), 247–55.

[3] Recent attempts to communicate with Miss Gilbreath through her publishers, or even to discover whether she is still alive, have failed.

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tions and comments. Besides, I learned from one of my colleagues who used this book in his third-semester Russian course (thus, "fairly elementary") that neither he nor his students have met any difficulties in using this book.

I should like to point out, moreover, that the problem of "difficulty" may also represent a controversial issue, since it depends largely upon methods of teaching rather than on texts selected.

The reviewer's criticism of the arrangement of explanatory material (notes, idioms, vocabulary) is far from convincing. The student does not have to resort to "endless and tiresome turning of pages," since the simple use of a bookmark or of a finger would do the trick. In this connection, I should like to add a more important point. It has been my experience that readers which offer the vocabulary concurrently with the text, although facilitating classwork, discourage students from independent learning of new words, and lead to unsatisfactory results in the final test.

It is a pity that the reviewer did not notice a very important point: the *Oxford Russian Readers* series, in which Birkett and Struve's selection is included, are the first books of the kind to give English-speaking students, apart from excellent notes and idiom selection, a faultless and scientifically arranged vocabulary. I am referring especially to the "six symbols system" as a guide to the shift of stress in the declension of nouns.

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Dear Sir:

Your reviewer, Professor John P. Dawson, does not seem to care for my book on Greece (*American Dilemma and Opportunity.* Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952). He finds it "highly colored"; he states that it adds "neither information nor fresh appraisal"; and he concludes that it is "a completely unsafe guide" to present-day Greece. Others (including all the Communist reviewers) have been equally negative while some have been just as positive. Each reviewer has the privilege of drawing his own conclusions, but does he not also have the responsibility of presenting supporting evidence for at least some of his conclusions? Not one bit of specific data or proof can I find in the review—only generalizations and blanket charges such as "extreme bias," "almost complete whitewash," and "it might have been expected that post-war events and disclosures would have brought a different view." I will admit that this is quite an effective procedure. What answer can one give except to plead innocent and refer the reader to the book itself?

There is no point in answering generalities with generalities, so I shall turn to two important events, my treatment of which Professor Dawson specifically criticizes. One is the Battle of Athens of 1944–45, a major turning point in contemporary Greek history. My reconstruction of this event is based upon two documentary collections, the EAM White Book and the British White Paper, and upon all the available accounts by participants and observers, both British and Greek. On the basis of this evidence I presented a step-by-step account of what happened between the liberation of Greece in October, 1944, and the outbreak of hostilities two months later. In doing so I could find no support for Churchill's insistence that the

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