

half-ripe dates and drunk coffee with them. My name had cropped up in his conversation several times. He had been awaiting my arrival impatiently, for I had written to him that I was coming. He supped lightly as usual, performed the evening prayer, then about ten o'clock the harbingers of death had come to him; before the dawn prayer he had departed this world, and when the aeroplane was bearing me from Nicosia to Beirut they had just finished burying him.

At forenoon I stood by his grave, with the Cypriot man sitting at the side of the grave, in his formal guise, listening to me as I gave prayers and supplications. He said to me in a voice that seemed to issue from the earth and the sky, encompassing me from all sides:

"You won't see me again in this guise other than at the last moment when I shall open the door to you, bow politely and say to you 'After you, your Excellency.' You will see me

in other and various guises. You may encounter me in the form of a beautiful girl, who will come to you and tell you she admires your views and opinions and that she'd like to do an interview with you for some paper or magazine; or in the shape of a president or a ruler who offers you some post that makes your heart lose a beat; or in the form of one of life's pranks that gives you a lot of money without your expending any effort; perhaps in the form of a vast multitude that applauds you for some reason you don't know; or perhaps you'll see me in the form of a girl twenty years younger than you, whom you desire and who'll say to you: 'Let's go to an isolated hut way up in the mountains.' Beware. Your father will not be there on the next occasion to give his life for you. Beware. The term of life is designated, but we take into consideration the skill shown in playing the game. Beware, for you are now ascending towards the mountain peak."

Translated by Denys Johnson-Davies

Nightmare

"A female monster supposed to settle upon people and animals in their sleep producing a feeling of suffocation." O.E.D.

The house was filled
with heavy sleepers;
the children's breath
clouded the lamp like
moths across the moon;
and she, pregnant

beside him, heaved
her bulk towards dawn.
It was the same
with all his children,
she was unaffected,
he spent listless nights.

He turned towards
the window and sleep.
Her breath clutched
at his chest, her hair
filled his throat,
something shifted

under her ribs and she
turned an open mouth
towards his face.

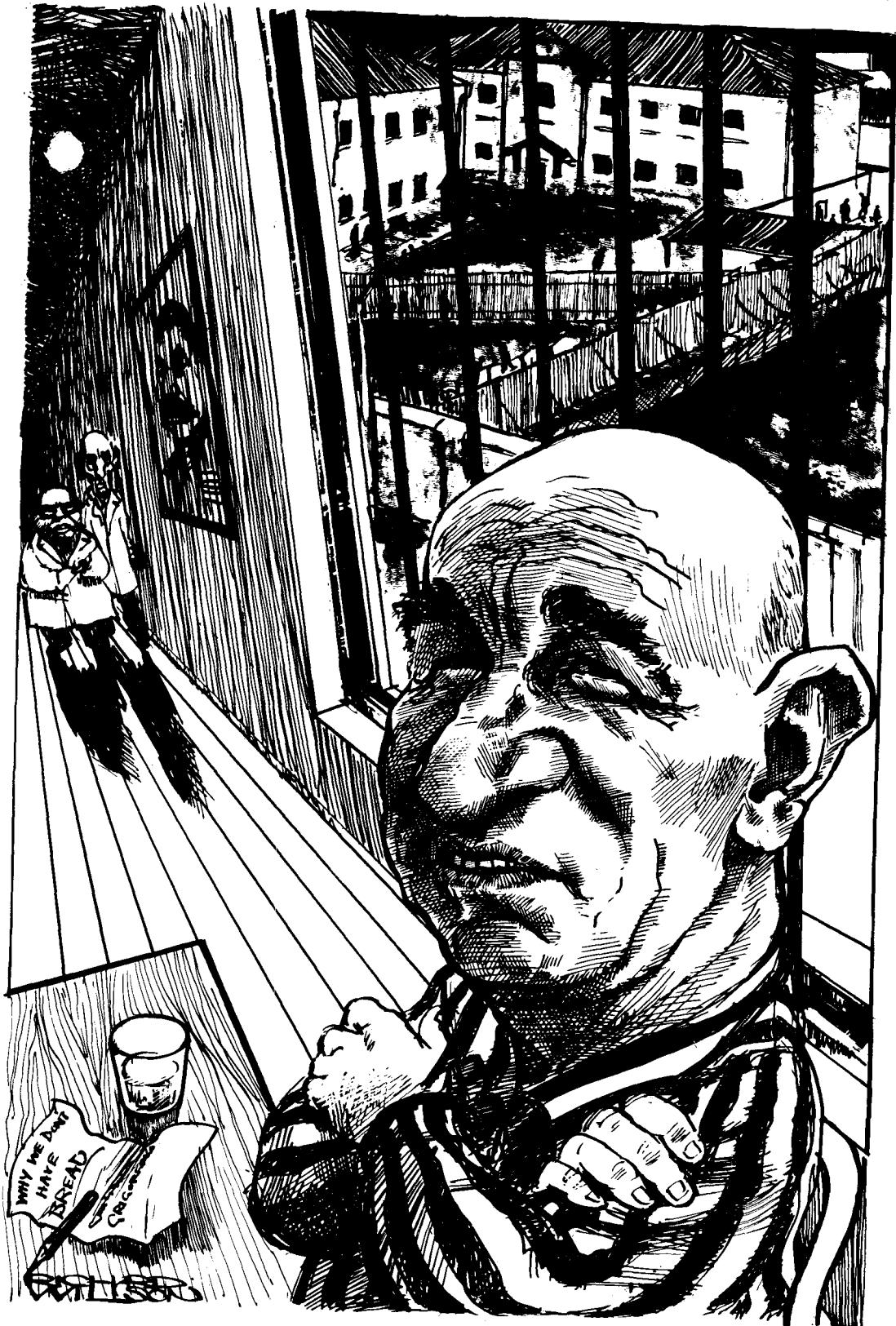
The stairs were cavernous
in the dark, the dog
dreamed of history

beside a dying fire.
He heard a bell
stick out its tongue.
Alone in the back yard
the wind was thrashing
the panes, the clouds

were hiding nothing.
About his feet lay
laundry, scattered scraps,
below ground stood
caverns toothed by
stalagmite and stalactite

where rivers flushed
their debris to the sea;
and up above, among
the cluttered stars,
the moon's gape
cried for continents.

Trevor McMahon



Walter Reich

The Case of General Grigorenko

A Second Opinion

PYOTR GRIGORIEVICH GRIGORENKO was the perfect realisation of the Bolshevik dream. Emerging from the humblest soil of Czarist Russia, he rose to the highest precincts of Soviet power. An ardent patriot, a committed Communist and effective leader, he became a Major-General in the Red Army, exercised a deep and seminal influence on Soviet military theory and was showered with medals, honours and promotions through five loyal decades of his Soviet life. In the early 1960s, at the height of his career, he turned dissident, and was arrested. He was psychiatrically examined, declared mentally ill, and committed to prison hospitals for the criminally insane. After he was allowed to reach the West, he asked for a "second opinion" on his psychiatric condition. This is my report on the examinations and our findings.

ON 23 JANUARY 1978 I was informed, through an intermediary, that P. G. Grigorenko, a prominent Soviet dissident visiting the United States, wanted a psychiatric examination. The intermediary, Dr Marina Voikhanskaya, herself an émigré Soviet psychiatrist, explained that the former Major-General, who had been psychiatrically hospitalised twice in the Soviet Union in relation to his dissenting acts, feared that, upon his return, he might be again arrested, again examined, and again hospitalised. Having spent almost five years in Soviet mental institutions, most of them hospitals for the criminally insane—hospitals populated by violent, psychotic patients and characterised by restrictive and harsh conditions—he wanted to reduce the likelihood

that he would again find himself in such grim circumstances. He fully expected, upon the expiration of his six-month visa in May 1978, to return to the Soviet Union and to resume speaking his conscience in support of human rights for particular individuals and nationalities as well as for the population as a whole; and, given that expectation, he anticipated official harassment, arrest and, possibly, psychiatric examination. His hope was that, if he were indeed examined and found ill by a Soviet psychiatric commission, he or his supporters would be able to announce that a commission of American psychiatrists had, in fact, just examined him, and had, in fact, found him to be psychiatrically well. In the main, I was told, he viewed the prospect of such an American examination as a kind of protective insurance policy: he would use it if he had to. . . .

I had been approached to organise and carry out the examination because of an interest I had developed in Soviet psychiatry and in the question of Soviet psychiatric abuse. In 1971, I became aware of persistent reports about psychiatric abuse in the Soviet Union. In order to educate myself about the theories and practices of Soviet psychiatry, I began to interview a series of Soviet dissidents, both those who had been hospitalised and those who had not, as well as a number of émigré Soviet psychiatrists. I had come to feel that the experience of Soviet psychiatry had much to teach psychiatrists everywhere about the social functions of their profession as well as its special

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PYOTR G. GRIGORENKO now lives in New York City with his wife, Zinaida, whose forceful protests were in large measure responsible for his release from Soviet psychiatric hospitalisation. He is completing his memoirs (to be published next year by Collins).