

LETTERS

Dear Sir:

Marshal Tito has emerged as one of the most controversial figures in post-war 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 sources¹ 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.