

WOLHODYMYR SHAYAN

I Can't Return

An open letter to all
lovers of Justice

“ NEW EPOCH ”

ELY - 1950

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“ Many people in this country are not aware of the fact that Bolshevism has practised largely the methods of the Nazis, in their efforts to kill out the Free Religious Spirit.

Your booklet will bring the focussing light of Truth on the existing conditions in the countries under the iron heel of the Dictator.”

—Matthew McKay.

The author expresses his gratitude to Mr. William B. Hammond, and Mr. Matthew McKay for their kind suggestions and help by the revision of the text for this edition.

—*Author.*

I CAN'T RETURN.

I cannot return to my fatherland either as scholar, or as writer, or as confessor of faith, or as politician, or as Ukrainian or as a human being.

The subjects of the Soviet Union are constrained to confess the conception of life of the dialectical materialism, which is preached there in the form of a dogmatic system by men of little knowledge, with the help of handbooks of low philosophical level.

It is impossible there to confess any other system of science, or only to try to work out other methods of research. Even old and celebrated scholars are compelled to go to the elementary courses of Marxism-Leninism and to "rebuild" their ideas of life or their creed.

Whoever tries to defend his own point of view in science, or who only holds fast to his own notions, is pitilessly annihilated.

I am an idealist in comprehending philosophy, literature and social phenomena. The philosophical system of historical objectiveness which I have created cannot be put into the narrow frame of the materialistic apprehension of history.

In my researches concerning the ancient Indian religion and mysticism I had to see the earnest impediments. During my lectures at the Lvivian University I was forced to mask my

true philological points of view. I was obliged to restrict myself to mechanical description, enumeration and narrow linguistical interpretation of texts. It was impossible for me to develop my theory about the essence of religion and mysticism because it was contrary to the official dogma, that "the religion is only a lie and an opiate for the masses."

In my researchings into literature and especially into its highest acquisitions, I could not employ my historiosophical method, as it was also contradictory to the narrow Marxistic theory of literature.

I know that thousands of scholars, philosophers and intellectuals have been punished to death or to deportation into the North-Siberia only for their scientific or philological theories.

As a scholar I cannot return.

As a writer I could not dream to publish my works. I had to hide my works, written from heart and soul.

I was forced to participate in the writing of a panegirical "collective poem" in honour of the person that does not merit any esteem.

I was incessantly watched and controlled.

When being accepted to the Union of the Writers of the U.S.S.R., I was subjected to public "purifications" which insult human dignity. I was interrogated about the most intimate matters of my life, such as my relations with lady G....

The Soviet writers can only write on the themes and in the trend, which are wanted and permitted by the government. Each word of the writer succumbs to the official and secret control of the "specialist."

I know that thousands of writers and artists have been murdered, have been forced to commit suicide, or have been deported to the Solovezky-Isles.

The history of the Ukrainian literature under the Bolshevist regime is an uninterrupted story of martyrdom and heroic victims.

There is no liberty of literary activity in the Soviet Union .

As a writer I cannot return.

I cannot return as a man of ardent belief.

The strongest reproach against me during one of my "purifications" was that of "confessing Buddhism." The originator of this reproach, writer Ivan Le, speaking of my Rigveda-Books, could not even distinguish Buddhism from Brahmanism.

And I could not explain the truth.

I could not exclaim : "Yes, I am a Buddhist as well as Brahmanist, a Christian, a Manichaeist, a freemason, an idealistic philosopher, because for me there exists only one manifold universality of the development of God's apprehension in the world of history.

I knew that the Bolshevist dogma brands "fideismus" as a much more dangerous enemy of Marxism than simple belief.

I have been forced to deny my own belief. I professed the "prescribed formula" that I always held with the positions of dialectical materialism.

I did it not from fear of death. My belief had not as then been proclaimed. My chief works were not published. The Bolsheviks had only unclearly heard something. I wished to live in order to realize my ideas. I have been forced to lie. I have been forced to immure my works in the kitchen-wall.

Do you understand what that was for me ?

I was forced to deny my own ardent belief.

Who is still so foolish as to believe in the freedom of religion in the Soviet Union ?

I know that thousands and thousands of clergymen of all confessions have been murdered in the name of fighting materialistic dogma.

As a confessor of faith I cannot return.

As a politician I defend the standpoint of independence of the Ukrainian State.

This most natural desire of a nation is the greatest crime under the Sovietic regime.

The Ukrainian nation cannot form its own destiny, cannot be a creative subject in history, and cannot play its part in the world development of mankind. All that is crime.

But these natural desires cannot be extirpated from the soul of the Ukrainian people. Therefore the history of the Bolshevistic regime in the Ukraine is an uninterrupted war and extirpation of Ukrainian statesmen, politicians, thinkers and millions of fighters for independence.

For this unextinguishable flame of the will to independence the Ukrainian nation pays with millions of heroic martyrs and victims, because the Bolshevistic regime, striving for power over the whole of the world, cannot, and does not, tolerate any other political centre in the world.

I know that millions of the best Ukrainian patriots have been murdered by the Bolsheviks.

As a politician I cannot return.

But I cannot return simply as a Ukrainian either.

In the wide prairies of the Ukraine, flowing with milk and honey, a famine was organized, in order to annihilate the Ukrainian nation. In the Ukraine, rich with wheat, millions of people died from hunger—impossible to believe.

Perhaps you remember our cries of "S.O.S." to the whole of the world in the days of the League of Nations, our documents and books on this matter.

But perhaps you believe that the Bolsheviks have grown into angels ?

The Ukrainian people, the Ukrainian language, the Ukrainian culture, are systematically eliminated and extirpated by the Russian people, Russian culture, and Russian language.

I know that the slightest appearance of national consciousness was considered a political crime.

I know that millions of the Ukrainian people died for their only crime of being Ukrainian.

I know that Russia will not stop in its extirpation of the Ukrainian people and culture.

Simply as a Ukrainian I cannot return.

And I cannot return as a human being.

The human soul, truth, conscience, God, mankind—all these notions are “only a lie of the class enemy.”

A human being is “nothing but a mechanism whose truth is formed by interests, and whose soul is the hatred of classes.”

You have not the slightest notion how a state looks, whose foundations have been built upon the wisdom of hatred and annihilation.*

Indeed the Bolsheviks have succeeded in warping the souls in millions of human beings.

And this is their greatest crime.

*Cp. “*The Wisdom of Hatred and Annihilation*” of the same Author.

The man has become rude, coarse, rough, wild, bestial, criminal, mendacious, deceiving and being deceived, full of distrust, fear, hatred and cruelty. Escaping from the death he puts to death his fellow-creatures.

Mankind has been humbled, lashed and tortured.

Its soul has been most savagely suppressed by the cruel hands of the torturers.

The victim becomes a dead phantom without honour and conscience.

He is a wild beast with the soul of a hater, vengeful and eager for annihilation.

“All the gentlemen—into one grave !” cries the Bolshevik poet, Paul Tychyna, in a fit of rage.

“ One mass grave !”—this is the holy ideal for the Bolshevik poetry.

Mankind is there, a bloody ghost of misery, war, hunger and death.

The Ghost of the Apocalypse.

I cannot return as a human being.

I see the endless line of martyrs rising to the Last Judgment of Humanity.

I see the thousands of the Polish soldiers, who had fought as heroes against the Germans, and who as prisoners of war have been then murdered by the Bolsheviks.

I see the endless procession of peasants, dying from hunger.

I see the mad mothers, eating their children.

I see the clergymen, dying with hands stretched out to the sky.

I see the hell, as it has not been seen by Dante. The hell of Dante pales. It is abstract, cooled by human mind, putting it into a classified order.

Here the hell has been caught in its naked reality.

Here in the Ukraine, which suffered the same cruelty under both the Bolshevist and German regimes.

Against this eternal hell are fighting the Ukrainian knights of the sacred war.

But you do not understand me.

You do not know the sharp physical feeling of pains of nostalgia.

You do not know the unextinguishable thirst for the beauty of the Ukrainian endless prairies and for the charm of Ukrainian night.

You have not heard the roar of the Dniepr, and you cannot understand this roar in our souls. The roar of our long historical tradition, the symphony of freedom, knighthood, truth and tragic heroism.

You cannot hear this cry of millions of suffering hearts that roars in my soul :

“We can’t return !”

You cannot understand my fervent love to Ukraine, to the state which exists in my mind as the soul of my ideals.

The Ukraine of goodness, liberty, brotherhood and truth,
The Ukraine of shining stars.

You do not believe that the holy knights of Monsalvat live hidden in the fens, forests, gorges, and mountains of Ukraine.

I see these young, beautiful knights, I see them fighting, and dying. They rend their shirts on their breasts, and, dying, they cry to the stars :

— “ I’m for the Independent Ukraine ! Shoot, executioner ! ”

You do not know this Ukraine—the philosophical stone of truth.

But to whom do I speak ?

Does mankind exist in the world ?

Do I believe in the conscience of humanity ?

I speak to you glowing deserts.

I speak to you cold stones.

I speak to you, high rocks of the Alps I see from my window.

I speak to you.

Because mankind does not exist.

I will create mankind of you, rough stones and wild rocks.

A mankind new and better, will I create.

May, 1945.

Of the same author :

“*The Creation of Humanity*”—published by “New Epoch” in English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Ukrainian languages.

“*The Historical Mission of Ukraine.*” (An introduction into the early history of the Ukrainian state)—published by “New Epoch” in English, French and Ukrainian languages.

“*The Wisdom of Hatred and Annihilation*”—published by “New Epoch” in English and Ukrainian languages.

“*I Can't Return*”—published by “New Epoch” in French, German and Ukrainian languages.

In Polish language :

“*The Hymns of the Rigveda*”—translations from the Rigveda and original poetry.

“*The Hymns of the Battle*”—translations from the Rigveda and original poetry.

In Ukrainian language :

“*The Sufferings of the Young Huzul*”—a novel.

“*The Knighthood of the Sun God*”—poems.

“*The Hymns to the Earth*”—translations from the Atharvaveda and original poetry.

"Rise Perun"—translations from the Rigveda and original poetry.

"The Mysterious Knowledge of Perun"—the upanishad.

"The True Soul of Shevchenko's Poetry"—historiosophical study.

In manuscripts, ready for print :

"The Knight of the Holy Battle—Hryhory Skovoroda"—historiosophical study, published by the living word in Galicia, Austria and Bavaria.

"The Purushasuktam—or the Mystery of Sacrifice"—philological and metaphysical study, presented to the Ukrainian Free Academy during its conference in Dillingen, Bavaria, May, 1947.

"Nation on the Cross"—a mystical study—published by the living word in Bavaria, 1947.

Under the editorship of the author :

"The Order"—Religious and Philosophical Thought, two numbers in English language.

Under the editorship of Bohdan Wijtenko :

"The Order"—Religious and Philosophical Thought, nine numbers in Ukrainian language, containing articles, essays and poems of the author.

