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### WHO EDITED THE SERIES “ИЗБРАННЫЕ СТИХИ РУССКИХ ПОЭТОВ” (SELECTED POEMS BY RUSSIAN POETS, 1914)?

WHO EDITED THE SERIES “ИЗБРАННЫЕ СТИХИ РУССКИХ ПОЭТОВ”  
(SELECTED POEMS BY RUSSIAN POETS, 1914)?

The article is concerned with the discovery of the author–compiler of the series “Избранные стихи русских поэтов” (Selected Poems by Russian Poets, 1914), compiled by the revolutionary terrorist Ksenia Pamfilova (1881–1957), a member of the Combat Organization of the Socialist Revolutionaries (nickname Irina), the wife of the famous Russian revolutionary Lev Zilberberg who was executed in 1907. After the provocateur Azef’s denunciation and arresting group, which Pamfilova belonged to, she managed to slip out of the police hands and flee to the West. When she settled in Italy (Cavi di Lavagna), she prepared this collection with her comrades in arms, the “group of compilers” (most likely Boris Savinkov, Andrey Sobol and others). It was published in the capital of Russia (Mikhail Stas-yulevych’s printing-house).

Keywords: Ksenia Pamfilova, politics and art, literature and revolutionary terror, literary (and literary-publishing) activities of revolutionary terrorists.

КТО РЕДАКТИРОВАЛ СЕРИЮ  
«ИЗБРАННЫЕ СТИХИ РУССКИХ ПОЭТОВ» (1914)?

Статья посвящена обнаружению автора-составителя серии сборников “Избранные стихи русских поэтов” (1914). Им явилась революционерка-террористка Ксения Памфилова (1881–1957), член Боевой организации эсеров (партийная кличка Ирина), жена казненного в России (1907) известного

революционера Льва Зильберберга. Вслед за доносом провокатора Азефа и ареста группы, к которой принадлежала Памфилова, ей удалось выскользнуть из рук полиции и бежать на Запад. Поселившись в итальянской рыбацкой деревушке Кави ди Лаванья (Cavi di Lavagna), она в содружестве со своими товарищами по оружию, «группой составителей» (по всей видимости, Борисом Савинковым, Андреем Соболев и др.), и явилась составителем и редактором этих сборников, увидевших свет в российской столице (типография Михаила Стасюлевича).

Ключевые слова: Ксения Памфилова, политика и искусство, литература и революционный террор, литературная (и литературно-издательская) деятельность революционеров-террористов.

The literary (and, more broadly, artistic) proclivities of many radical revolutionaries — those who belonged to the extremist wing of the body of fighters against the Tsarist regime, the militant terrorists — are fairly well-known. Boris Savinkov was a poet and fiction writer (publishing under the pseudonym V. Ropshin<sup>1</sup>); his workmate at the “red workshop,” Ivan Kalyayev — a member of the SR Combat Organization who assassinated Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, and paid for this crime with his life — wrote poetry; going a little backward in time, we might recall Nikolai Morozov, a member of Narodnaya Volya who likewise wrote poetry, and who published three large works that straddle the boundary between cultural history and natural science: *Откровение в грозе и буре* (The Revelation in Storm and Thunder, 1907), *Пророки* (The Prophets, 1914), and the seven-volume study *Христос* (Christ, 1924–1932). This list could be extended.

That said, the fascination of these advocates of bloody terror with the fine arts hides a wealth of unsolved psychological mysteries and vexing moral enigmas. First and foremost, we are faced with the perplexing and seemingly inexplicable paradox of the unity of two diametrically opposite elements: art, with its attempt to harmonize

<sup>1</sup> Upon reading his poems in the posthumous edition (Paris, 1931), Vladislav Khodasevich was extremely disappointed that, by being clothed in lyrical garb, the mental drama of this “ideological murderer” became stripped of its demonic grandeur: “the real Savinkov has turned out to be orders of magnitude lesser than the legendary one,” as he put it. Владислав Ходасевич, *Собрание сочинений в 4-х томах* (Москва: Согласие, 1996–1997), II, 244. Here and henceforth all the translations are author of the article.

the world and resolve the tragic contradictions of the human predicament by appealing to our “nobler passions;” and the appetite for destruction, violence, and bloodshed. This paradoxical union of two irreconcilable opposites, the mixture of two immiscible substances, became organically interwoven with the complex and polyphonic history of the Russian Silver Age, leaving an indelible impression on those who were shaped in its atmosphere and who took its spiritual testaments to heart. In this sense, Xenia was one of those who firmly believed that the road to the kingdom of Freedom led through a ruthless struggle against the hated regime, and that only those willing to wade in blood would reach that Promised Land.

In 1914, a series of collections titled “Избранные стихи русских поэтов” (Selected Poems by Russian Poets) was published in St. Petersburg (at the Mikhail Stasyulevich print shop; Vasilyevsky Island, line 5, no 28). In fact, it would be more accurate to speak of two separate series united by a common design: one made up of collections arranged chronologically and another that groups them thematically. The “chronological” series consisted of three publications (the last of which, the third, was actually split into two books), whereas the “thematic” one appears to have been limited to a single issue — however, as we shall see later on, it could have been extended further. Thus, a total of five collections were produced; all the covers were designed by Konstantin Ligskey, who will be discussed below.

The book *Избранные стихи русских поэтов. Серия сборников по периодам. Период первый (Д. Давыдов, А. Фет)* (Selected Poems by Russian Poets. A Series of Collections Arranged Chronologically. Period I. D. Davydov — A. Fet. St. Petersburg, 1914) was 224 pages long. Its Introduction, written in the style of a high-school textbook, supplied the following notes:

Let us briefly elucidate the order in which we have decided to arrange the poets of the first period.

1. D. Davydov — the predecessor of Pushkin.
2. A. Pushkin
3. A. Delvig, E. Baratynsky, N. Yazykov, D. Venevitinov — Pushkin’s cotemporaries, comrades, and disciples.
4. V. Benediktov and A. Polezhayev — the “Romantics.”

5. A. Koltsov and A. Khomyakov — the forerunners of the second, realistic, “populist” period of Russian poetry.

6. M. Lermontov.

7. Y. Polonsky, N. Shcherbina, L. Mei, A. Maykov — the “classic” poets of the Pushkin era.

8. I. Turgenev and A. Tolstoy (in part), F. Tyutchev and A. Fet in particular — the completers of the 1<sup>st</sup> period, the Pushkin era, and the progenitors of the 3<sup>rd</sup> period of contemporary Russian poetry (SPRP: Introduction).<sup>2</sup>

The Introduction to the next collection — which was 272 pages long, and which, based on the editors’ classification scheme, comprised the second period in the history of Russian poetry (from Nikolay Ogarev to Dmitry Merezhkovsky) — stated:

Here follows a brief elucidation of the order of arrangement of the poets of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period.

1. N. Ogarev, Y. Zhadovskaya, I. Aksakov, N. Nekrasov, A. Pleshcheyev, A. Zhemchuzhnikov — the first “realists” and “populists”.

2. N. Dobrolyubov, M. Mikhailov, V. Kurochkin, I. Omulevsky, L. Trefolev — the “realists” and “populists” of the 1860s and 1870s.

3. I. Nikitin, I. Surikov, S. Drozhzhin, F. Postupayev — the populist poets who emerged from the common people.

4. S. Frug, P. Y., S. Nadson, V. Figner, N. Morozov — representatives of the civic lyric poetry of the 1880s.

5. A. Apukhtin, A. Golenishchev-Kutuzov, K. Sluchevsky, A. Andreyevsky — those outside the mainstream.

6. Skitalets, V. Bashkin, G. Galina, A. Chumachenko, V. Rudich — new poets who had more affinities with the 2<sup>nd</sup> period than with the 3<sup>rd</sup> one.

7. N. Minsky, D. Merezhkovsky — the completers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period and the heralds of the 3<sup>rd</sup> period (SPRP: Introduction).

The first book of the third period, which featured poets from Konstantin Fofanov to Valery Bryusov (and was 129 pages long), opened with a longer Introduction than the previous publications:

The new poetry has become so tangled and ramified that one needs a certain principle of grouping, of classifying, to arrange the new poets in any sequence whatsoever. Here, we feel obliged to give at least a brief and general outline of the principles of classification that have guided us in this endeavor (SPRP: III).

<sup>2</sup>*Избранные стихи русских поэтов* (Санкт-Петербург: тип. М. Стасюлевича, 1914). Hence: SPRP (Selected Poems by Russian Poets), with page numbers.

Although this was followed by an overview of the assignment of poets, the representatives of the “new poetry,” to particular groups, the actual principles that determined this assignment look rather tentative and subjective — and hence, extremely precarious

[...] Our grouping grew not so much out of a conscious decision, based of content and form — but, rather, out of an unconscious, intuitively grasped combination: not so much out of the authors’ ends and means, as out of the results they achieved. Thus, two such different poets as Ellis and [A. M.] Dobrolyubov are united in our eyes by their common extreme concentration of religious fervor; conversely, Klyuev — who, in formal terms, is much more of a “symbolist-idealist” than Dobrolyubov — is regarded by us as a neo-realist, a “naturalist-populist”, by virtue of the strength of the concrete earthly life within him (SPRP: IV).

According to the Introduction, the key factor determining the assignment of a poet to this or that group is his/her inner intonation:

This major inner intonation (so to speak) of the poet is determined by the way he perceives and receives the world. This perception and “reception” can have different degrees of abstraction and objectivity. On the upper rungs of abstraction, we find the “symbolists-idealists”, while the lower rungs are home to the “concrete-symbolists”. The “impressionists” convey more direct, subjective impressions. The “stylists” paint a more self-conscious, objective picture. The “neo-realists” constitute a synthesized center of sorts, and they grow into a complex, ramified tangle on both of these planes (SPRP: IV).

Despite the reasonable assertion that “in their extremes, the various types of new poets move very far apart,” the author of the Introduction admitted that

[...] they always share many formal and spiritual commonalities, and these types are so deeply intertwined, shading into each other, that the groupings sketched out below are necessarily arbitrary in many cases. Nevertheless, we believe that, over time, a certain succession of literary movements becomes apparent: first, the stylists and symbolists-idealists; then, the symbolists and neo-realists (SRPR: IV–V).

The author goes on to give the following illustrations of this thesis:

1. K. Fofanov, V. Solovyev, P. Solovyeva (Allegro), M. Lokhvitskaya, I. Bunin — the heralds of the new poetry.

2. K. Balmont, Z. Gippius, F. Sologub, V. Bryusov<sup>3</sup> — the progenitors of the new poetry.

3. A. Blok, A. Bely, V. Ivanov, I. Konevskoy, J. Baltrušaitis, V. Strazhev, A. Dobrolyubov, Ellis, V. Polyakov — the “symbolists-idealists.”

4. M. Kuzmin, M. Voloshin, N. Gumilyov, A. Marie, A. Bisk, A. Tinyakov — the “stylists.”

5. I. Annensky, V. Gofman, Y. Sidorov, I. Novikov, V. Pyast, M. Tsvetaeva, I. Ehrenburg, A. Akhmatova, Nelli, I. Severyanin — the “impressionists,” “concrete symbolists.”

6. S. Chorny, P. Potemkin — the “neorealist-caricaturists.”

7. S. Gorodetsky, M. Zenkevich, O. Mandelstam, L. Stolitsa, P. Radimov, A. N. Tolstoy, N. Klyuev, S. Klychkov, M. Shaginyan — the “neorealist-naturalists” and “populists” (SRPR: V–VI).

This introduction was reproduced in volume 2 of the third period, the largest publication of this entire project (314 pages), which included poets from Alexander Blok to Marietta Shaginyan.

The single issue of *Избранные стихи русских поэтов. Серия сборников по темам. Россия* (Selected Poems by Russian Poets. A Series of Thematically Grouped Collections. Russia, 1914; 139 pp.) included poems by Alexander Odoyevsky, Aleksey Khomyakov, Alexander Pushkin, Aleksey Koltsov, Mikhail Lermontov, Fyodor Tyutchev, Afanasy Fet, Aleksey Tolstoy, Apollon Maykov, Lev Mei, Ivan Nikitin, Ivan Aksakov, Nikolay Ogarev, Aleksey Zhemchuzhnikov, Ivan Turgenev, Nikolay Dobrolyubov, Innokenty Omulevsky (Fedorov), Nikolay Nekrasov, Aleksey Apukhtin, Arseny Golenishchev–Kutuzov, Simon Frug, Pyotr Yakubovich, Semyon Nadson, Nikolay Minsky, Konstantin Sluchevsky, Vladimir Solovyev, Konstantin Fofanov, Fyodor Sologub, Ivan Bunin, Konstantun Balmont, Ivan Konevsky, Valery Bryusov, Zinaida Gippius, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Vasily Rudich, Andrei Bely, Pavel Potemkin, Sasha Chorny, Ilya Ehrenburg, Ada Chumachenko, Alexander Blok, Sergey Gorodetsky, Aleksey Tolstoy, Mikhail Zenkevich, Sergey Klychkov, and Nikolay Klyuev.

The identity of the editor(s) of this fairly sizeable anthology of Russian verse, who also took a stab at classifying the materials contained therein, grouping them by theme, has remained obscure to

<sup>3</sup>21 poems by Bryusov were included in this issue.

this day. Their name(s) do not appear on the pages of the anthology itself (except for the abovementioned cover designer, Ligskey) — and, to the best of our knowledge, no one has ever attempted to discover who compiled these volumes. And yet, the hunt for their identity(ies) leads us into the circle of those peculiar authors who divided their lives between *belles-lettres* and revolutionary-terrorist activity, between artistic creation and the struggle to overthrow the hated Russian regime.

Who, then, was the anonymous editor of the series of volumes discussed here, and why did this person choose to remain anonymous?

The answer to this question (or, at least, to its first part) can be found in a letter that has been preserved in Bryusov's archive. We think it worthwhile to reproduce the full text of the letter, which is typewritten and dated May 20, 1914 (according to the postal stamp on the envelope), along with the publishing project outline that was attached to it:

Dear Sir,

Given our deep respect and interest in you as a poet, we take the liberty of writing to you on the subject of our publishing project *Selected Poems by Russian Poets, Arranged Thematically and Chronologically*.

We are also sending you this outline, which should give you some idea of the nature of our project. As for its execution — see the collections, which we have mailed to you.

We would greatly appreciate it if you were to review our work in the press — or, at least, convey your opinion and remarks in a personal letter.

Perhaps you might know of some particular publishing house that would be willing to undertake the publication of future collections in our series. As of this day, we have published five collections (four of which are chronological, and one of which is thematic — “Russia”) through the M. M. Stasyulevich publishing house. However, seeing that Stasyulevich drags on the process for too long, we are searching for a new home for our project, and we request your assistance: Could you help us in this endeavor? We would be very grateful. Naturally, you should do so only if our project — its goals and execution — is to your liking.

Right now, we have a collection titled *Woman* virtually ready to go into print, along with the rough draft of another collection titled *Love*. The other collections are at such an advanced stage that they can be submitted for publication in two weeks' time each.

We hope that you will find our letter worthy of a reply.

With sincerest respect, please accept, etc.  
 On behalf of the editorial team,  
 [added in hand:]

Xenia Silberberg

Address:  
 Signora Xenia Silberberg  
 Cavi di Lavagna Rivera Ligure  
 Italie<sup>4</sup>

As mentioned above, this letter was accompanied by a project outline, which was printed typographically (at the same Stasyulevich print shop), and which laid out the central purpose of the project, its goals and content, as well as its primary target audience:

ABOUT THE PROJECT:  
*Selected Poems by Russian Poets*  
 Arranged chronologically and thematically

The proposed collections of “selected poems by Russian poets” largely pursue the same goals as do other similar anthologies, readers, etc. However, they differ from those in the way they frame and achieve their goals. Let us briefly lay out the distinguishing features of our collections.

Their first peculiarity is the aspiration to a higher aesthetical level than the existing poetry collections. At present, it is not only the cheap, trashy crowd-pleasers, not only the naive compilations by casual editors, which suffer from this flaw. Instead, even the high-minded, ideological collections (e.g., P. Y’s *Russian Muse*<sup>5</sup>) seem to aim at an intellectually deficient or somewhat immature readership; at best, they may be described as grammar-school-like chrestomacies. We believe that Russia is already home to an extensive circle of readers and lovers of poetry, who possess an (inborn or cultivated) taste, but who are just as much (if not more so) in need of collections that would satisfy their refined aesthetic sensibilities. This circle of readers is our target audience.

Accordingly, we have adopted the following principles to guide our editorial process. First of all, we wished to make the selection systematic, rather than random; thus, apart from some exceptions (which should be easily understand-

<sup>4</sup>OR RGB. F. 386, box 86, file 57.

<sup>5</sup>This refers to the *Russian Muse* anthology, which was widely popular in Russia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and which was edited by the revolutionary populist, poet, and translator Pyotr Yakubovich — *Русская муза: стихотворения и характеристики 132 поэтов*, ed. Петр Якубович (Санкт-Петербург: Русское богатство, 1907).



able to the reader), we have limited ourselves to individual, small poems (rather than fragments of larger works), and to original (rather than translated) pieces. Furthermore, we have refrained from offering any edifying remarks (in the form of critical-biographical references, etc.). Likewise, our selection process is free from any aesthetical, political, or philosophical biases. Finally, we have taken several extraordinary steps to make the selection maximally strict and aesthetically pure.

First and foremost, the collections were compiled not by a single individual, but by a circle of enthusiasts working together. All the poems by the major Russian poets (except for a few accidental gaps) were read by several (as a rule of thumb, at least three) persons and marked up for their unmediated aesthetic impact. The best poems were then chosen based on the total number of these marks (with a little extra weight assigned to the judgment of one particular member of the circle, who was playing the role thereof of editor-in-chief). This resulted in as many as four thousand poems by more than 100 poets. And these, in turn, served as the basis for the final selection (which was once again made by several circle members, under the editorship of one individual).

Obviously, such collective editorship may result in both strengths and weaknesses. It may suppress the unmediated individual perception, making the selection process faceless, mechanical, and lifeless. Conversely, the involvement of several individuals can serve to diversify and expand the selection while also making it more rigorous and pure. At the outset of our project, we were very concerned about the former eventuality, and we also feared the prospect of total failure as a result of the cacophony caused by the radically divergent tastes of the key members of the circle. However, we came to learn from experience that, not by renouncing our individual preferences, but by developing, evolving, and juxtaposing them in the process of reading the same poems over and over again, we can usually create some resultant force, converging on a relatively objective aesthetic evaluation of a very wide variety of poems by almost all the poets in our sample. We, therefore, dare to believe that our experiment has not been a failure, that the method of collective choice has saved us from overlooking many aesthetically valuable poems and also from letting some weak poems slip through — both of these pitfalls seem to be inevitable in cases of individual choice.

Later, in the process of compiling the collections themselves, we were guided by the following considerations. Being unwilling to do violence to the readers' tastes, and wishing to present the aesthetic content in an aesthetic package, we decided to offer, in lieu of the commonplace large and unwieldy books containing chaotic jumbles of verse, *two series of small, systematized collections*, handsomely produced. Each reader will then be able to select the poems that accord with his/her tastes.

The first series of collections — *the chronological one* — is self-evident. These three periods of Russian poetry correspond to its three major schools: the "classicalists," the populist realists, and the new poets (who, despite the great variety of schools they belong to, are clearly aesthetically distinct from the first two). We should note here that, while arranging the poets by period, we made some

departures from strict chronology for the sake of greater thematic unity in the character of their poetry.

The second series — *the thematic one* — seems just as necessary and fascinating. First of all, this grouping of poems by subject matter is of major interest to the systematic study of poetry. On the one hand, the individual natures of the poets become distinct and pronounced only by being compared against common themes; on the other hand, in order to describe Russian poetry — both as a whole and as a succession of schools — it is equally important and necessary to perform a detailed thematic study of it.

However, apart from this relatively specialist interest, we attach a much broader significance to the thematic collections. For one thing, this natural systematization leads to a concentration, strengthening, and deepening of the aesthetic impact; secondly, each reader can focus on that corner of the poetic field that is most to their liking, achieving a fuller and more intimate appreciation of that corner. To validate this claim about the existence of a real need for collections of poems grouped by subject matter, we may cite the appearance of several collections of this kind — not only abroad (in France, Germany, etc.) but in Russia, as well. Some examples are: *Christ in World Poetry* by Mr. Brikhnichev, *A Compendium of 18th-Century Love Lyrics* by Mr. Wrangel,<sup>6</sup> and numerous occasional publications — on the War of 1812, on the House of Romanov, etc. Of course, for now, such collections are still sporadic, and only a handful of them are of interest. However, our goal is precisely the creation of thematic collections that would be complete and systematic.

There seems to be only one valid objection to this systematization: it will be dry, deadening the immediate aesthetic impact. This danger is real enough, but only when the systematization is done ineptly, in too radical a fashion. Naturally, extreme fragmentation and concreteness of the subject matter — e.g., separate collections dedicated to “Moon,” “Sun,” “Stars,” “Spring,” “Sunset,” “Sea,” “Steppe,” “Flowers,” etc., in lieu of combining all these themes under the single heading of “Nature” — will result in tasteless gruel. However, if we limit ourselves to the division that exists in painting, in music, we will definitely achieve that concentration and intensification of beauty that we can see, for instance, in a bouquet consisting only of roses, of chrysanthemums, etc. Another possible pitfall of a thematic division (which none of the collections that we know of has been able to avoid) — the zeal to collect and the willingness to include aesthet-

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<sup>6</sup>This refers to the following books: *Христос в мировой поэзии* (*Christ in World Poetry*), edited by the poet, journalist, and publisher Iona Brikhnichev, one of the leaders of the “Golgothan Christians” movement (*Христос в мировой поэзии*, ed. Иона Брехничев. Москва: Торговый дом «В.И. Знаменский и К°», 1912), and *Сборник любовной лирики XVIII века* (*A Compendium of 18th-Century Love Lyrics*), ed. A. Veselovskaya and Baron N. Wrangel, who authored the article “The Woman in 18th-Century Russian Art” in it — *Сборник любовной лирики XVIII века*, ed. Анна Веселовская, барон Николай Врангель (Санкт-Петербург: Пантеон, 1910).

ically weak poems on a given subject, to round out the collection — does not apply to us, since, as stated above, we prioritize the strict aesthetic criterion over everything else, scrupulously avoiding third-rate poets and poems.

For now, we are preparing collections on the following subjects: 1) The World. 2) God. 3) Nature. 4) Life and Death. 5) The Human Being, Humankind. 6) Woman. 7) Youth. 8) Love. 9) Truth and the Ideal. 10) Thought and Word. 11) Beauty. 12) Poetry and Poets. 13) Social Motifs. 14) Russia. 15) The People, Labor. 16) The Village. 17) The City. 18) Images. 19) Moods. 20) Fairy Tales. 21) Songs and Romances. 22) Jokes and Satire. Eventually, we may be able to sketch out some additional subjects.

One final general remark regarding *the order of arrangement* of both the authors and their individual poems in each collection. This arrangement is not based on any formal principle (e.g., the alphabet), but neither is it random. Rather, it is rooted in the *inner, directly felt* connections between individual poets and poems — making them shade and modulate into each other, like the melodies and harmonies of a single music. Of course, this criterion is largely subjective, but let us note that, although this arrangement had been sketched by the editor of our circle, many other details were introduced by the other members, who also approved of the editor's scheme. In the chronological collections, where the arrangement was more complex and delicate, based on our established classification of poets, the editor's general explanation is given in the text itself.

Finally, here are some scattered but important notes to the readers. In the *thematic* collections, the reader will not find even a minimally *complete* collection of poems on a given theme: Apart from the sheer impracticality of such a massive reprint, we aimed (as stated above) at quality rather than quantity, and we wished to include only the *best* poems on a given subject, rather than all of them. The three *chronological* collections, taken together, represent *all of the Russian poetry over 100 years*, including all the *significant* poets who can give *unmediated aesthetic satisfaction even today*; at the same time, we pass over the poets who are only of *historical interest* and who are no longer read today (a total of about 900 poems by 90 poets).

Finally, everything that has been said above naturally leads to the following request to our readers: Take our collections in the spirit in which they were compiled — primarily as an aesthetic, rather than intellectual, exercise. At the same time — or, rather, for this very reason — you should keep rereading even the pieces that you didn't like: We did not seek out poems that give instant gratification but focused on those that grow on the reader over time.

We end the letter with an earnest request to authors and publishers to send us (the M. M. Stasyulevich book depository, St. Petersburg, V[asilyevsky] I[sland], line 5, 28) books of poetry to help us correct and expand our collections. We are also asking all our readers to speak their minds, giving us detailed critical feedback that will make our future work better.

The editors<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> OR RGB. F. 386, box 86, file 57.

This letter to Bryusov was written by Xenia, who appears to have been the initiator of this publishing project. The series of collections “Избранные стихи русских поэтов” (Selected Poems by Russian Poets) — which came out in the Russian capital from 1914 on and was aimed at lovers of poetry in the educated strata of society — was created in the Italian Riviera, and the driving force behind it was an illegal alien who had fled from Russia to avoid persecution by the political police. Apart from Pamfilova-Silberberg herself, who were the members of the “circle of enthusiasts” (as she put it in the letter to Bryusov) editing this series? All we can offer is conjecture, albeit with a fairly high degree of plausibility.

In Cavi di Lavagna, Xenia had a love affair with Andrei Sobol, an escaped convict who would soon become a famous author in his homeland, only to commit suicide on June 7, 1926 (for more on him, see the monograph: Khazan 2015).<sup>8</sup> This affair became known not only in their circle, but far beyond it.<sup>9</sup> Since both lovers were being monitored by agents of the foreign department of the Okhrana, who perused their letters, we have documentary evidence of Xenia’s social circle around this time.

Thus, there is a surviving letter by Sobol from October 11, 1912 (year deduced from the contents), mailed to Xenia in Sanremo where she had traveled with her daughter to visit Maria Alexandrovna Silberberg, the mother of her executed husband.<sup>10</sup> Silberberg was then living at villa Vera Monte Solaro, which was rented

<sup>8</sup> Since the letters written by both Xenia and Andrei Sobol were intercepted and perused by agents of the Tsarist Okhrana abroad, they eventually landed in the archives of the police department and have survived to the present day, see: GA RF. F. 102, op. 265, file 801, pp. 57–63; for Sobol’s letters to Xenia, see: GA RF. F. 102, op. 265, file 674, pp. 91–332. See also: GA RF. F. 102, op. 265, file 801, pp. 76, 80, 119.

<sup>9</sup> In his obituary of Andrei Sobol, the prominent literary critic Pyotr Pilsky goes so far as to assert — erroneously, of course — that Sobol was the brother-in-law of Savinkov, referring to the fact that Savinkov was the common-law husband of Yevgenia Silberberg, Xenia’s sister-in-law, the sister of her late husband. See: Петр Пильский, “Суд Андрея Соболя над собой.” *Сегодня*, 12 June, no. 128 (1926): 3.

<sup>10</sup> GA RF. F. 102, op. 265, file 674.

by Savinkov and his then common-law wife, Yevgenia Ivanovna Silberberg. Needless to say, this trip was well-known to the police agents who were keeping tabs on Xenia. We can see it in a report sent to St. Petersburg by Alexander Krasilnikov, “an official for special assignments” (registered at the special police department on October 20, 1912):

To: His Excellency

Sir Director of the Police Department

The official for special assignments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs [Krasilnikov]

Top secret

Based on information obtained by external surveillance, Yevgenia Somova’s daughter-in-law, the widow Xenia Silberberg, who has lately been living with her underage daughter in Cavi di Lavagna, recently made a trip to Sanremo, to visit Savinkov and Somova. After spending several days with them, Silberberg returned to Cavi; she was met at the Genoa railway station by Yuli Sobol (Andrei Nezhdanov), with whom she has been cohabiting, judging by existing secret information. They both spent the night at a hotel in Genoa, where they signed in: She under her real name, and he using the alias *Andrei Sobol*, a student living in Cavi. The next day, they both traveled back to Cavi, where Silberberg stayed. As for Sobol, he left Cavi several days later and visited Milano, from where he traveled to Berne.<sup>11</sup>

If we are to treat plot details from Sobol’s short story *Вскольз* (In Passing, 1916), which is set in Cavi di Lavagna, as a “utilitarian”-biographical document, then the following sentence, referring to the story’s child protagonist, who stands in for Xenia Jr. — “During the summer, my little friend lived by the church on the mountain; in the winter, her relatives moved down, and we became close neighbors, even sharing a balcony” — indicates that Sobol and Xenia Junior actually became neighbors one fine morning.

Sobol never specifies the prototypes of the story’s protagonists: He names no names, and refrains from telling us whose daughter his “little friend” is; neither does he disclose the identity of the mother, who also appears in the story. Nevertheless, apart from the general biographical context, numerous scattered details enable us

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<sup>11</sup> GA RF. F. 102. OO. 1906, file 115, vol. 18, p. 196; GA RF. F. 102, op. 314, file 521, p. 185.

to reconstruct the characters' identities. The "little friend", the offspring of the Russian mother Pamfilova and the Jewish father Silberberg, is a "half-breed": This can be deduced from the description of another character in the story, the boy Dima — another child of émigrés, who is nonetheless fully Russian ("no halves"):

There are three of us now: me, the girl, and Dima the little Parisian.

He is already a Russian — completely, no halves: This was immediately reported to me by my friend.<sup>12</sup>

By the end of the story, the motif of "halfness/mongrelhood" becomes explicit, turning into the key theme of the work. One of the story's pivotal scenes, which would become a recurrent feature of Sobol's work, is the description of an unexpected snowfall on the Italian Riviera; the Russian-born child, who has spent her life far from the land of her birth, and has never seen snow, greets it with indescribable joy:

From the balcony, I saw that the whole beach was blanketed with snow; it covered the yellow oranges; the red camellia shrubs were strung with thin white threads, while the blue sea was napping calmly against the beach, treating the snow like an old acquaintance. We rushed down from the balcony. The worried Italians were hemming and hawing: This was their first snow in thirty-five years.

For a long time, my girl kept running along the beach, wild with jubilation, and shouting at me:

— Look, look, it is so soft!

From time to time, she would run up to me, her hands full of fast-melting snow:

This is Russian snow, right? Tell me that this is Russian snow!<sup>13</sup>

This is followed by a scene that deepens the "Russian — Jewish" motif:

[...] In the evening, before going to bed, she asked:

— Is there such a thing as Jewish snow?

I looked into her inquisitive eyes and... replied:

— There is.

— Is it just as white?

— It is.

<sup>12</sup> Андрей Соболев, "Вскольз," *Еврейская жизнь*, 14 August, no. 33 (1916): 39.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, 38–39.

— Is it just as soft?

— Yes.

— And how do I tell it apart?

Fortunately, her mother came to my rescue:

— Girl, girl, it is time to go to bed.

My little friend said reluctantly:

— Coming.

And, walking away, she kept turning back to me, and I knew that she was still preoccupied with her thought:

— How do I tell it apart?<sup>14</sup>

The same “snowy” fragment appears in Sobol’s short story *Ностальгия* (Nostalgia), which was written a year earlier, in 1915:

One winter morning, I woke to find the beach blanketed with snow. It covered the yellow oranges; the red camellia shrubs were strung with thin white threads. The bluish sea was napping calmly against the beach, treating the snow like an old acquaintance.

The worried Italians were hemming and hawing. Old Mafaldo made himself hoarse by repeating:

— We haven’t had snow in thirty-five years. This must mean something.

The little Russian girl, who had never actually lived in Russia, kept running along the beach, wild with jubilation, and shouting at me:

— Snow! Snow!

And she kept asking:

This is Russian snow, right? Tell me that this is Russian snow!<sup>15</sup>

Sobol must have cherished the unusual sight of snow in the mild, subtropical Italian climate, since he also incorporated this passage into his novella *Люди прихожие* (Passersby, 1916):

I recall one winter, spent in a seaside Italian village. Once, upon waking, I saw that the beach was blanketed with snow; it covered the yellow oranges; the red camellia shrubs were strung with thin white threads. The blue sky was napping calmly over the beach, treating the snow like an old acquaintance.

The Italians were hemming and hawing: Old Mafaldo, who combined the duties of postman and cobbler, made himself hoarse by repeating:

— We haven’t had snow in thirty-five years. This must mean something. They say that, last week, Spain was covered with a ten-meter layer of snow. This has also been mentioned in the papers...

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, 39.

<sup>15</sup> Андрей Соболев, “Ностальгия,” *Голос жизни*, 4 March, no. 10 (1915): 8.

The little Russian girl, who had never actually laid eyes on Russia, kept running along the beach, wild with jubilation, and shouting at me:

— Snow! Snow!

She tried to roll a snowball, and kept asking:

This is Russian snow, right? Tell me that this is Russian snow!<sup>16</sup>

Sobol would return to this scene one final time in his sketch *Одесское* (On Odessa, 1919):

I remember an unexpected snowfall in Italy. In a minute, the snow blanketed the seashore, the orange trees, and the red camellia shrubs. My little friend, a seven-year-old Russian girl who had been born in Italy, was indescribably ecstatic. I recall her running along the beach, trying to cup the snow in her hands. She kept asking me:

— Tell me that this is Russian snow! Tell me that this is Russian snow!

And now, I myself, just like that girl — the daughter of an émigré and a revolutionary who had been executed back in 1906 — am walking through Odessa, watching the lonely, swirling, white snowflakes, and asking myself:

— This is Moscow snow, right?

Even though I am not seven, but twenty-, thirty-seven years old, I would like to believe, just like the girl, that this snow is from Moscow, and that it will not melt soon — unlike that Italian snow, which had left only some wet traces by noon.

Am I not an orphan, like that girl? Is the one who gave me birth — the one whose torment is my torment, whose mournful eyes I now glimpse between Robin's coffeehouse and the statue of Catherine II — not being executed every minute?<sup>17</sup>

Xenia's romantic relationship with Sobol appears to have been complicated by difficult and dramatic circumstances: She was unable to fully renounce the burden of widowhood — the loyalty owed to her executed husband — and Sobol, with his heightened sensitivity and nervous excitability, was acutely aware of this fact. This is the key to understanding Sobol's words about "him" — the invisible presence between the two lovers — in the abovementioned letter to Xenia from October 11, 1912, which was mailed to Sanremo, where she had traveled with her daughter to visit the mother of her late husband. Sobol wrote there, *inter alia*:

<sup>16</sup> Андрей Соболев, *Собрание сочинений в 4 томах* (Москва–Ленинград: Земля и фабрика, 1926), I, 101.

<sup>17</sup> Андрей Соболев, "Одесское," *Современное слово*, 17/30 November, no. 31 (1919): 3.



Without you, the minutes are dragging on interminably. And I know that you won't come as soon as you would wish to.

And, awe-inspiring, you will reach out to him with your soul and your eyes.

And I will keep repeating: "darling, darling"

Yet you do not hear. You will come, but he will still be present *within you*.

I told you:

— Xenia, come!

And you soothed me:

— Darling, I will indeed come.

Xenia, "indeed." Do you understand what you were saying?

[...] Pray tell, think for yourself: You will indeed bring him along.

Not alone. Not alone, since you haven't actually been alone this whole time.<sup>18</sup>

In the first, more "relaxed" and "businesslike" part of this huge letter, Sobol tells Xenia about a project that was on his (and, apparently, her) mind at the time: the compilation of a corpus of collective materials (articles, feuilletons), either for some existing Russian press organ or (which is more likely) for a fledgling new periodical (judging by the available evidence, this project came to nought):

Yesterday, I returned to Cavi at 11 PM. As I couldn't just sit still in my room, I kept wandering about. This morning, I edited the Tale of Life. In the afternoon, I wrote a little. I wanted to continue writing about Ropshin,<sup>19</sup> but I don't have the feuilleton[s] by Yevg. Yevg. [Kolosov]<sup>20</sup> (he took them away when he left), the article by Ignatov,<sup>21</sup> or the one by Merezhkovsky. In a word, I have nothing, and I won't be able to do anything without these materials.

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<sup>18</sup> GA RF. F. 102, op. 265, file 674, pp. 94–5.

<sup>19</sup> The literary pseudonym of Boris Savinkov.

<sup>20</sup> Yevgeny Kosolov (1879–1938, executed) was a member of the PSR and the Combat Organization. After being arrested and escaping from the prison hospital in July 1906, he fled abroad, and in May 1910 he settled in Cavi di Lavagna under the alias Edoardo Kolyari. According to the writer Mikhail Osorgin, who knew Kosolov well, "it was thanks to his efforts and agitation that the Russian émigrés of those years settled in Cavi"; see: Михаил Осоргин, "Местечко на Ривере," *Последние новости*, 26 October, no. 5694 (1936): 2. Under Soviet rule, he devoted the time between arrests to journalism and scholarly work, being a historian of the Russian revolutionary movement.

<sup>21</sup> In all likelihood, this refers to the publicist and literary and theater critic Ilya Ignatov (1858–1921), who was a member of the editorial team of the newspaper "Русские ведомости" in 1907–1914.

Well, there's no point in doing it.

In any case, I couldn't possibly publish it anywhere. No Russian newspaper will accept it, and when I wrote to you about [1 word unclear], I forgot that this newspaper would be published in Vech[erneye] Vr[emya] — and, ergo, it would refuse to run articles that are too radical. Why, then, should I make the effort?

Later, slipping first into a melancholic, lyrical-elegiac mood (“I do not wish to work in your room. I do not wish to look at it when you are gone. Oh God, time is dragging on so slowly! I keep writing, reading, and working, but the day is still not over”),<sup>22</sup> and then gradually ratcheting up the degree of emotional intensity, Sobol transforms the elegiac monologue of a lonely lover into an exalted lovers' duel, which culminates in the following passionate declaration flung at Xenia:

And I am struck by the thought: to take Sonya [Simanovskaya], thereby becoming your equal and easing your difficult task.<sup>23</sup>

As he wrote to Xenia in a state of nervous agitation, this was the reason that was driving him out of Cavi. In case he was able to realize his intention of leaving, Sobol asked Xenia to pay his debts out of the fee he was due to receive for his Russian translation of Sholem Aleichem's novel *Wandering Stars*:

If the 100 francs from Sholem Aleichem have arrived,<sup>24</sup> give 15 to Kolosov, 25 to Olga Nikolayevna Chernenkova, and 60 to Carmela [the proprietress of a grocery store in Cavi].<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> GA RF. F. 102, op. 265, file 674, pp. 92.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, 143. Sonya (Sarah) Simanovskaya (1889–?) was a medical student at Berlin University when Sobol met her. The two had a brief affair, of which Xenia was aware. The meaning of this declaration by Sobol is: ‘to go back to Simanovskaya, thereby becoming equal to you in our common commitment to remain faithful to someone.’

<sup>24</sup> On the fact that Sobol translated this novel into Russian, and on his financial dealings with Sholem Aleichem, see: Владимир Хазан, *Жизнь и творчество Андрея Соболя, или Повесть о том, как все вышло наоборот* (Санкт-Петербург: Издательство им. Н.И. Новикова; Издательский Дом “Галина Скрипит”, 2015), 155–72.

<sup>25</sup> GA RF. F. 102, op. 265, file 674, p. 150.

After receiving this letter from Sobol, Xenia replied to him that same day, without delay:

But you will not leave before my arrival, right? — she asked, — you will meet me in Genoa? I am going to mail the letter right now. [1 word unclear] and do not forget it, even for a minute.<sup>26</sup>

Sobol did wait for Xenia's arrival, and he came to meet her at the Genoa railway station — as we can learn from the abovementioned report by Krasilnikov, the “official for special assignments,” to the director of the Police Department.

The subsequent twists and turns of this relationship are obscure. All we know is that Sobol, who yearned to return to his homeland, finally did so in the autumn of 1914. Half a year prior to that, he had been to Salonika, but then came back to Cavi. His return is attested in a note he mailed to Xenia from Sanremo:

Sanremo. [May] 14. 10 AM.

I'm going back. As soon as I get there, I will tell you everything. I probably won't be able to write in transit, since I need “something” to buy stamps and postcards, and I have too little of that “something”. Prosh sends you his warm regards!

And so, I will soon be in Cavi.

I send Xenia [Junior] a warm kiss.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, we can conclude that Sobol was still in Cavi in May — i.e., the month when Xenia wrote her letter to Bryusov. Since Sobol himself had a certain aptitude for poetry (for instance, a notebook of poems by him, which he had given to Xenia, has been preserved in XPS Coll.), he could easily have been one of the editors of the series “Избранные стихи русских поэтов” (Selected Poems by Russian Poets).

Another person who may have been involved in this project is Prosh, who asked Sobol to convey his regards to Xenia in the note reproduced above. His full name was Prosh Perchevich Proshyan

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<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, 59.

<sup>27</sup> XPS Coll., box 9, folder 2.

(1883–1918), a Russian revolutionary activist and member of the SR party. After the October Revolution, Proshyan joined the coalition government, serving as People’s Commissar for Posts and Telegraphs (until March 1918); he was a political commissar of the Supreme Military Soviet; later, from May 1918, he was People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Union of Communes of the Northern Oblast. Following the anti-Bolshevik Left-SR uprising (July 1918), in which he took a direct and active part, Proshyan went underground, dying of typhus shortly thereafter. In the period discussed here, he lived in Cavi di Lavagna as a political exile. Given his closeness to Xenia and Sobol, and his interest in literary activities, he could very well have contributed to editing the “Избранные стихи русских поэтов” (Selected Poems by Russian Poets).

Almost nothing is known of the literary activities of Xenia herself. From the little we do know, we can mention her translation of the monograph *Molière in Russia*, by the French scholar Jules Patouillet, which was published in 1924 by the Berlin-based Petropolis publishing house (see: Паруёе 1924). This modest list can be extended by an acrostic she composed and dedicated to Savinkov (the initial letters of the original Russian lines, read from top to bottom, form the first and last names of the addressee: САВИНКОВУ БОРИСУ {to Boris Savinkov}). Thankfully, it has survived among her papers:

Сегодня вечер мне стихи принес,  
 Астральные, пугливые, больные, —  
 В них бледный свет, сочащийся от звезд,  
 И сок древесный, и забытый плес,  
 Неверный сон, и голоса ночные.  
 Когда тебе свои стихи прочту,  
 Окутанные в звездные шептанья,  
 В которых сердца скрытые терзанья,  
 Устами обнаженные мечтанья,  
 Блаженство памяти — всего, что выше чту, —  
 Окинешь взглядом комнаты квадрат,  
 Расположась на стуле, как на троне,  
 И так же, как и много лет назад,  
 Стихов моих болезненных раскат  
 Усмешкой легкой твои губы тронет...<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> XPS Coll.-NA.

(Today, the evening has brought me poems —  
 Astral, timid, and sick.  
 They exude pale light trickling down from the stars,  
 Tree sap, a forgotten stretch of river,  
 A false dream, and nocturnal voices.  
 When I read you my poems,  
 Swaddled in astral whispers,  
 Containing the hidden torments of the heart,  
 The dreams laid bare by the lips,  
 The bliss of memory — of all things enumerated above —  
 You will cast your gaze upon the square of the room,  
 Settling into the chair like a king upon his throne,  
 And, once again, just like many years ago,  
 The peal of my sickly verse  
 Will twist your lips into a light chuckle...)

Judging by these lines — which can be read either ironically or as a genuine expression of (mild) hurt and sorrow — one of the architects of Russian terror, who is here depicted as a supreme poetic judge and high priest, regarded Xenia's attempts to write poetry with a degree of mockery. However, despite the ironic chuckle that her poems brought to his lips, Savinkov may have endorsed the idea of publishing the series of collections “Избранные стихи русских поэтов” (Selected Poems by Russian Poets), and he may even have taken part in the implementation of this project.<sup>29</sup>

As we conclude the tale of the affair between Xenia and Sobol, we should mention that her recollections of him have been preserved in XPS Coll. As the text reproduced below indicates, they were written only after her move to Palestine (judging by the way they were written — on random pieces of paper that happened to be close at hand; the “telegraphed narrative”: a hurried, abbreviated, and choppy writing style, coupled with the absence of any reasonably extended “narrative” memoiristic descriptions, etc.):

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<sup>29</sup> Another possible contributor to the project, Konstantin Ligsky (1882–1931) — who, like all the other probable editors of *Избранные стихи русских поэтов*, was a member of the SR Party, an escaped convict (while doing hard labor in the harsh Gorny Zerentuy, he met Andrei Sobol and Prosh Proshyan), and a person with a measure of literary talent and aptitude.

Andrei: a suicide attempt — age 14–15.<sup>30</sup> “Poor, poor kid.” He remained such a “poor boy.” How he kept his cuffs clean in jail. He is a natural dandy, clean and elegant.

“Andreyushka, light of my life,” and yet he was not a source of light. At night, he would sit in the corner and howl like a wolf, and this is obviously madness. He often stood on its very brink.

Ehrenburg on him: To erase, and make everyone forget, my Jewishness, to make me fall upon the bosom of my upturned land.<sup>31</sup>

*Dust, Madness, Moses and Muhammad* — still unpublished, yet very typical of A[ndrei] S[obol].<sup>32</sup> *Song of Songs*. The images of children. His love for children (from the newspapers: in the box and among the papers). Ask Prof. D. Shor.<sup>33</sup>

“His eyes shone like a gentle, old bird.”<sup>34</sup> The free neck, the white, immaculate, backfolding collar. We are at the theater. Longing. My sudden tears.

He is in jail. Going out to meet me, he inspects the cleanliness of his cuffs. Prosh Proshyan in Cavi. Before his departure to Russia. Our house with the balcony. The three of us are walking. The Roman stone road. Shadows. I scattered rose petals — from the bouquet in my hands. Andrei was lagging behind, and I called out: An-d-re-i! Prosh: over there, in Russia, possibly in jail, I will remember this road, the rose petals, the sound of the sea, and your sonorous, singsong call — An-d-re-i! Prosh perished. Were his dark moments illuminated by the bright images of Italy? His song about the lover was in Armenian.

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<sup>30</sup>In the course of his life, Sobol made several suicide attempts. As we can see, he told Xenia about them in detail.

<sup>31</sup>From Ilya Ehrenburg’s poem *He вспоминай с улыбкой милой* (Recall with a Pleasant Smile).

<sup>32</sup>Xenia is wrong: All the abovementioned works by Sobol were published.

<sup>33</sup>On Prof. David Shor, whom Xenia met in Palestine, see: *Russian Philosophy in Exile and Eretz Israel*, vol. I, part 1: Nikolai Berdyaev and Yehoshua Shor: A Correspondence between Two Corners (1927–1946), comp. and comm. by Vladimir Khazan and Vladimir Janzen; Introduction to the series and the volume by Vladimir Khazan (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2019: index).

<sup>34</sup>The source of the quote could not be located. Sobol’s novella *Обломки* (*Fragments*) does contain a passage where eyes (or, rather, eyelids) are compared to birds, but the wording there differs from the one cited by Xenia — one of the protagonists, Mirovich, is described in the following terms: “His eyes are oblong, and the shadow of his eyelids is always upon his face, as though some bird of ill-omen were constantly hovering above him, like the eagle that is always circling above the conqueror, the victor, the successful man. He narrows his eyes, as though trying to trace the scattered roads through the red liquid.” Соболев, *Собрание сочинений*, III, 122.

His mother was an amateur actress.<sup>35</sup> One of his brothers was a dramatic actor.<sup>36</sup>

His fragility.

The stories: *The Cart Road*. Like the first long story in *Zavety*?<sup>37</sup>

On another piece of paper, she wrote:

1) “Poor, poor boy. Why did you do it in this way?”<sup>38</sup> (Andrei after the first [suicide] attempt: I can do without words).

2) “If God were to ask me what I wish to be, I would tell Him: My God, make me a water hauler, but definitely not a writer.”<sup>39</sup>

That same archive contains two undated letters from Sobol to Xenia Junior, and these attest to the depth of his tender feelings for the child. The first of these was probably written in Paris (the back of the letter, which was probably handed to the addressee by some third party, bears the words: “To Xenia Lvovna, M-lle Silberberg, in person. Cavi”):

Dear Xenichka!

Thank you for the letters. This letter, too, will be given to you after you go to bed. But you must go to sleep at once, without shouting for mommy twenty times in a row.

And yet you are still shouting? You dirty, filthy, dried-up thing!

How did you like the Parisian hat? Do you remember me? I still love you tenderly, even though you are a Malayan chimpanzee. And a Turkish shark. No,

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<sup>35</sup> Sobol’s mother, Mina Sergeevna (Sigismundovna) (*née* Berman; 1866–1927), had an aptitude for acting, and performed at an amateur theater.

<sup>36</sup> This refers to Sobol’s youngest brother, Vladimir Sobol (1892–?), a professional actor.

<sup>37</sup> Xenia is referring to one of Sobol’s first lengthy novellas, *Ростом не вышел* (Short of Stature), which was published in St. Petersburg, in the SR-affiliated magazine *Zavety*: Андрей Соболев, “Ростом не вышел,” *Заветы*, no. 5 (1914): 19–56, and included the following year in his book: Андрей Соболев, *Рассказы* (Москва: Северные дни, 1915), 121–181.

<sup>38</sup> I.e., commit suicide.

<sup>39</sup> XPS Coll., box 9, folder 2.

you are no shark, but a pug-nosed shark cub. I will soon send you another hat, and another one to Ira, as well.

Farewell for now, Akস্যutka!

My sweet girl.

Andrei<sup>40</sup>

The second letter reads:

My dear girl, Xenia Silberberg-Pamfilova! Yesterday, I came to bid you farewell one last time, but you were already asleep. When I am back, I will write a fairy tale just for you, and have it published in a journal, with a clear indication that the tale is dedicated to Xenichka. Furthermore, when I am back, and we rent an apartment with a garden, I will buy you a monkey. This way, I will get to have two monkeys (please guess who the second monkey is!)

For now, I give you a warm kiss, and ask you to live in peace with your mother. After all, she is the smallest of us all, so you must not upset her. And finally, please don't forget that I love you very-very-very-very-very-very-very-very-very much.

Yours, Andrei<sup>41</sup>

## ARCHIVES

GA RF — State Archive of the Russian Federation (Moscow)

OR RGB — Dept. of Manuscripts of the Russian State Library (Moscow)

XPS Coll. — Xenia Pamfilova Silberberg Collection in the Yad Tabenkin Archives (Ramat Efal, Israel)

XPS Coll.-NA — Xenia Pamfilova Silberberg Collection in kibbutz Naan (Israel)

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<sup>40</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem.



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