

**Biography:** Writer and journalist Pauls Bankovskis (1973) was born in Līgatne, Latvia. He studied glass art at the Riga School for Applied Arts and philosophy at the University of Latvia (1992–1996). His prose was first published in 1993, and a prolific author, he has now published novels, several collections of short stories, books and works of non-fiction and film scripts. His focus tends to shift from Latvian history, its myths, and legends to the realities of the recent Soviet past and the possibilities of the future.

**Synopsis:** It is autumn 1918. The war is supposed to be over (the truce between Germany and the Entente was signed on 11 November), but it is not. On 18 November 1918, Riga and Courland are under the Germans. Amongst all this chaos, destruction, hopelessness and mortal danger, a small group of Latvians got together in the middle of an occupied city and founded their own national state, something which would have seemed impossible even a year earlier. "Every year, on the 18th of November, we fly the Latvian flag, solemn official events take place and people celebrate with their families and friends – perhaps less solemnly but certainly with more true feeling. It's not surprising that nowadays the date 18 November, 1918 seems to have been a great celebration of the birth of the Latvian nation. And it hardly occurs to anyone that at that time there were hardly very many celebrants. (..) The diary form became a natural medium in the novel: one writer is an eyewitness of the events of 1917–1918, whereas the other is our contemporary.

## Excerpt

### I. OVERCOAT

Whenever we come to the country, cleaning begins. Upon leaving we leave everything in order and clean, yet when we return, we have an irresistible urge to straighten everything out even more than before.

Of course, rodents have left their droppings here and there; spiders have woven their webs; there are a few dead flies on the windowsills; the hornets' nest in the corner of the window of the attic room is already empty and eroded; the bird's nest behind the balcony railing has been abandoned; everywhere, there are the brown crumbs from the blooming of the oaks, as well as stalks, panicles and pollen of various flowers, grasses and tree blossoms; a mouse dead from starvation is found in the garbage can as, right next to the desiccated body, are the already empty pupas of flies; on the floor, there may be a forgotten Lego piece or two, just waiting for an adult to step on it with a bare foot, and then there are things, things, things – all sorts of objects that have been put aside year after year, reasoning that they 'just may come in handy' or have been taken to the country on purpose, for they 'no longer are of any use in the city but will be good enough for the country'.

So the first three days are passed not by cutting grass, sawing off dead branches, leveling the patches of soil dug up by moles or wild hogs or stacking wood but by straightening out and cleaning the house instead. Once upon a time, a forest ranger lived here. Originally, it was a squat little house with a couple of rooms built on the hump of a pre-historic dune. Only after many years, the change of ownership and death of the ranger, it has acquired additional rooms and new histories, verandas, attic constructions and city amenities. The forest-ranger, just like his father, was said to have had his eccentricities: from time to time, each of them had been occasionally beset by what in their family was called a 'teeter-totter'. On such occasions, they used to leave the house and stay in voluntary confinement in an underground bunker built for this purpose in the forest.

What the house looked like in the forest-ranger's time no one can really say anymore. One can get the basic idea from other buildings scattered throughout the village that has been all but abandoned by the natives: they have a simple, almost square layout with a kitchen and a couple of rooms. Once we may have seen the ranger's house in its original, however. It happened at the Liv festival in the local cultural center. In its lobby, there was a photo exhibition and one of the pictures seemed to feature our house. It was shorter almost by half, but the setting was exactly as it is now: the mountain-ash in front of the door, one oak by the end of the house and another one slightly further off. Two people were standing by the door to the house; a third was sitting on a stool. In old photographs, one is usually struck by the sharpness and depth of the image; sometimes, the most incredible details can be detected in them, but this particular photograph was very blurry – people's faces were so smudgy, it was impossible to determine their age or sex. Images from the past, wrapped in white, fuzzy mist, were staring back at us from the time immortalized in the picture and from the front of our own house.

The trash bags were filling rapidly and just as rapidly grew the list of things that should be bought on the next trip to town. There were things we threw away, but there were others that we turned out to have been missing all this time.

"Just don't throw away Grandpa's overcoat," was an admonition issued during this process.

"Grandpa's overcoat should by no means end up in the trash," it was decided.

"We should definitely keep Grandpa's overcoat."

And Grandpa's overcoat was on its way back to the wardrobe. It only remained to check its pockets. In one of them, there was something angular, bulky and hard.

It was a case of rough leather, wrinkled in places, which contained a small black camera. For a moment, I imagined that perhaps it had belonged to Grandpa, but that was not possible. It was a Lumix digital camera and at the time they started making it and it could be bought Grandpa, in all likelihood, no longer took pictures or even went to the country. The battery was dead, the camera would not turn on, and the only clue to its provenance might be provided by the memory card. Yet the solution to the mystery had to wait till our return to the city and a computer.

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Upon returning to the city, we were impatient to push the memory card in the computer, pretty much sure that 'there could be nothing special there'. Probably just some pictures taken in the dark by a Summer Solstice bonfire or a seascape. It did turn out that there was nothing terribly interesting in the pictures, yet neither were they ordinary shots of scenes of nature, everyday life or festive occasions.

#### Photograph 1

At a first glance it seems that only a forest is pictured – and not even a forest, just shrubbery and much undergrowth. There is almost no color, the picture is almost black-and-white; it has been taken either on a day with dark clouds or at the twilight hour of an overcast day. The trees and shrubs form a black, almost opaque wall on either side, and only in the middle of the picture it thins out and lowers: there is a firebreak overgrown with lower shrubs.

There are two power poles on it. The place seemed familiar, but we had to scrutinize it for quite a while before we finally figured out what and from what angle the unknown photographer had captured. Upon a closer look, there is a tiny triangle behind the tangle of branches on the left side – the gable of a roof. It is our house. It is not clear why anyone would have taken such a shot or how the photographer decided upon this particular viewpoint: an impenetrable thicket on that side alternates with persistently water-logged sloughs: there have never been any mushrooms or berries or anything else worthwhile. A little to the right from the triangle, between a power pole and the other wall of shrubbery, one can spy something that looks like a small white human figure, but it may be just some optical illusion or technical defect. We tried to zoom in as much as possible, yet all that we could see was a mess of gray, white and black specks. When we go to the countryside again, we'll just have to try and find that vantage point. [..]

## II. JOURNAL

August 20, 1917

"To hope!" Tidriķis made a toast, raising his glass of cut crystal. The first of the three bottles remaining from the prewar time was close to empty.

"To hell with it!" Alberts replied, clinking energetically with Tidriķis.

"Hope is the comfort of fools!" I joined in. The night before we drank to the memory of the ill-fated dream of Latvia's statehood and independence. And the more bubbly we drank, the greater our grim conviction became that we would turn out to be right. It's all over. Done

for. We, Latvians, simply aimed too high. We are doomed. We cannot shake off either the Russians or the Germans and be free. If one set is gone, they will be replaced by others, and we will continue to have no say in our own destiny.

If at the beginning of the year revolution had still brought some hope, now it had vanished. What use are the makers of this revolution if their own nation has no faith in them? And how would the nation believe in them if they look down their noses at it? All this revolution brought was just greater calamity. The calamity brought by democracy. If there had not been this damn revolution, the Bolsheviks would not be free to stir up trouble and get our army to the point where it is now.

The army can't even defend Riga. With shame and sorrow, we have to run from our city, possibly forever. At six o'clock in the evening, the order to retreat was issued.

"Let us at least not leave the champagne for the Germans!" Alberts said. But I had to think about what we would have to leave behind, for you can't take everything with you. The Germans had started an attack on Riga and were advancing rapidly, but the army was losing all ability and will to resist. The soldiers are spoiled, emboldened by the Bolsheviks and lazy. They treat us, the officers, as the real enemy. But you can't shoot everyone just to intimidate the others. After all, they are our own boys, our own men. Yet they stare at you as if you were their farm foreman; they ignore your orders and want to fraternize with the Germans. Apparently, they even threw rocks at General Goppers when he came to try to straighten them out. How can one think of Latvia if you can't even recognize your fellow Latvians? Where has all the zeal gone that made us establish our own regiments of riflemen and issue the call: "Forward under Latvian flags for the future of Latvia!" All those

Bolsheviks, congress goers, rally goers, Mensheviks, Socialists and God only knows who else. Everyone imagines himself to be the best and the wisest while all the rest are enemies, saboteurs and fools. "Hard times in the land of our fathers, it's up to the sons to help?" Hell, no. We don't deserve a state. Trophy pickers, daydreamers, windbags.

August 21.

It had rained during the night, and it was a sunny, crisp morning signaling autumn. The fresh, cool air did wonders for the fog in my brain and it had soon dissipated. Although it was still very early, there was much activity in our yard on Alexander Street. The old Neļķises from the small house at the back of the yard kept tugging at their two cows, which they apparently were going to move to a safer place. One cow seemed ready to go, but the other was resisting. Their boy Leopolds was trying to catch the chickens that had scattered all over the yard. The noise of war was not heard and it all looked like a tableau from a country fair. In some neighboring yard, a rooster crowed. In the middle of the yard by the horse-chestnut, there was a horse eating from a sack of oats. That must have been the cart of the Šteinbergs family from the front building – I recognized their chest of drawers and some other things that were tied to the top of the load.

There was much activity on the street as well, mostly in one direction – away from Riga. There were army units intermingled with civilians; pedestrians and all kinds of drivers and riders – in carriages and carts, on horseback, on bicycles. What they all shared was the amount of property: the things to be taken along were dragged, lugged and carried, and it almost seemed that what they carried was not really their own; it could particularly be said

about the soldiers. These were things edible and inedible; they were grabbed from what was ' commandeered' from the city warehouses and 'rescued' from citizens' apartments. There were reams of fabric, musical instruments, sacks of flour, furniture, and piles of suits with hams and links of sausages on top.

I was caught in this one-way current as soon as I had stepped out of the yard. By the Orthodox church on the corner of Neva Street I ran into Miss M. whom I was surprised to see striding, in a most determined fashion, in the opposite direction. We were not well acquainted, having seen each other only on a few festive occasions, yet these extreme circumstances seemed to allow the liberty to not only greet but also address her. In truth, it was she who addressed me first.

"And where are you off to?" she asked.

Confused, I did reply right away, just pulled on the strap of the sack I had over my shoulder with even more determination. The glass of a broken shop window was crunching under the soles of my boots. In the sack I had all of the belongings I had cared to take along; there was nothing of sentimental or luxurious value: just a shaving kit, a clean pair of underwear and a small, worn brochure "The Antichrist" by Nietzsche. I was in the habit of making notes on the edges of its pages, even though I always carry a small notebook with light brown cardboard covers, in which I am presently making this journal entry.

At this very moment I was already in fact a deserter, although I was walking with my former battlefield comrades in the same direction. But, as of the previous night, our intentions set us apart. The passing army units were still obeying the orders of the commanding officers –

irrespective if they were still loyal to the Russian high command or had their minds turned



against it by the Bolsheviks. Should the need arise, I could still say that I was about to join my unit in the Hussar Barracks by the Church of the Holy Cross -- in my pocket, I even had papers to that effect. But of course I did not need to tell any of this to Miss M.

"But of course," seeing my confusion, she found her own answer. "You must follow orders, must you not?"

"Absolutely," I said as resolutely as possible and asked if she was not going to leave the city herself.

"It is no longer safe here," I tried to convince her.

"It certainly is not, now that you are abandoning us," she chuckled. "So long!"

A moment after we said good-bye to each other, there was much noise from a German grenade that fell right there on Alexander Street, to be followed by two more. In an instant, the street was empty; at the intersection, the water main had been hit and a fountain of water shot up in the air. A building had its front wall missing, revealing a dresser, a bed, a painting on the wall (a Rozentāls, if I am not mistaken), and soon enough a crowd was beginning to gather. The brief conversation with M. kept resounding in my mind and kept bothering me until I reached my first destination. Miss M.'s political views notwithstanding, she regarded me as a traitor. Her political sympathies were unknown to me at the time, yet her mood was not hard to guess.

*Only later, many years since, I found out that first she had been an active Social Democrat, then, after the founding of the Latvian state, she had been arrested for anti-government*

*activities; as the Soviet regime was set up in 1940, she had been an active collaborator, only to disappear in Siberia a few years later.*

Traitor. In contrast to Tidriķis who had urged us to drink for hope and to the ever skeptical Alberts, I had decided to stop my war this very morning and, from now on, try to save my own skin. No political or moral ideals, just existence, pure and simple. For was it not the main lesson to be learned from this terrible war – the lesson taught to us both on the Island of Death and last winter in Tīrelpurvs Bog? Even as you face death in the name of a common goal, you are alone. Alone with your hands turned to icy stone, alone with your stiffened arms stretched out to heavens and your face a mess of blood, snow and ice. You are alone, entangled in barbed wire and alone with your stick drawn on the edge of the German trench.

*On that morning, I had no idea that very soon my path will intersect with those of Tidriķis and Alberts and that then we, as they say, will be three people completely different from our former selves.*

[..]

August 23

I slept badly. Again I had fever, sweated a lot and fell asleep only toward the morning when it seemed to already be getting close to dawn. Soon I woke up, put on my boots and clothes

and set on my way. It was a remarkably quiet and foggy morning. A peaceful wartime morning. It was impossible to see very far ahead and the milky white seemed to echo the slightest sound: water dripping from the branches of the trees lining the sides of the road, the flapping of wings, a thud with which an apple fell to the ground and the bellowing of stags in the depths of the forest. The fever had abated and, even though I felt groggy and stiff, I found it pleasurable to breathe in the cool air and felt some joy in my heart. I was determined to get to Valmiera today and was sure that I could do it. I was a little less sure of what awaited me there.

For quite some time, I met neither pedestrians nor drivers and noticed some bustle only as I approached Ungurmuiža. I stepped off the road and, using utmost caution, tried to steal past the manor house. The fog served me well, as it provided a good cover that let me stay invisible. It was clear that some army unit was stationed at the manor – horses were braying, there was cussing and exclamations in Russian. Keeping within the shadows of the large oak trees in the park, I had crept quite close and now could observe what was happening in front of the manor. There were several carts, smoke was coming from a bonfire around which a number of posh chairs and even a sofa apparently brought out from the manor house were placed. Under the open windows of the house, various pieces of broken furniture, picture frames and other objects lay scattered about. Most of the windows had been broken and the building had the look of a blind man who had lost his way in the confusing surroundings.

Watching the behavior and general mood of the soldiers I concluded that this had to be some "revolutionary" unit that had gone over to the Bolsheviks and that for that very reason I would do best to be on my way as quickly and inconspicuously as possible. I did not feel at all sorry for the devastation wrought on the manor – it was just what the supporters of one foreign power had done to what belonged to another foreign power. It was only one of many manors: an embodiment and symbol of the wrongs visited upon my people in the course of 700 years; the cornerstone and buttress of the foreign powers.

And then I almost got myself into a fix by attracting attention: when, having reached what seemed to be a safe distance from the manor, I returned to the road, three big dogs of some exquisite breed emerged from the fog and drew close to me, running across the field. They did not bark and that made me all the more worried, for everyone knows that a barking dog is less dangerous than one that advances on you silently. I had already drawn my revolver, but had the presence of mind not to shoot – having sniffed me the dogs lost any interest and soon ran off on some sort of canine business.

Had I not kept a cool head and pulled the trigger, the noise would have certainly got a rise out of the army unit housed at the manor and, who knows, this day might have turned out to be my last. I must note, however, that the feeling of fear that might cloud my mind is quite alien to me. I cannot claim to be completely without fear, but I have noticed since my early youth that at moments when others, overtaken by fear, take flight, lose their bearings and probably get into even worse trouble, I am overcome by an unusual peace and serenity,

with my mind working as precisely as clockwork. It may of course be some special kind of insensitivity. I have been reproached at times for being too direct and sharp-tongued in social settings, even where it concerns the ladies, because I tend to speak my mind. It is my belief that if it is the truth, one should not fear it. And there should be no fear in hearing it. Perhaps it is cruel at times, but some white lies told out of pity, to me are simply a sign of cowardice.

Fear and cowardice are not feelings worthy of man – they are something from the animal world, something rudimentary, as unnecessary and unseemly as body hair. Some miles past Ungurmuiža, I spied some live creature on the road. At first, it was just a small, moving point but, coming closer, I realized that it was a fox. In another instant, I could see that it was not going in the same direction as I but coming toward me. Most fascinating was the fact that the stupid fox did not notice me for quite a while and only at a very short distance it suddenly froze, pricked its ears and fearfully stared straight at me. I too stopped, for now, after what I had seen at the manor and the experience with the dogs, I found this meeting amusing. The very next instant, the fox demonstrated the ridiculous essence of its animal nature – it swung around at lightning speed and fled, moreover running not to the bushes lining the ditch or into the forest, but straight down the road, disappearing behind the bend. Fear is an animal instinct. This is proven also by the fact that no forest animal, from a poisonous snake to a wolf or a bear, will attack a person just like that. An animal is afraid of man, for over millennia it has been proven time and again that man is superior. That is, if he is not of the faint-hearted.

At that moment I had no inkling that the day's adventures were not yet over. Now my route took me past another place important to the sad history of our people. The Rubene church was said to be the place where the man known as Henricus Lettus, or Henry of Livonia, the author of the famous chronicle, worked and baptized the first Livs and actually the very first Christian church, spreading that alien faith throughout our land. By Kokkenhof I was forced to come back onto the big road and there I immediately got into trouble.

I noticed the three riders only after they had seen me. It would have been silly to run or show any resistance, for that would have certainly ended very badly for me. "Stoi!" they yelled at me, then rode up to me and demanded to see my documents. Since I had had no chance to obtain any kind of travel documents in Riga, I tried to convince them that I was on my way back to my unit, but this story did not convince them. I heard them suggest that I was probably either a deserter who had gone over to the Bolsheviks or perhaps even a German spy. I was lucky that it did not occur to them to finish me off right there and then. Having taken away my revolver, they made me follow them.

I had not expected that my journey could end like this and was sure that sooner or later I would find a way to escape. My situation was not good, but neither was it hopeless. The riders now had to adjust to my walking speed; I was walking in the middle of the road, two of them were flanking me on each side, and the third one was keeping an eye on me and from time to time nudged me from the back. In this formation, we entered the manor

grounds. Several artillerymen were busy by the horse barns, one of the buildings – it may have been the house of the overseer – served as a headquarters and from there emerged a messenger who quickly mounted. I had a feeling as if everyone we encountered looked at us trying to guess who was the bird that was caught this time.

I was brought inside and turned over to two soldiers who proceeded to lock me up in a dank and empty cellar. The space had a clay floor and, by the very ceiling, a tiny window, the size of a fist. Naturally enough, there was no furniture and no conveniences of any kind. I spread out my great coat and lay down on it. There was no hope to break out of these thick walls, my sore feet needed a rest and -- who knows? –after a nap an escape plan just might present itself to my mind.

And yet there was no time to rack my brain over any escape plans. I must have fallen hard asleep, for I was startled by a rough kick to my side and a guard's voice: "*Vstavai!*" I have no sense of how long I had slept, but the light on the upper floor suggested that it was probably late in the afternoon. I was brought into a room that in peacetime must have served as a dining room, for there was still a sideboard with china by the wall and the large table was requisitioned for the war effort. A gaunt non-commissioned dragoon officer was sitting at the table. "Gaunt" may actually not begin to describe it: he was one of these people whose body since childhood and for the rest of their life seems not only too tall but also too thin in every part of his body. Even his face was thin, and his uniform looked like inside there was no flesh at all. He had a sickly grey face, a sparse mustache and equally sparse, yellowish

hair combed back. The ceaseless smoking did not make him look any healthier: he was smoking as I walked in, kept lighting cigarettes during our conversation and remained smoking when I left his "office".

"Ivan Petrovich Herzenfeld," he introduced himself. In his civilian life, he must be a quiet, timid, even shy person, always dissatisfied with himself and full of various prejudices. Yet the circumstances of army and war had brought him to this situation and he had learnt to hide his congenital shortcomings behind theatrical gestures and rituals. Smoking undoubtedly was one of them. During our conversation, he casually offered a cigarette also to me, but I politely declined. Among his means of expressing himself was also "manly" yelling. It was clear that by this he was trying to win greater respect, yet the impression it made was more on the comical side.

Whatever the form of this meeting, its content was far from comical. He inquired as to my political views, my attitude toward the provisional government and the Bolsheviks. I answered truthfully, indicating both that I consider the provisional government to be weak and that I feel no sympathy toward the Bolsheviks. "Is that so?" That was the extent of my interrogators response. Having asked another couple of questions, about which one could say that these were clumsily laid traps, he announced that he would have me court martialed. That was not good at all, for in all likelihood it meant being executed. I threw a glance at the open window, but the officer had immediately caught my movement and said in a stage voice: "If you attempt to run, we will shoot you ourselves."



I had to return to my prison, yet here fortune suddenly smiled upon me. As the guard and I were descending, it was good old Tidriķis we encountered coming up the stairs. He was taken completely aback by seeing me. He almost passed me by without paying the slightest attention but then – honor where honor is due – he quickly grasped the seriousness of the situation and acted accordingly.

"Where are you taking him?" he sternly demanded.

"To the cellar, Your Excellency!"

"Bring him to me," Tidriķis waved casually.

"Yessir, Your Excellency!"

And so I came to be in the company of my good friend. It turned out that the manor housed not only dragoon units and artillerymen, but also what remained of Tidriķis's regiment after the battles near Riga and the retreat in the course of two days. True to form, he had settled in probably the coziest space of the overseer's house, the veranda, within hours making it conform to his tastes and lifestyle. Had our meeting not taken place under wartime conditions and a moment ago I had not been facing court martial, one would think that we are two people enjoying a retreat outside the city.

"We just got here today and – what do you know? – you are already here!" Tidriķis seemed amused as he offered me some sweet wine and cigarettes. We sat in wicker garden chairs, the slanting rays of the August sun were coming in through the small panes of the veranda windows and the air quavered from the smoke of our cigarettes and flickered with shiny mites. Next to maps and dirty dishes, I saw several of Tidriķis's books – Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* in Latin and Clausewitz's *On War*. I knew that the object of Tidriķis's interest was not the history or theory of the art of war or individual battles but the past as such. Depending on political events and even his own matters of the heart or family circumstances, he used to find in testimonies from the past what seemed to him most relevant, and thus tried to find a deeper explanation for what was happening in the present.

He never parted with history books, although I have no idea when he managed to read them. "I don't read, I study," he once explained. My occasional experience suggested that studying meant lengthy periods of reflection, staring at the same page until the student dozed off and woke up with a start only when the pencil he had been hitherto holding in his hand fell to the floor and rolled off.

I did not refuse the drink he offered me and told him about my troubles.

"Goddamn Herzenfled," Tidriķis grumbled. "He is neither a real Russian, nor a German, so he just stirs up shit wherever he can."

In the cozy atmosphere of Tidriķis's "office" we worked out my escape plan. Ignoring my protestations, Tidriķis first of all got me a fine lunch: he asked for some boiled potatoes, bread, cottage cheese and sour cream and "if possible, also a piece of meat". No piece of meat was immediately available, but that fact notwithstanding, it was one of the best meals I've ever had.

"Victory is usually based not on physical but moral superiority," Tidriķis said. "By the way, it is for this very reason that this war is a completely hopeless undertaking. Physical superiority is like lottery winnings – sometimes one side gets it, at other times the other does, but, if there is no moral superiority on either side, it is clear that this war will have no winners. The only possible only winners may be the Bolsheviks with their fervent speeches and sheer pluck."

At the basis of our plan was this very theory, probably borrowed from Clausewitz, as well as our belief that luck to a great degree depends on the ability to surprise the enemy when he least expects it. "There is no way of knowing what Herzenfeld might think of next, so let's not waste time," Tidriķis said. Since my revolver had been taken away, Tidriķis produced a Smith & Wesson from his stores, but we agreed that I should put it to use in extraordinary, not to say completely hopeless circumstances. A gift even more valuable than the "S&W" was several travel documents stamped with the headquarters' stamp in which I could enter my destination at will.

Wine, cigarettes, lunch and conversation – all that now became a kind of overture or introduction to our plan; for afterwards we entered the house from the veranda as two war buddies deep in an important discussion. I already mentioned that I completely lack any sense of fear and here this character trait served me particularly well. The main thing that was to attract attention was the naturalness of our performance and the objective Tidriķis had set for us: to get past the sentries placed by the overseer's house and at the gate of the property. Apparently our performance was impeccable, for neither in the yard, nor on the road paid any attention to us. At the root of our success was of course the fact that during the time of our meeting and conversation, the guards had changed and both those who captured me and those who imprisoned me were off duty.

I said good-bye to Tidriķis, thanking him sincerely and, without much worry, started out in the direction of Valmiera. I was sure that no one would come after me and the main thing was to take care to never run into Herzenfeld again.

*I never saw Tidriķis after that. Only several years later, I found out that in the winter of 1919 he was captured by the Bolsheviks, beaten and tortured with vicious vengeance and finally abandoned, tied to a tree in the forest where he froze to death.*