



White road: A Russian odyssey, 1919-1923

Olga Ilyin

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FROM THE DUST JACKET: "WHITE ROAD. THIS IS AN ENTHRALLING SLICE OF PERSONAL HISTORY THAT CHRONICLES THE ONSET OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, FOLLOWS THAT PATH OF RETREAT OF THE WHITE ARMY, AND INVOLVES US IN THE CHAOS, DISARRAY, AND HORRIFYING DIFFICULTIES THAT BESET THE WHITES ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE FROM THEIR NATIVE RUSSIA AND ESTABLISH NEW LIVES AS EXILES ABROAD. OLGA ILYIN WAS A YOUNG BRIDE AT THE TIME THE REVOLUTIN BROKE OUT, HER HUSBAND AN OFFICER IN THE WHITE ARMY. THEIR BACKGROUND RECALLS THE WORLD OF TURGENEV'S NOVELS MOVED FORWARD INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. MEMBERS OF THE UPPER CLASS AND THE INTELLIGENTSIA, NOT UNAWARE ORF UNDERSIROUS OF SOCIAL CHANGE, THEY WERE SUPPORTERS OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. BUT AS LENIN AND THE BOLSHEVIK FORCES TRIUMPHED, WHETHER ONE WAS A MODERATE OR A MONARCHIST NO LONGER MATTERED. THIS WAS CLASS WAR WITH A VENGEANCE. THE WHITES HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES-LITERALLY--AND THE STORY MRS. ILYIN TELLS IS UTTERLY FASCINATING AND SOMETIMES HORRIFYING. THE ZIGZAG JOURNEY ACROSS SIBERIA IS BROUGHT ALIVE IN ALL ITS HARDSHIPS AND UNEXPECTED BRIEF PLEASURES. WHITE ROAD IS ALTOGETHER A MIXTURE OF HEROISM, FEAR, AND NOSTALGIC RECOLLECTIONS. THE AUTHOR IS A WOMAN IN HER EIGHTIES OF INDOMINTABLE SPIRIT AND INNATE INTELLIGENCE AND MUST BE ONE OF THE LAST LIVING WITNESSES TO THE EVENTS SHE DESCRIBES SO VIVIDLY."

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