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Included with the documents about Bulgakov are two unrelated to him, but of great interest nonetheless: the letters of Lev Lunts, and Ivanov-Razumnik's letter about the death of Sologub.

Scattered throughout the issue are the illustrations for *The Master and Margarita*, done by the Leningrad artist Belkin, as well as numerous photographs.

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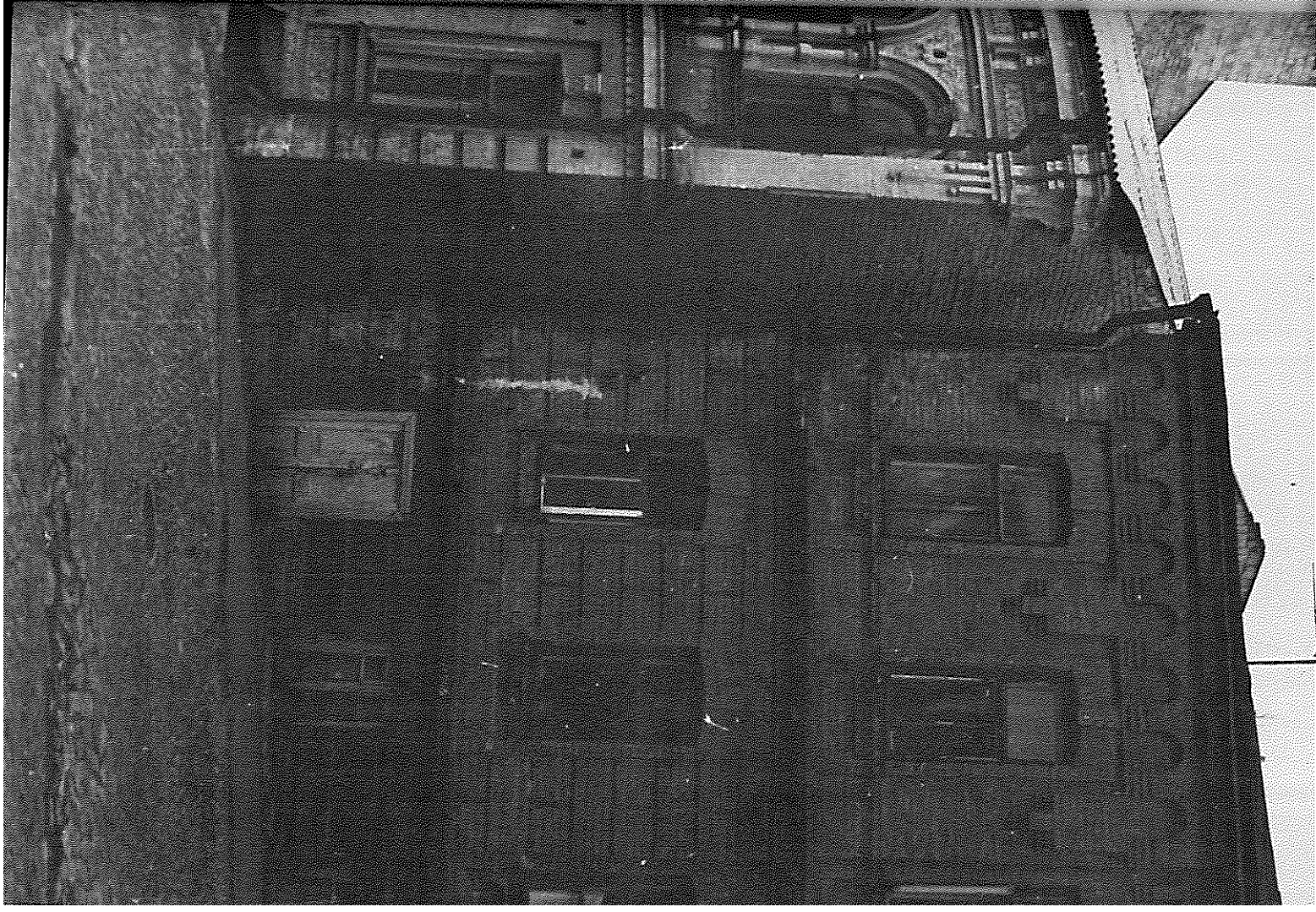
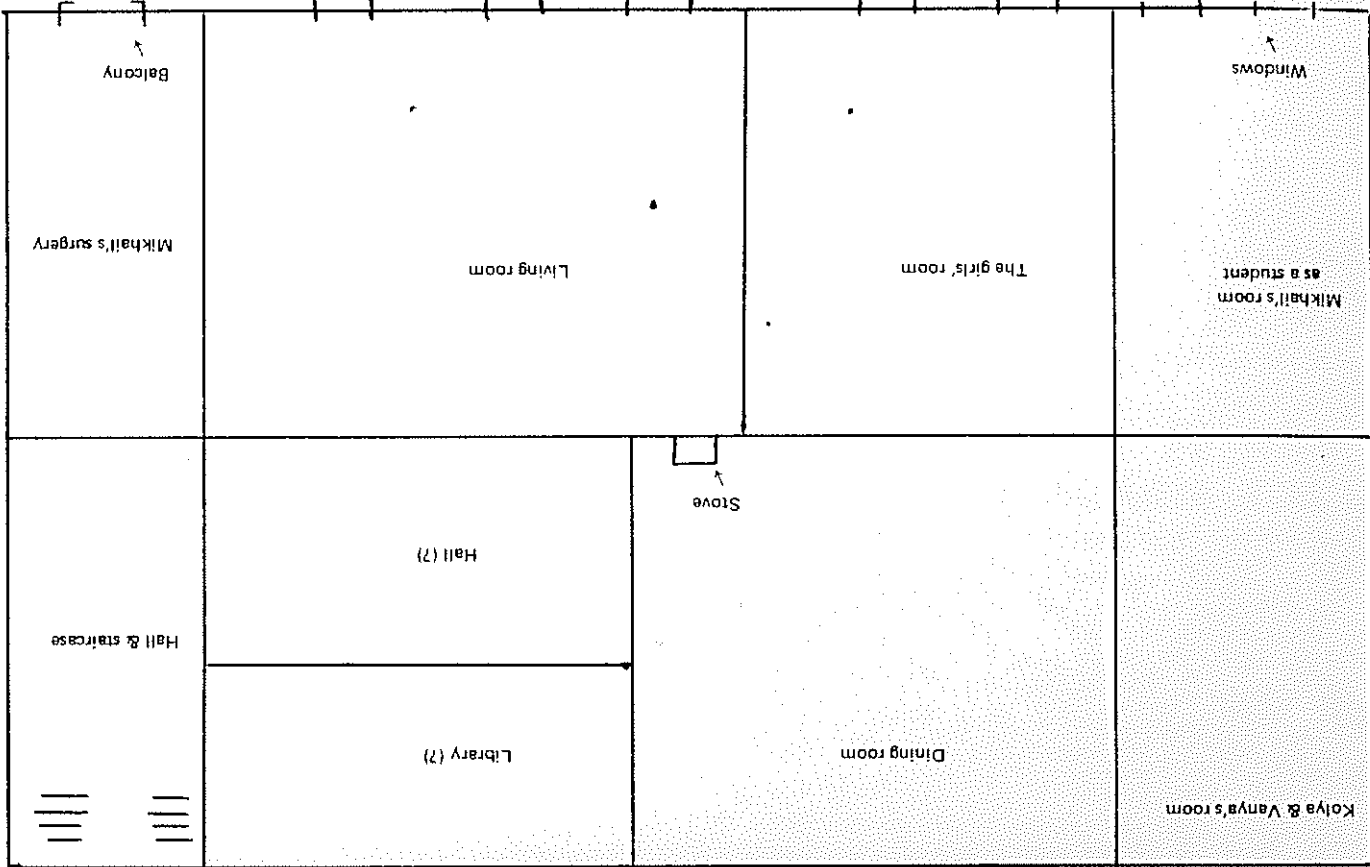


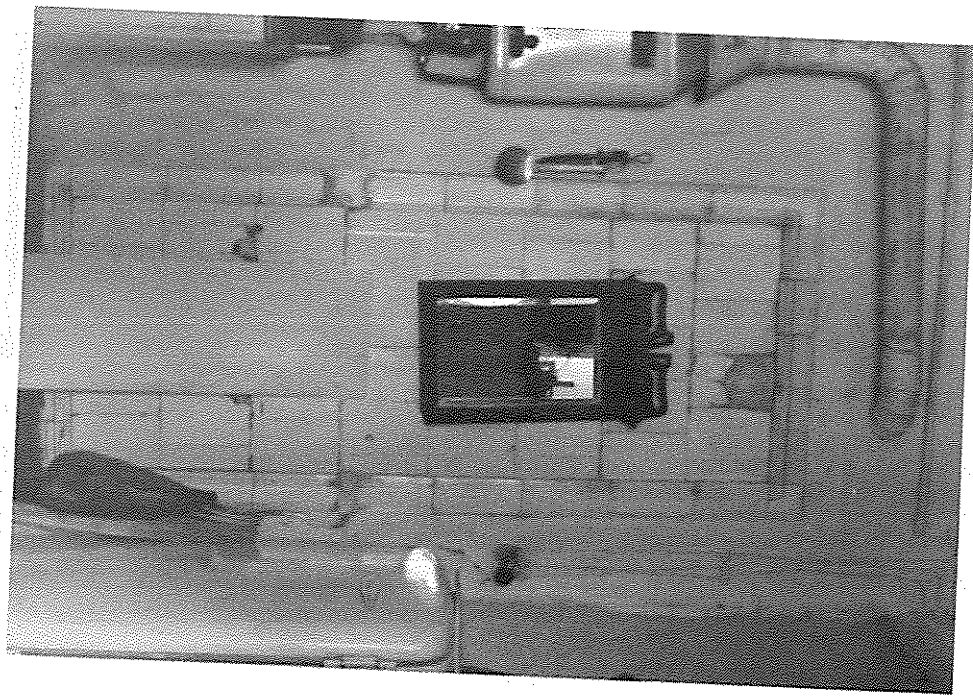
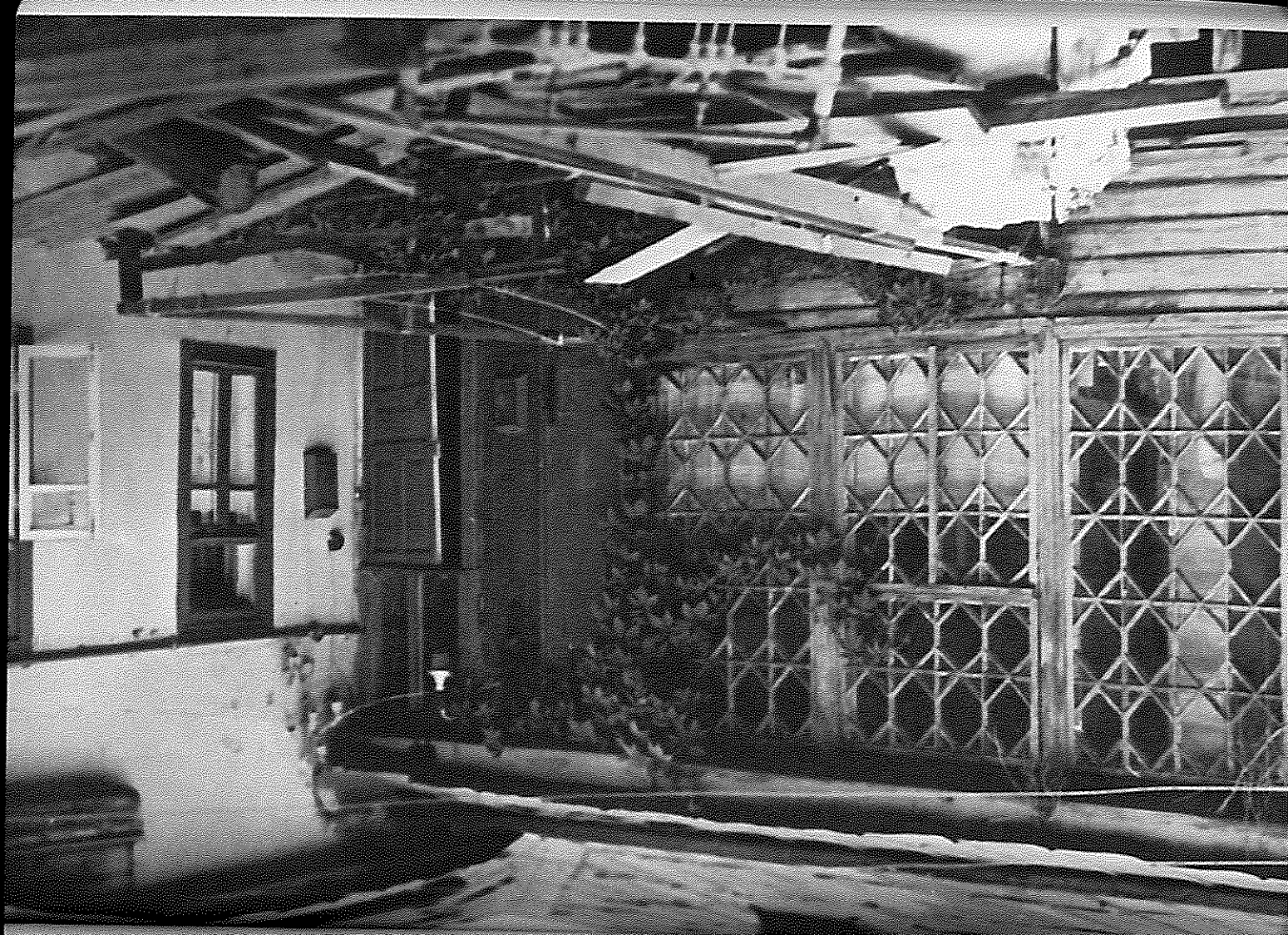
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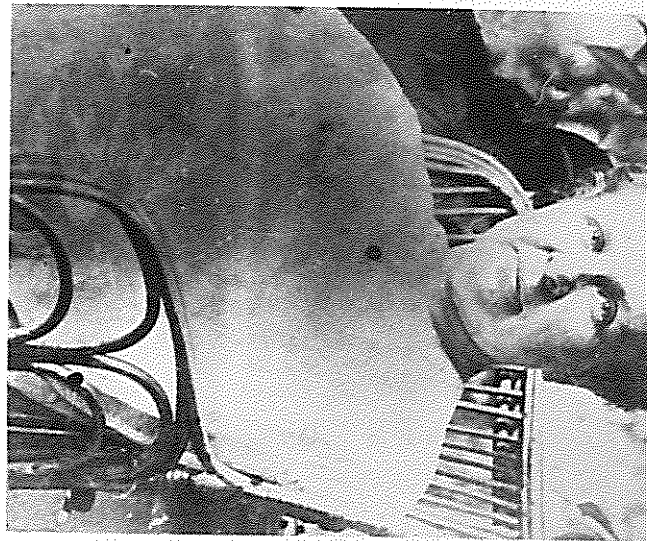
Plan of Bulgakov House on Andreevskii Spusk

Street

Street





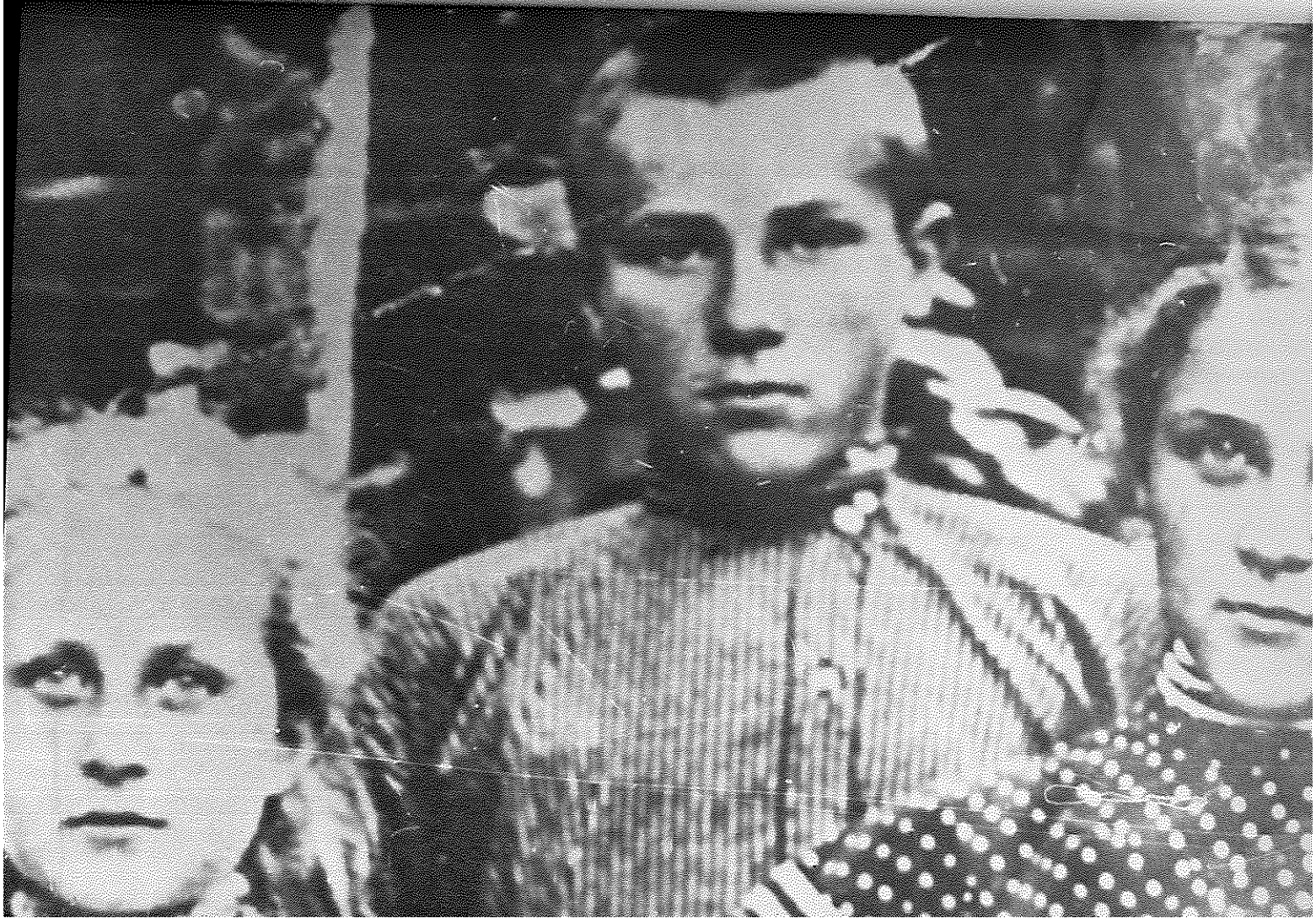


My ambition to visit the Bulgakovs' house in Kiev started after seeing the MKhAT production of *The Days of the Turbins* in Moscow; this led me to read Viktor Nekrasov's account of his visit to the house, which in turn inspired me to go there myself. In the course of my two visits, I recorded the memoirs of Inna Vasilievna Konchalovskaya, the daughter of the Bulgakovs' landlord, who still lives in the same house, and photographed her collection of photographs of the Bulgakov family. These memoirs and photographs form the substance of this article; it should be emphasized, however, that they are sources of entirely different characters—unlike the photographs, Inna Vasilievna's memoirs do not constitute a document, although they do present a certain interest as a curiosity, and in some ways help to recreate the atmosphere of the Bulgakov household. Inna Vasilievna is now an old lady, and has told her story many times, no doubt embroidering new details here and there, and accumulating further inaccuracies with the passage of time. Her pride in having survived all the members of the Bulgakov family is reflected in the morbid interest with which she dwells on the manner of their deaths, and, in general, her memoirs reflect many of her own subjective feelings about the Bulgakov family; for this reason, I am giving them in direct transcript and translation, rather than rewriting them into any more ordered form which might give a misleading picture of objective, reliable information.

I first visited Kiev in early May, the month in which Bulgakov was born. Spring had reached Kiev before Moscow, chestnut and fruit-tree blossom was everywhere, and the first cherries were on sale in the market. The exuberance of the springtime disruption of the harsh lines of winter seemed to be caught up in the elegant baroque outline of St. Andrew's church, Rastrelli's masterpiece, a dazzling soaring blue and white porcelain edifice, standing at the top of St. Andrew's Hill. Wide and cobbled, the street winds down in a horseshoe shape to the old commercial part of Kiev, the Podol'; it is a very steep street, and flows like a river past small wooden and yellow brick houses, interspersed with curious Neo-Gothic towered buildings. About halfway down, on the right, is Number 13, the house in which the Bulgakovs used to live.

The house is as disorienting as the street on which it is located; from the street, it appears to be a solid yellow brick house, complete with basement and friezes. From the back, however, the house altogether loses its appearance of massive solidity, and looks more like a country dacha; the ground rises so steeply behind the house that the top floor becomes the ground floor, which is approached by a little bridge under which lies a cavernous pit where the Bulgakovs used to store wood. A pile of unsightly rubbish spoils what

landlord's daughter, and a contemporary of Bulgakov's younger sister, Lyubya, now lives in the upper flat, occupying what used to be Bulgakov's sisters' room, and part of the dining room, in which the famous stove is still to be seen. Inna Vasilievna and I sat in the first room, somber but elegant, lace curtains playing in the breeze, a bust of Pushkin on the bookcase. Throughout the talk, Inna Vasilievna kept half an eye on the television, surveying the progress of a documentary, while repeatedly tucking her spreading bosom into her dress. Her face was heavy, square-shaped, wrinkled and old, but alert, framed in a fluffy mass of gray-white hair. She is by no means a shy, retiring old lady; on the contrary, she is forthright, dogmatic, and sure of herself, extremely anxious that the right impressions and facts be recorded. She fusses, acts a little suspicious, and tells one what can be recorded and what cannot. Her situation is in many ways an awkward one—she respects nobody in the world more than her father, whose memory she cherishes; however, people now come to see her to find out not about her father but about the Bulgakovs, whose attitude to her father and family is reflected all too clearly in *The White Guard*. A certain defensiveness in relation to her own family emerges from her constant insistence upon the education of her family, from her anxiety and fear of appearing 'nekulturny.' Her memoirs, the translation of which follows, are therefore to be approached with due care.







... v oobrevia s treusnup with Lyolya (Elena), Mikhail Bulgakov's sister)

At the outset of my reminiscences about the Bulgakov family, I would like to make the preliminary remark that there is little I can say about Misha, because there was a difference of thirteen years in age between us, and in those young years, this amounts to an abyss. He was eighteen years old, already grown up, courting his future wife, and I was six years years old, still interested in dolls. I mixed with the younger generations, that is to say, with Misha's younger sister Lyolya—Elena Afanasyevna Bulgakova. She was a year younger than me, and we had a lot in common: we used to play dolls together, and read one of my books, by Lydia Charakaya (there was such a writer, who mainly described to Caucasus); Lyolya and I used to act out scenes from the book, she playing the part of Bella, and I that of Princess Djelaha. Mikhail Afanasevich liked making fun of people, he enjoyed being ironical and sarcastic, and when he would pass us, prancing away on the arm-rests of the sofa, me as Princess Djelaha, and Lyolya as Bella, he would always tease us. The younger generation tried to keep out of his way.

(The Bulgakov family: their births and deaths)

I knew the Bulgakov family very well, because I was the only daughter in my family, and there were nine young people in theirs, so I was naturally always drawn to their family. I was very fond of the mother, *Varvara Mikhailovna Bulgakova*. She was very strict, very exacting, and very demanding, but everyone respected her, and I was very fond of her. I never knew the father, *Afanasy Ivanovich Bulgakov*. He was a professor of the Theological Academy, and died in 1907, whereas I only moved to this house in 1909.

The members of the Bulgakov family were as follows: the eldest son was *Mikhail Afanasevich*, born in 1891. After him came *Vera*, born in 1893;¹ then came *Nadya*, born in 1897;² then came *Varyusha*, she served as the model for Lena in *The Days of the Turbins*, she was born in 1897; then came *Kolya*, that is to say, the Nikolai who worked in the Pasteur Institute in Paris as a microbiologist. As you can well imagine, for a Russian émigré to get into the Pasteur Institute is much the same as gaining entrance into the heavenly kingdom. He had indeed distinguished himself from early youth by his great capacity for thought and work. He was born in 1899. After *Kolya* came *Ivan*, he born in 1900 or 1901, I can't remember exactly. He ended up in Paris, playing the balalaika in a café 'à la Russe.' Then came *Lyolya*, she was my particular friend. She was born in 1902, and I was born in 1903; there was a difference of one year between us which in practice hardly

disease, sclerosis of the kidneys, from his father, and died as prematurely as his father had, at the age of forty-nine. Furthermore, he died a very painful death, having lost his sight, and had to dictate the last chapters of *Master and Margarita* to his wife, Elena Sergeevna Bulgakova. After Misha came Vera,³ she died in some psychiatric nursing home near Moscow; her condition deteriorated completely; for example, she would tell her sister Nadya that her husband, Misha, who had died of cancer many years previously, had been round to see her two or three days ago, and now, for some reason, had disappeared. She completely lost her memory, but lived for a very long time, longer, perhaps, than anyone else in the Bulgakov family. Nadya, her sister, who used to come to Kiev and bring me books (she brought me *Notes of a Young Doctor* in memory of our youth), died of high blood pressure some time in 1971 or 1972.⁴ Then Elena Sergeevna died. The very youngest of the family, my childhood friend Lyolya,⁵ died very early—she had inflammation of the varicose veins, which turned into gangrene, and she had to have first one leg amputated and then the other; she died at a very early age. Although Misha writes that *Varvara Mikhailovna* died in 1918,⁶ this must have been some sort of a literary device, because she died in 1920⁷—I remember this exactly because I was away from Kiev at the time, and in May, when I returned, Lyolya came running up to me; they were commemorating Varvara Mikhailovna's death; it was Shrovetide, and they were making pancakes, for the memorial meal. There is a Russian custom, 'pominki,' which involves commemorating the ninth and the fortieth day after the death of a friend or relation; this was the fortieth day after Varvara Mikhailovna's death. Varyusha married a Latvian, he was an officer in the Tsar's army, his name was Leonid Sergeevich, he had a high rank, I think a general's rank in the Red Army, but Yezhov's regime spared neither him nor Varva, and they both died there. This in short, was the history of the family.

(Varvara Mikhailovna)

Now I would like to talk about *Varvara Mikhailovna*. She was a very strong-willed woman, not a gentle person, but hard, as perhaps Misha wanted to describe her in his reminiscences, but Misha was her son, whereas I look upon her with the eyes of an outside observer, and can see that she could not have been any different, because she was left without a husband, and with seven children and two nephews as well (they were the children of Afanasy Ivanovich's brother who lived in Japan, their father was the dean of the Russian Orthodox church in Tokyo, and they used to come to Kiev every year at winter to study at the University of Kiev and at the Polytechnical Institute). So, as a general rule, there were nine young people to keep in hand,

It was impossible for Varvara Mikhailovna to be gentle, she was hard, very demanding and full of authority, but this was the only way she could be. When I look back at Varvara Mikhailovna, now that I am adult, elderly, and have my own children and grandchildren, I can see how clever she was.

She would often turn a blind eye to the children's behavior, so as to preserve her prestige and not undermine her authority in their eyes. For example, when all the boys were beginning to smoke, they used to go into the main hall where the staircase was, and gather there and smoke. Varvara Mikhailovna would stand in the doorway and ask them to breathe out. "Breathe out!"—someone would pass through the door, everything in order. "Breathe out!"—another would go through, everything all right; somehow, Varvara Mikhailovna never seemed to notice that they were all smelling of smoke.

I remember another similar incident: when the troubles started in Russia and my parents were no longer traveling anywhere, I lived in Bucha (a small dacha settlement) with Varvara Mikhailovna at the dacha, in 1917, I think. I remember that Varvara Mikhailovna always insisted that the children should all be in bed by eleven p.m.; but the children—by then, of course, most of the children were grown up—never wanted to go to bed at that hour; the moon was shining in the garden, the night was warm and starry. The girls would arrange cushions under the bedclothes, and take Varvara Mikhailovna's hairpieces and arrange them on the pillows, so as to produce the impression of a sleeping body. The boys did the same, jumped out through the window and ran out into the garden, to the summerhouse and to the pond. At eleven p.m. exactly, Varvara Mikhailovna would do the rounds, carrying a candle, starting with the girls' and boys' rooms. She may have guessed that dummies instead of real people were lying under the covers, but she pretended that everything was as it should be, that everybody, faithful to her orders, was asleep, and calmly retired to her room.

There were days, when Varvara Mikhailovna had a headache, when she would get up in the morning in a terrible temper and would start finding fault with everyone. We all knew that things would come to a bad end, and disappeared in different directions, into the wood, the park or to the pond. But most of the time, she was in a good mood. Out of all the children she loved Varva best (she was the model for Lena); Varva was charming, very attractive, very graceful, supple and nimble, and if Varvara Mikhailovna had to be approached for something, Varva was always called upon for protection. Nobody every called her Varva, only Varyusha, while Misha was known as Mishka. In keeping with my childhood habit, I referred to Bulgakov as Mishka when speaking with Nekrasov, for which he rebuked me and decided that my attitude to the great writer was not respectful enough—this is, of course, not the case, however.

Varvara Mikhailovna's death was completely unexpected, one might even say prosaic. They had a bath at home, and water was only periodically

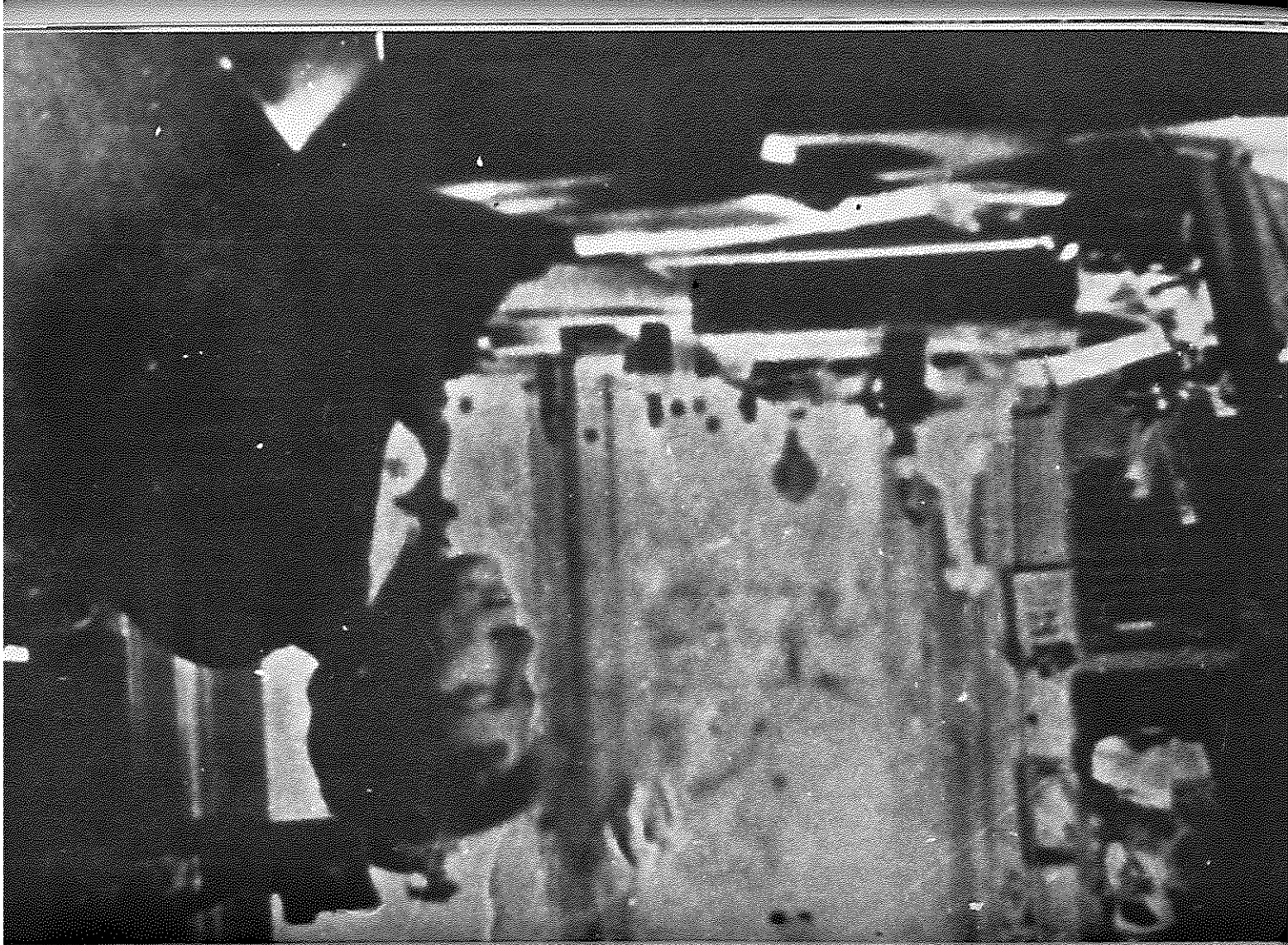
love going to the baths, she went to the baths, this was in 1920, when there were a lot of people about with infections and bugs of various kinds—Vera Mikhaliovna caught an infection from an insect, and came down with typhus. Her second husband, Ivan Pavlovich Voskresensky, did his utmost to save her, but it was no use, and she died, still young, a beloved mother and respected woman.

(Recorded in Kiev, June 1976; transcript translated into English without any alterations)

NOTES

1. Incorrect. Vera was born in 1892 (*eds.*).
2. Nadezhda was actually born in 1893 (*eds.*).
3. Vera died in 1973 (*eds.*).
4. Nadezhda died in 1971 (*eds.*).
5. Elena (Lyolva) died in 1954 (*eds.*).
6. It was indeed a literary matter—the death of a mother is described in the novel *White Guard* (*eds.*).
7. She actually died on February 1, 1922.





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