

I am leaving Djevdekiya for Nish to build the railway. We got 2 dinars each for the journey. Before we got from the station to the stables in Nish, we got all wet from rain. This is our lodging with a new surprise—fleas. They are as big as flies, and you get hundreds of them within half an hour. Nobody can even think about sleep.

May 7

Each of us got 3 loaves of bread and a piece of smoked meat for the journey. We went through Nish to Knyezhevats. We spent the first night in a forest. I froze to the bone, having no coat and no blanket and sleeping on damp grass. The other night was better—we slept in an abandoned school. The journey is getting harder, going over hills and ravines unlike anything I have ever seen.

May 1

We rested for 2 days in Knyezhevats, where we were accommodated in a café and slept under the tables. Everyone got a pair of sandals, and some were hit with a stick.

We arrived in Banitsa in late afternoon. We bathed there in a thermal well while our uniforms were boiled in cauldrons. When they were so-so dry, we went to sleep in Ragost, where I and several boys slept in a chicken shack.

May 23

We finally arrived, having marched all day in immense danger. We are to live in a large cave where a kitchen is set up. Rocks are all around us, wild Timok is underneath, a bit of blue sky is above, and eagles are our partners. One can't see grass anywhere—it is all bare rocks. A real wasteland. We have to dig our paths—make a bad move and fall down. There are 35 of us, mostly Czechs with Sergeant Roubík. Our commander is Theodor Tcheikovitch from Monte Negro, a first-class bastard. He looks like a fugitive convict. The boys immediately nicknamed him *Babinský* Legendary Czech criminal. It fits him perfectly. With an oak stick, he is always ready to earn recognition through slaps and blows, and he becomes a real nightmare for everyone.