

ADELA AND ALBERT: A TOLSTOYAN LOVE STORY

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In 1895 Tolstoy became intensely interested in the case of a twenty-six year old Slovak doctor, Albert Škarvan (1869–1926), who, in February of that year, refused on grounds of conscience to complete his term of conscript service in the Austro-Hungarian army. He had drawn his inspiration for this unusual act of defiance largely from reading Tolstoy's challenging treatise, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (*Tsarstvo Bozhie vnutri vas*), with its powerful antiwar message. The Russian text had been published abroad in 1893, and a copy had reached Škarvan while on services. Tolstoy was overjoyed when he discovered that writings of his, suppressed at home, had produced results abroad. He saw this development, somewhat unrealistically, as the beginning of a movement that would eventually embrace the whole world and bring an end to human warfare.

The Slovaks of northern Hungary, since the outset of their national awakening in the previous century, had looked to Russia as an ally in their struggle to preserve a national identity threatened most visibly by the Magyar ruling class. Cultural slavophilism and even political union of all Slavs under the sceptre of the Russian Tsar had been popular ideas among the leaders of the Slovak national movement. However, by the end of the nineteenth century the old-time Slovak national party was on the wane. Its political panslavism and sympathy for the Russian autocracy had alienated many young Slovak intellectuals, who now sought new ways to strengthen their still largely rural people. Protestants among them tended to look to Prague and the person of T.G. Masaryk, then a professor of philosophy at the Czech University there. Members of the majority Catholic faith, on the other hand, concentrated their hopes

Abstract:

Albert Škarvan (1869–1926) is regarded today as a figure of some importance in Slovak literature. Though he played no part in political life, he was an enthusiastic cultural nationalist and an advocate of the use of the Slovak vernacular for literature. His *Memoirs of an Army Doctor* (1920), republished in 1992, reveal the mindset of a Tolstoyan antimilitarist. They also present a unique picture of conditions prevailing in military prisons of the Habsburg Empire at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1895 Škarvan, who was then near the completion of his conscript service, had, largely under the influence of Tolstoy's writings, refused to serve any longer—to the surprise of his fellow officers.¹ He remained firmly behind his decision and, as a result, he was eventually sentenced to a term of imprisonment in a military jail. His stand was warmly supported by Tolstoy, with whom Škarvan had started to correspond. Before being sentenced Škarvan spent some time in the psychiatric ward of a Viennese hospital, to which the army authorities had sent him for examination. There he met a charming Austrian aristocrat, a widow of Polish origin, Adela von Mazzuchelli, who was visiting another patient in the psychiatric ward. The two fell in love. After he was released from jail, Albert, however, broke off the relationship, even though Adela wished to continue it. The romance came to an end for various reasons, among these the chief perhaps were the difference in social status of the couple in a class-bound society and Škarvan's desire not to become emotionally entangled. Tolstoy was fascinated by their story; so, in a long letter, now preserved in the manuscript collection of the Tolstoy Museum in Moscow, Škarvan related in detail the course of his romance. The letter forms the main source for the present article.

on the Slovak Catholic priesthood as potential leaders of the national movement.

Tolstoyism was to find only a handful of adherents among the Slovak intelligentsia. The significance of Slovak Tolstoyism lies in its providing the only example of the fusion of Tolstoyan nonviolence with nationalism of the cultural-linguistic variety. (State nationalism and Tolstoyism are, of course, incompatible ideologies.) It was Albert Škarvan, along with his mentor and Tolstoy's house physician Dušan Makovický, who were to become Slovakia's leading Tolstoyans. An able translator from the Russian, an eloquent exponent of Slovak cultural nationalism, and a skilled writer in his mother tongue, Škarvan also enjoys a secure place among the masters of Slovak prose.²

The young Slovak had been sentenced by court-martial to a term of imprisonment in July 1895, and he was released from jail on 3rd October.³ While still in detention waiting for his official discharge from the army, which came three weeks later, Škarvan wrote at some length to Tolstoy to thank him for his warm support and to tell him something of his own experiences over the previous months.⁴ Once having taken the decision to refuse further service he had no longer hesitated how to proceed. He no longer attempted to weigh the consequences; he was no longer affected by those who tried to persuade him to act differently. "From then on," he told Tolstoy, "I had no regrets. On the contrary I felt increasingly that I had acted logically and as I should do. Throughout my time in prison I only rarely felt a slight pang of regret at the change in my fate. Otherwise I was entirely at peace with myself".⁵

A few sentences of Škarvan's near the end of his letter immediately caught Tolstoy's attention. They were certainly such as to attract the eye of the novelist who had created Anna Karenina.

During these last eight months [Škarvan wrote] I got to know many interesting and agreeable people. Among them a charming woman, the Viennese Countess Mazzuchelli. I would be delighted to talk to you about her and my relationship with her, although in all likelihood anything between us has now ended for good. She possesses the most exuberant nature of any woman I have known. Indeed I loved her ever so dearly. She was the only person I could tell everything to, everything I felt and everything I did. But then, when I had revealed my whole self to her, she turned away from the ideals I hold as well as from myself (*ot ideala i ot menia*). The former she now considers humbug while she regards me as tilled with ambition and an egotist.⁶

In his reply to Škarvan's letter, Tolstoy expressed his "very great interest" in this abortive romance and begged his Slovak friend for further details, "provided this would not be disagreeable" to him.⁷ And Tolstoy repeated his request a month later. Tell me, he wrote: "what was it that drew her to you and what was it that the affair if emotion hinders you."⁸

It was not until the following spring that Škarvan complied with Tolstoy's request. After release from the army, though still under the shadow of recall to the colours and deprived now of the right to practise as a doctor, he had returned home. There in the Slovak highlands he occupied himself chiefly with volunteer medical assistance to poor countryfolk in his neighbourhood, where there were not enough doctors available to satisfy the need. He also commenced an account of his prison experiences.⁹ Late in April 1896 he finished and sent Tolstoy his story. He does not explain the reasons for his delay in responding to Tolstoy's request. But probably, as Tolstoy had surmised, for several months after his break with the countess, the matter was too painful for him to discuss even with such a sympathetic and respected corre-

spondent. The letter he wrote on April 2nd is a remarkable document. Of its fifty closely packed pages thirty-four deal with his relationship to Adele (Adela) von Mazzuchelli.¹⁰ Now he felt able to write:

“Certainly emotion does not hinder me; on the contrary, it prompts me to tell you everything.”

Adela and Albert first met in unusual circumstances. The military authorities at Košice (Kaschau, Kassa), where Škarvan had been stationed at the time of his act of defiance, not really knowing what to do with this strange delinquent soldier, had sent him under escort to Vienna for examination in one of that city’s major hospitals. If, as they probably hoped, he was found insane, they would rid themselves of an awkward problem. For nine weeks Škarvan was shut up in the hospital’s psychiatric ward. At the end of this period, however, the doctors declared him to be without a doubt sane, and he was then returned to Košice, again under escort.

Let us now take up Škarvan’s story, as he told it to Tolstoy, with the arrival of a newcomer in the psychiatric ward during the fifth week of the Slovak’s sojourn there. This man was Alexander von Carina. Transylvanian by birth and a cavalry officer by profession, Captain Carina was attached to the imperial Ministry of War (*Reichs-Kriegs-Ministerium*). Carina and Škarvan occupied rooms next door to each other: officers were treated like gentlemen in the hospital, even in its psychiatric ward, which indeed housed all sorts.¹² The troubles of the amiable, if ingenuous, captain had begun when he became involved in an affair with the attractive, but extravagant, young widow of a highranking friend of his in the Ministry. In 1892 Count Ludwig von Mazzuchelli, it seems, had committed suicide as a result of his wife’s lifestyle. Three years later Carina, after amassing a heavy burden of debt on account of his lady love, followed in the count’s footsteps and attempted suicide by throwing himself into

the Danube. His attempt, though, proved to be somewhat halfhearted, made perhaps in order to evoke pity for his plight rather than to put an end to his life.¹³ At any rate, he was rescued from drowning. Partly to avoid scandal, the authorities then sent him for psychiatric examination at the hospital where Škarvan was interned.

The two men got on well together—at least for the time being. Škarvan was surprised to find in Carina, contrary to his previous experience with such persons, a professional army officer who was both cultured and sensitive, “a man... with whom one could talk about other things than women, wine, and the service.” He was well read in a wide range of literary genres and extremely articulate. He liked to talk about his countess, confiding in Škarvan how miserable her husband’s family had made her by accusing her of being morally responsible for the latter’s death.

It was not long before the countess came to visit Carina, and she soon began to do so on a daily basis. The 29-year old Adela made an immediate impression on Carina’s Slovak co-patient. Like Škarvan, she was a Slav¹⁴, though they seem to have communicated with each other in German as the most convenient interlingua.

Writing to Tolstoy nearly a year later, Škarvan described her as a lovely brunette, hair touched with grey, face and figure that of a girl of seventeen. “Care-free,... clever, exceptionally energetic and sensitive, affectionate and with a simple and almost child-like spirit: that was how she struck me, and thus she remains today in my memory. What feeling was reflected in her face and what an impressionable nature she possessed! What delicacy with respect to manners and behaviour!” Škarvan confessed he had often felt awkward in the presence of upper-class women. But there was never the slightest restraint in his relationship with Adela; even though she was by nature “a proud aristocrat,” he always felt entirely at ease with her.¹⁵

Adela continued to be Carina's visitor. But every day Adela and Albert took a stroll together in the hospital garden; they usually had supper together, too, in Albert's room, which he tidied up especially for her. While Adela brought dainty morsels she had bought in the town in order to supplement the hospital fare, "I would lay the table," he told Tolstoy, "wash the dishes, make the tea, etc." Often she brought her three children with her for the day; and to them Škarvan would tell stories. (He was a wonderful story-teller.) They all, adults and children, played games together in the garden; it was springtime and the blossoms were out. Adela spent more and more of her time at the hospital; in fact, as she confessed, she now felt bored at home. She had never met anyone like Albert before; she felt that his *Weltanschauung* (she did not use that word though) was utterly different from anything she had known about before and that his act of defiance could not be assessed by the rules of life she had been taught.

She listened to him like a bright yet innocent child as he explained the reasons that had led him to his "act" and expounded the Tolstoyan gospel that had at last brought him inner peace after he had despaired of the world and its ways. She showered him with questions and would listen to his reply with intense emotion, her nose convulsed and her lips twitching. She would interrupt him when she did not understand something or failed to follow his argument, sometimes asking for time to think over what he was telling her, especially when this appeared particularly challenging. "She filled me with admiration," writes Škarvan. But naturally she worried and perplexed Carina as he began to realize that his countess was transferring her affections to the Slovak. Relations between the two men rapidly cooled.¹⁶

In an autobiographical fragment written shortly before his death in 1926, Škarvan

described the initiation of the next stage in his relationship to Adela.

„One day in the hospital garden when no one was looking, the countess handed me a packet. Opening it I found it contained an amulet attached to a small chain and also an unusually affectionate and deeply poetical letter such as only a refined and well educated woman could compose. Pushkin himself might well have envied me such a letter: was so beautifully written I read it through several times. 'I was lost, you have brought me back to life. It is as I was born again: I feel indeed like a girl of sixteen.' Her sincerity and enthusiasm made a great impression on me, and I began to fall in love with her."

They started to write each other letters; the occasions when the hospital régime allowed them to be together no longer seemed sufficient. Poor Carina now felt he had been abandoned by the countess altogether. Several times he came late at night to Škarvan's room to talk things over; the latter, however, had pretended to be asleep.

Though Škarvan admitted he was beginning to be in love, he tried to keep the affair on a platonic level, as he thought befitted a follower of Tolstoy. "If you really love me," he wrote her, "love in me what I value in myself. And if you do this, you must love something greater than I am. You must free yourself from love of my person, and then we will reach out together toward God." The proud and elegant aristocrat took his words to heart. She laid aside her jewelry and exchanged her fashionable clothes for the commonplace dress worn by women of the lower orders. Škarvan was obviously not altogether pleased by this change. As he relates: "Clearly she lost thereby at least part of her charm as a woman." He was even less pleased when she suggested that they should get married. He must indeed have shown his displeasure since "she did not repeat her suggestion. And I did not pursue the matter any further." 18

One evening Adela left home and came to the hospital in some distress. She was suffering from her monthly period and unable to sleep, so she lay down on the sofa in Albert's room (Carina was present, too) and slept for half an hour. Awaking refreshed she became once again "her usual cheerful and happy self." It had been Albert not Adela, who made up the sofa so that it would be comfortable for the sleeper. He had done this, he explained to Tolstoy, because "the countess was curiously helpless if faced with any kind of physical labor. From childhood she had been accustomed to others doing everything for her, while for my part I was anxious to perform any little thing for her that needed doing. She indeed wondered at my being able without difficulty to arrange all such things for her!"

Now, when he looked at her asleep on the couch he had experienced a curious sensation. She seemed changed—almost beyond recognition. He saw lying there an almost elderly woman with lines on her face and with flabby cheeks: suffering was stamped on her countenance. He suddenly felt a wave of compassion encompass him and a strange joy that she had come, he thought, to accept the Christian way of life, which was one of suffering. She no longer lived for physical love alone. "At that moment I loved her purely and tenderly and with such joy in my heart."¹⁹ At the same time he could not help asking himself where it would all end.

Not long before he was scheduled to leave the hospital Škarvan received from the countess the first of three letters written in German,²⁰ which he included almost in full in his report to Tolstoy. She told her "dear friend" of her delight in his company. "I would gladly talk to you without interruption for hours on end." And she dared not think what would happen to her when he left the hospital. She did not wish, though, to place any obstacles in the way of his becoming reconciled with his former fi-

ancée.²¹ What she offered him was her sincere friendship. She once again intended to become Carina's wife; her feelings for Albert he had made her realize were indeed of a different—and more elevated—kind than those she entertained toward her other—and most faithful—admirer.

Albert answered her letter without delay: it was now the day before he was due to leave Vienna for good. He loved her, he told her, because he loved God and she was striving to love God, too. Not unexpectedly, she interpreted this letter as a reciprocation of her own love for Albert rather than merely a recognition of the love they both now felt for God. Her second letter, therefore, reflected a sense of triumph. "You are mine!" she began. "You love me as I love you." (The doctor was no longer *Sie* but *Du*.) "No one is nearer to me than you are." True, she loved him as a creature of God but she loved him, too, as a man. She begged him not to leave her; she needed his help if she was not to fall back into her old lifestyle. "At first I could not comprehend why you had chosen to go to prison; now I understand why."²²

Škarvan's reaction was mixed. He obviously wished to keep free of emotional entanglements; at the same time, as he told Tolstoy, he knew she had come to "worship" him. He could not fail, either, to notice the mounting passion expressed in her letters. On the eve of his departure, therefore, he felt awkward. With Carina hovering in the background he hesitated to fulfill her desire for a passionate farewell, even though he saw how unhappy his unwillingness to do so made her: she looked to him as if she were ready to commit suicide. He became frightened and, suddenly, he kissed her on the lips telling her to be at the railway station early next morning.

Of course she was there, along with a friend of Škarvan's from the city who had come on his own account. Though she looked pale after a sleepless night, Albert

thought her enchanting – no longer the haughty high-society lady but “a simple country lass.” Now for the first time he, too, used the familiar second person singular in place of the formal second person plural which, despite their increasing intimacy, he had hitherto always employed in addressing her. The kindly military escort allowed her to travel with Škarvan as far as Marchegg several stations down the line; he even left them by themselves in the carriage reserved for the prisoner and his guard. Albert felt blissfully happy as he talked to Adela about God and His love for humankind. Škarvan described to Tolstoy how deeply he had been moved after she had alighted from the train, by the sight of her standing on the platform at Marchegg as if immobilized by shock, clutching her gloves and her hat, which the strong wind had blown off so that her abundant tresses streamed in all directions.²³

Back in Košice, Škarvan was again placed by the army authorities in a mild form of detention (*Preventivehaft*). Since he was allowed to write, and receive, as many letters as he wished, the two lovers were able almost daily to exchange at least one letter. Albert poured out his soul to Adela: “I revealed to her my spiritual joys and my sorrows.” And she replied to him tenderly and with understanding.²⁴ But this agreeable interlude was not to last long.

Rigorous imprisonment began for Škarvan when, on July 4, a court-martial gave him a 4-month jail sentence. His future indeed looked bleak, especially since the court had stripped him of his medical degree. As he entered the military prison his spirits soared, however, as he saw Adela standing near the entrance gate. For the moment they were not allowed to speak to each other. But for Albert, “it was as if through the clouds the sun suddenly shone so that the landscape, hitherto grey, began to glitter with a thousand colours.”²⁵

By a combination of feminine charm and

aristocratic bearing Adela succeeded in persuading the prison authorities to allow her to see Albert twice a day, though they required that a guard be present at every meeting. She and Albert continued their dialogue on the spiritual life and the ideal society. But from time to time—Carina apparently forgotten—Adela would raise the question of their life together after Albert came out of jail. “I’ll leave Vienna and come with my children and be with you wherever you may happen to be.” She did not intend now to marry again, she told him, nor did she wish to interfere in any way with his occupations. But he would come every evening to her house for supper. As in the hospital he would slice the bread (“no one else can do that like you”) and play with the children and tell them stories. “And so the time will pass...” Škarvan confessed to Tolstoy that he found her “chatter” delightful: those meetings undoubtedly helped him through a difficult period.

Within the prison walls, with the jail guard sitting discreetly beside them, their relationship reached a climax. Finally Albert became fully conscious that Adela was not merely a “beloved sister” as he had pretended till then, but a woman whom he loved. “As she chattered away... I could not refrain from stroking her curls... Only a tiny push was needed for the thin partition which lay between us to fall, and then I would [know] for sure that I was passionately, madly, in love with the woman who was Adela.” (“What a mixture of animal and divinity humans are!”)

The partition fell when Adela said goodbye to him as he was led away to spend two weeks in solitary confinement in the punishment cell for a minor infringement of the prison rules. Earlier he had kissed her – but “as a sister”; now for the first time, the countess took the initiative. “And what a kiss that was!” he told Tolstoy.

„With that kiss everything seemed changed. Adela, lifting the veil which cov-

ered her face, had pressed her lips to mine. And, in our speechless contact, I had experienced a feeling of rapture. Throughout my body I felt a sweet poison of passion, of physical desire for woman. I felt it surge through my body; I felt it in every limb, to the tips of my fingers. I have never before felt desire take hold of me as now. It was as if in that kiss she received confirmation of her longing that I should belong to her and to her alone. It was as if she were telling me: you can occupy yourself in a way you wish but you must belong to me. Apart from me no one will – or can – love you.

She left the room but the passion she had aroused in me remained... My cheeks were on fire. I felt her slender waist and her soft hair as if they were still beside me. The violet perfume she always used scented the room. To sleep with her seemed to me now both innocent and natural – and so desirable!"

While he remained in confinement, Škarvan just let matters drift. Underneath, he obviously felt uneasy at some of the implications of their changed relationship. Still, it was wonderful to have her there to brighten the dreary scene he was daily forced to witness behind the prison walls.²⁷

In the spirit of the Master he considered it would be wrong to conceal any of his imperfections, including his lapses from sexual purity, from the woman who loved him. It was during Adela's last visit at Košice that he gave her a letter in which he made, as it were, full confession of his sins. "Since we had become so close to each other I wanted her to know all of me. For this purpose... I had in my letter to tell her everything. I wrote there... frankly and openly of the physical desire I felt for her and about my whole sexual life from the very beginning."²⁸ She responded that very same day to her "dearest Belo." She was in no way surprised, she wrote, at what he now told her; after all, none of us are perfect and, therefore, must not demand too much of

each other. "Surely a kiss bestowed out of true love is not unclean"; rather it proves the purity of such love. Come what might, they should face the future with confidence: "the most important thing is that we understand each other, that in spirit we are one. Everything else is unimportant." She asked him to respond to her letter promptly.

Albert felt at first reassured by the letter; he did not doubt for a minute Adela's sincerity. But soon misgivings began to arise. "This was not the first time," he confessed to Tolstoy, "that the problem had arisen of living in partnership (*vopros sozhitel'stva*) with a woman I loved." It had already puzzled him, indeed tortured him, in his relationship with his ex-fiancée, Saša. His ideal was to live purely and seek God as Christ had taught in the gospels that humankind should do. But might not marriage with the woman he loved conflict with his love of God? Might not that bond rivet him to the material world from which he strove, like the Master, to liberate himself? He remained uncertain, too, whether any woman would have the power to retain his love. He feared that, even with the arrival of children, a time would come when he would leave wife and "little darlings (*golubushki*)" to become again a pilgrim in search of God. He hinted to Tolstoy about dark fears he nurtured concerning his reaction if having married, his wife should die in childbirth. He would surely feel like a murderer! For "I knew there were far better and more important things to do in life than procreate offspring when I really didn't want children." He could then only weep unavailingly over the body of his dead spouse.³⁰ Thus, while marriage attracted him indeed, at the same time it scared him. Reading Škarvan's contorted prose with its misty aspirations toward the godhead, one cannot doubt that the romance between Adela and Albert was doomed from the outset.

Adela lingered for over a week in Košice. Albert is unable to explain why she did not

come to see him again or write. Perhaps, after his revelation of his passion for her, she expected more from him than he was prepared to give? That indeed would not have been unreasonable on her part. He wrote her several letters (we do not know their content) but received no reply. Why, why? he asked. Only now that I had lost her did I realize how deeply I loved her.³¹ He felt no wish either to eat or drink. He wandered aimlessly around the exercise yard. One moment he seated himself on a stone, the next moment he was standing up only to sit down again, this time on the ground. Back in Vienna, Adela wrote to demand he return her letters, Carina acting here as intermediary.³² He complied with her request; but only after he had made copies of the three letters he later transmitted to Tolstoy - conduct he does not seem to have considered in any way reprehensible!

He found consolation in this juncture reading the gospel of John, chapters 10 and 11:33. The agony of separation gradually subsided: after a week or two it had vanished altogether and he regained peace of mind, even though he was far from forgetting Adela or their love for each other. Then, unexpectedly, a letter arrived from her. In it she told him how miserable she now, felt having lost the one person able to guide her to a better life. For reasons that he does not make at all clear in his report to Tolstoy, Škarvan reacted negatively to the countess's letter. He found its tone artificial; he doubted her sincerity. Though he could not recall his exact words, he told Tolstoy that in his reply he had stressed once again - as gently as he could - that it was not the Countess Adele, who had aroused his love, but "her ardent spirit thirsting for the truth."

Adela was deeply offended by this response from the man she evidently still wished to consider as her lover. She felt herself rejected. Her love for Albert, which she had revealed frankly, had been spurned. So now her pent-up emotions

overflowed. In her reply she accused Albert among other things of "pride, egoism, and deception." "You would have done better," she went on, "if you had made an effort to take care of your poor old mother instead of seeking the limelight by extravagant actions and lying declarations." She hated herself now for having fallen victim to his blandishments: indeed she could not understand why she had ever been such a fool.³⁴

Škarvan decided to leave the letter unanswered: "I had no doubt," he told Tolstoy, "that it reflected what its writer now thought of me."³⁵ All communication between the two ceased.

In his response Tolstoy found Škarvan's account of the romance "extremely moving." He saw it as a drama exploring the nature of the relationship between the sexes. He did not consider that Škarvan had acted badly: the latter should not nurture any feeling of guilt over his part in the affair.³⁶ In his case the religious impulse had won out, in hers physical love: "in that lay the tragedy (*tragizm*) of your relationship."³⁷

A Tolstoyan love story should perhaps have a sad ending. For does not worldly love divert us from our proper goal on this earth of searching for God? The last Albert heard of the countess was that, after marrying Carina in 1897, she abandoned the unhappy man, who had meanwhile taken to drink as a result of accumulating new debts.³⁸ During the many years from 1896 on that Škarvan was to spend in exile, his own romance gradually retreated into the recesses of his mind. Albert was to marry three times; his first two marriages were disastrous. At the end of his career he admitted having had some very difficult moments in his life - "mostly on account of my relationship to women."³⁹

In his relationship to Adela there may have been a touch of class: a consciousness on Albert's part that the elegant

young Viennese lady and the boy from the village were not likely to make a success of life together on the long haul. Albert was in some ways more realistic than Adela. The trouble was that, in his genuine desire to adopt the lifestyle proclaimed by the Tolstoyan kerygma, he often lost sight of his own strong sexual drive: the kind of mistake Adela never made even if, with Albert as her tutor, she made heroic efforts to learn what the Tolstoyan gospel signified. Albert, on the other hand, was surely right when he doubted if Adela would ever wholeheartedly accept Tolstoyan nonresistance. He had noted how she had reacted angrily whenever a prison guard displayed rudeness toward either of them whereas Albert genuinely strove in such circumstances to turn the other cheek. He foresaw that this difference of outlook, stemming perhaps from a difference of temperament, might cause difficulties if their relationship continued.⁴⁰ He may also have suspected that his main attraction for Adela lay in his novelty, which would wear off sooner or later.

Škarvan had sensed that Tolstoy would not only find the tale he told interesting but would also discover in it a confirmation of his own outlook on life.⁴¹ Did Tolstoy himself ever contemplate creating out of it a story of his own, with Adele von Mazzuchelli (*née* Adela Niwicka) replacing Anna Karenina as a heroine who sacrificed the quest for divine love to follow earthly passion to a tragic conclusion? If he did, he left no record of his intention. But at the end of his life Škarvan was to comment: "Had I kept possession of those letters [of Adela] they would have made a fascinating book."⁴² Was he perhaps also echoing Tolstoy's own thoughts, as he heard the Master express them during his stay at lasnaia Poliana in 1896–97? At any rate we now have only Albert Škarvan's narrative, gathering dust in the archives, as a paradigm of a Tolstoyan love story, of the kind of story Tolstoy might have written at that time but never did.

NOTES

- 1 See my article, "Tolstoy and the Škarvan Case," *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 13 (2001): 1–7.
- 2 For Škarvan's life and thought, see Rudolf Chmel and Augustín Mařovčik, *Život je zápas: Vnútorná biografia Alberta Škarvana* (Martin: Osveta, 1977), which contains extensive extracts from Škarvan's diaries. See also the chapter on Škarvan in my *Freedom from War: Nonsectarian Pacifism 1814–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 230–46, 387–91. Chmel has recently published an annotated edition of Škarvan's classic prison memoir together with his chief work on the Slovak national idea: *Zápisky vojenského lekára. Slováci* (Bratislava: Tatran, 1991).
- 3 For Škarvan's prison experiences, see my translation of extracts from his memoir published in book form in 1920, *Life in an Austro-Hungarian Military Prison: The Slovak Tolstoyan Dr. Albert Škarvan's Story*, ed. and trans. P. Brock (Syracuse, NY: distributed by Syracuse University Press, 2002).
- 4 Letter to Tolstoy, 11 October 1895, MS, Tolstoy Museum (Moscow) Archives [cited below as MS1] fols. 2, 3, 6, 8. Škarvan writes (fol. 3): "Forgive me my poor Russian and inability to write it correctly." At this period Škarvan, though he wrote Russian fluently, made many gram-

matical mistakes and frequently inserted Slovakism while occasionally using letters from the Latin alphabet instead of cyrillics. I am grateful to Dr. Olga Velikanova for providing me with a typescript of those passages of Škarvan's two manuscript letters to Tolstoy that form the chief primary source for this article. Without such aid I would never have succeeded by myself in deciphering Škarvan's handwriting! I should also thank the Tolstoy Museum for making these letters accessible to me.

- 5 MS1, fol. 3
- 6 MS1, fol. 8
- 7 Letter dated 14 November 1895, in Lev N. Tolstoy, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii vol. 68* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1954) 256. [cited below as PSS]
- 8 Letter dated 16 December 1895, PSS vol. 68, 278.
- 9 Published in 1898 by Vladimir Chertkov at his émigré press in England: *Moi otkaz ot voennoi sluzhby: Zapiski voennago vracha* (Purleigh, UK: Svobodnoe slovo, 1898).
- 10 Letter to Tolstoy, 21 April 1896, MS, Tolstoy Museum (Moscow) Archives [cited below as MS2], fols 19–52. According to PSS vol. 69, 97 note 2, "Škarvan devoted a special exercise-book (*tetraď*) to his relations with [the countess], which he sent to Tolstoy along with his letter

- of 21 April." But it seems that the two items were not in fact separate. Today the page numbering of the two letters runs consecutively.
- 11 MS2, fol. 19
- 12 In a chapter of his memoir he entitles "Among the *Insane (Medzi šíalenými)*" Škarvan has given a graphic account of the inmates of the psychiatric ward, Škarvan, (Prague: Aventinum, 1920) 45–59.
- 13 That at least was Škarvan's explanation; see MS2, fol. 20.
- 14 Née Niwicka, Adela was born on 16 December 1865 near the west Galician town of Bochnia. Her father belonged to the Polish landed gentry. I must thank Dr. A. Bablok, cultural attaché at the Austrian Embassy in Ottawa, for obtaining from the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Vienna) information about the countess's background based on the entry on "Mazzuchelli" in the Gothaisches Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Gräflichen Häuser, Teil B, Jg. 114, 1941. This family was of north Italian origin with an Austrian title since 1818. In his old age Škarvan mistakenly stated that his lady friend was Italian, her late husband Hungarian, and his rival for her love, Carina (whom he always refers to as Korina), Polish.
- 15 MS2, fols. 20, 21. In my article, "Tolstoy and the Škarvan Case" (p. 4), and in *Life in an Austro-Hungarian Military Prison* (p. 6), due to a typographical error in one of my sources I mistakenly state that Adela was considerably older than Albert. In fact, she was his senior by only just over three years.
- 16 MS2, fols. 21- 24.
- 17 Škarvan, *Vlastný životopis*, Prúdy (Bratislava) 10 (1926): 419.
- 18 Škarvan, *Vlastný životopis* 419, 420.
- 19 MS2, fols. 24, 25.
- 20 They are to be found on fols. 25-7.
- 21 A reference to Saša Gerovská, a Carpatho-Rusyn who had broken off her engagement to Škarvan after his act of defiance. It was not long before she married a Russian lawyer and went to live in Russia. Later Škarvan observed that neither he nor the countess were in fact much troubled by the thought of Saša: Adela's "advantage over the simple Rusyn lass was obvious" to both of them (Škarvan, *Vlastný životopis* 419).
- 22 MS2, fols. 28, 29.
- 23 MS2, fols. 29, 33.
- 24 MS2, fol. 34.
- 25 Škarvan, *Life in an Austro-Hungarian Military Prison* 20.
- 26 MS2, fols. 35-37.
- 27 For this I must refer the reader to my translation of his prison memoir, *Life in an Austro-Hungarian Military Prison*.
- 28 MS2, fol. 43.
- 29 Škarvan's letter seems to be no longer extant. But a copy of the countess's letter (which she concluded affectionately with the words, "Ich grüsse Dich und schicke Dir einen herzlichen Küss, Deine Adele") was included in Albert's report to Tolstoy (fols. 42–44). There it is dated "13. VII. Freitag 3 Uhr." But 13 September, and not 13 July, seems to be the correct date.
- 30 MS2, fols. 44 – 46.
- 31 MS2, fol. 48.
- 32 In his report to Tolstoy (MS2, fol. 49), Škarvan does not give the name of Adela's intermediary. But in his *Vlastný životopis* (p. 420), written just before his death, he states that the countess, having renewed her former relationship with Carina, had entrusted him with this task.
- 33 These chapters contain inter alia the story of Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead with its message of victory over death.
- 34 MS2, fols. 49 – 51. The prison authorities confiscated the countess's letter during a surprise search shortly before Škarvan went home. Škarvan surmised that she had hesitated for twelve days before finally deciding to dispatch the letter.
- 35 MS2, fol. 51.
- 38 In *Vlastný životopis* (p. 421) Škarvan states that, after Carina's death (which occurred in May 1912), Adela entered a convent. If she did indeed do so, her stay there must have been brief since in September 1914 she married for a third time. Her last spouse was by training a lawyer, Dr. Otto Reibenschuh. I have been unable to discover the exact dates of the countess's death. But she lived at least into her late seventies.
- 39 Škarvan, *Vlastný životopis* 415, 420, 421.
- 40 MS2, fol. 38.
- 41 Škarvan gave Tolstoy permission, if he wished, to insert a few references to Adela and Carina in the memoir he had sent him for publication in Russian, provided that only initials were used. In fact, Chertkov included merely a few lines on the love theme. See Škarvan, *Moi otkaz* 97 - 99, 132. In the Slovak version of the memoir, which Škarvan completed in 1904, he did not make extensive reference to this theme, either; presumably he regarded the matter as still being of too delicate a nature for him to do so. See his *Zápisky* 54, 58 - 60, 76.
- 42 Škarvan, *Vlastný životopis* 420.