

# TRUTH ON ITS HEAD

ONE OF THE best-known characters in Russian literature is Gogol's Chichikov, the peripatetic trickster who went around shopping for dead souls. Last October a modern Chichikov descended on London in the shape of an elderly antisemitic propagandist, Tsezar Solodar, whose special claim to notoriety is that he is himself a Jew by nationality.

Gogol could not have invented a more ironic outcome. This Chichikov was received as an honoured guest by no less than the Chief Rabbi, visited the offices of the JEWISH CHRONICLE, engaged in a "dialogue" with the editor of the foremost Anglo-Jewish literary journal, the "Jewish Quarterly," and was suitably dined and wined by the British Foreign Office, which adds an Evelyn Waughish touch to the comedy.

Now, in a development that will make the bureaucrats of Soviet propaganda chortle and Soviet Jews flinch in dismay, the JEWISH CHRONICLE last week gave Mr Solodar three valuable columns of space to reassure us that under the Soviet constitution antisemitism is a crime against the State, antisemitic propaganda is unthinkable, and only lady demagogues falsely suggest that the authorities obstruct Jews who want to go to Israel.

Mr Solodar, who had not previously been heard of, sprang into prominence in 1976 with an eight-part serialisation of an anti-Zionist book, "Wild Wormwood," in the mass-circulation illustrated weekly, "Ogonek," and several articles in "Krokodil," with its 5,850,000 readership. Claiming to be a Yiddish-speaking journalist, he thus joined the small group of Jews ready to sign Soviet antisemitic tracts in books and newspaper articles.

Another is Vladimir Begun, author of the foul-smelling "Creeping Counter-Revolution," which declares that Jewish rabbis preach the annihilation of Arabs, that Judaism justifies the vilest deeds against non-Jews, and that Jews themselves

are responsible for antisemitism.

Mr Solodar's theme is that Zionism was the forerunner of Nazism and that "in the Vinnitsa ghetto, when the fascist occupiers were brutally killing my mother," for him it echoed the fanatical Zionist preaching of "a God-chosen Jewish nation" he heard in his distant youth in the 1920s.

Zionists are "thugs and gangsters." During the Second World War, barely had the roar of guns ceased "when Zionist emissaries devised and carried out in Europe a cycle of large-scale operations concerning the forcible transport of Jews to Palestine. . . .

"In these camps languished Jews who had been doomed to annihilation in the gas chambers and awaited death until the swift attack of Soviet troops forced them from Hitler's prisons . . . they were counting the days and hours until the happy moment when they would be able to go to their Homeland [Soviet Russia].

"And the dreams of these long-suffering people were pitilessly destroyed. The highest Zionist organs decided to send them to Palestine by force." On bended knees these "doomed people" begged not to be taken to the "alien Palestine land," but the Zionists were implacable.

When British medical personnel in Bergen-Belsen were about to evacuate desperately ill women and children, "Jewish rabbis in the British military units intervened in the actions of the selfless doctors" and on Zionist instruction insisted that only people who agreed to go to Palestine should be evacuated to hospital.

"In order to save dying children and wives whose death could only be prevented by most urgent treatment, many people agreed to be taken to Palestine . . . and, in May, Zionist agents deported to Palestine a transport of former Bergen-Belsen prisoners."

Solodar comments that "echoes of this tragedy even now, many years later, still knock at the hearts of honest people."

Following last week's article by Tsezar Solodar on the Jews of Russia, which aroused a storm of criticism (see letters on page 18), Emanuel Litvinoff, editor of the monthly "Insight: Soviet Jews," examines the character of the Russian writer

Mrs Natalia Shcharansky during a hunger strike outside the Soviet Embassy in London to highlight the plight of her husband, Anatoly, who has been detained in a Moscow jail since last March and may face treason charges

So much for history. But honest people still have cause to tremble. After a recent trip to the Low Countries, Chichikov-Solodar reported that Holland and Belgium are in the grip of a reign of terror by "Zionist thugs."

He described a meeting with a terrified dentist in an Antwerp park who whispered that his father, forcibly transferred to Palestine after the war, managed to escape just before the proclamation of the State of Israel.

Although his father had been dead ten years and the dentist had children of his own he went in terror that the long hand of Zionism would reach out in revenge because he dared speak of the bitter fate of his father. He begged Mr Solodar not to publish his name and address.

All such informants, giving other examples of Zionist thugery in Amsterdam and Brussels, remain conveniently anonymous. The Zionists, Mr Solodar explained, were rewarded for



"coming out against Communism" by the US neo-fascist John Birch Society, which hates Jews and Negroes, and by the Black Colonels of Greece whose followers daubed synagogues with swastikas.

Like Chichikov, he relies on human gullibility. "It is simply unthinkable," he writes, "that even one line could be published in our country similar to the antisemitic booklet 'Did Six Million Really Die?' . . . Could miniscule fragments of such a nature have been published even in the most remote corner of the Soviet land? Never!"

Never? In the country where the notorious Ukrainian antisemite, T. K. Kichko, is honoured and awarded prizes? Where, with full official authority, the "specialist on Jewish affairs," Valery Emelianov, lecturing at the Scientific Research Institute of the Soviet Rubber Industry, told his audience that the Torah is the blackest book created in the space of mankind's entire history; that the Jewish lan-

guage is an Esperanto of hagglers originally based on the Arab language; that Jews divide mankind into real human beings (Jews) and two-legged cattle and aim to turn all other people into their slaves; that the Jews plan to achieve world mastery by the year 2,000 and the struggle to prevent them would cost untold millions of lives?

And what about the Soviet Embassy in Paris, found guilty of incitement to racial hatred in 1973 for publishing similar accusations supported by forged "quotations" from alleged Jewish religious writings in its official journal?

The sad fact is that the Soviet Union is the principal disseminator of crude antisemitic propaganda in the world today, and Mr Solodar is one of its most odious practitioners. No doubt the Soviet authorities are amazed at their luck in having had him accepted as a legitimate spokesman for Soviet Jews in the columns of the JEWISH CHRONICLE.