

GEORGES PAPAZOFF

GEORGES PAPAZOFF was born in Bulgaria. His family, one of the oldest in the country, is covered with glory; and legends which form part of Bulgarian folklore have grown up around its more prominent members. Georges as a boy had little liking for school life. He had hardly read Robinson Crusoe before he imitated him—and this in the heart of winter, on an island in a frozen lake, and for background the virgin forests of the Balkans. He lived on wild plums which he found beneath the covering of snow. This bucolic episode lasted as long as a box of matches; he came home barefoot like the son of a prophet. He began work on a farm, spending his vacations at the lycée, where his parents thought they should send him—as was proper for respectable merchants of a little provincial town. He was their favourite child. When of age he became a comitadji, taking advantage of this venture to increase the probabilities of love. Nevertheless, the shoemaker's trade attracted him; and then, after publishing several articles on Russian art, he did not hesitate to fight a duel with the director of the State Bank who frequented the house of Papazoff's mistress. He felt himself insulted, but in reality it was the financier who laid prior claims on this woman with her eyes as soft as those of a sleeping bird. The Sofia prefect of police classed the incident by exclaiming, "Vive la'amour." Papazoff went into penance, accompanied by some book of Dostoevsky and a good Mauser—selecting as the scene of his exploits the independent theatre of Macedonia. Later he picked himself the profession of architect, which ended in disaster by his constructing a hangar for Zeppelins at Sofia which was carried off by some fatherless wind. This was evidence to him that he was destined for a subtler kind of architecture and thus he became what we usually call a painter. His painting is like the man. We will never know whether his painting is done to explain his temperament or whether some pure germ of painting seized his body to find there its incarnation. The bey Billouk, a great friend of his father, summons him to Constantinople each time the needs of nature become importunate. In the "Intran" some time back, there was an advertisement: "Loft to rent (if possible in the Quartier Montparnasse). Address Papazoff, 28 rue Vavin."

Tr. by Kenneth Burke.

MARX LOEBE