

## CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Friends,

Here in a letter to the editor I wish to inform you and our readers that a Russian historian has recently discovered how the cornetist Oskar Böhme came to an end. In a chapter about Böhme in my book *East Meets West* I had written, “The exact date and the circumstances of his death will probably never be known.” In the wake of Stalin’s “Great Terror” (1928–54) more than four million people were deported and/or executed. Especially after Central Committee Secretary Sergey M. Kirov was assassinated on 1 December 1934, Stalin initiated a great series of purges of artists and scientists, also banishing many persons of German origin, including Böhme, to distant places. Böhme was arrested on 13 April 1935 because of supposed—i.e., trumped-up—anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation and sentenced to three years of banishment from St. Petersburg to Orenburg (Stalinist name: Chkalov), a traditionally German city at the foot of the southern Ural mountains. Until 1938 he was teaching at a music school there, without the right of correspondence. Since 1995, with access to the KGB archive, Historian Anatoly Jakovlevich Rasumov has been publishing the names and short biographies of those who were assassinated by Stalin’s henchmen; his *Leningrad Martyrologium* has reached fourteen volumes so far. He has discovered that in October 1938 (probably on the 23rd) Oskar Böhme was shot. See Christian Neef, “Archivar des Terrors,” *Der Spiegel* 53 (24 December 2015): 94–97, here 96.

With best wishes,

*Edward H. Tarr*

