

CHIEF OF THE COSSACKS

by HAROLD LAMB

On the other side of the earth flows a mighty river called the Volga. More than three centuries ago, the men of Muscovy—from the city of Moscow—appeared on its banks. They claimed the river for their master, the Tsar of Muscovy. The prairies of the Volga became a vast frontier between the nomads of Asia and the town-dwelling Muscovites.

At this time one man ruled the frontier of the Volga. Some called him a pirate. Some called him chief of the Cossacks. His name was Stenka Razin, and his power was greater than that of kings, even though he dwelt not in a palace but on a fleet of river boats.

In childhood Stenka learned the dangers of floods, blizzards, the prairie grass fires. Through manhood he learned the dangers of a dream—a dream of a Cossack Republic where men could be safe from the dreaded commands of the powerful Muscovites. For this dream he suffered torture in prison, and fought many battles. His followers grew in number from a hundred to a hundred thousand. He became a father to the homeless, friend to the serfs, leader of all the Cossacks.

Today in Russia, the men of the prairies and the mountains remember Stenka Razin, and they sing his songs.

Harold Lamb has written a powerful book about this colorful figure in Russian history. Open its pages, and a strange and remote world bursts into life.

Illustrated by ROBERT FRANKENBERG

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