

# B. Traven

## Portrait of a Famous Unknown

**Golo • Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith**

His life belonged to him, only. His books belonged to the public.

*B. Traven: Portrait of a Famous Unknown* is a graphic biography that tells the larger-than-life story of the German revolutionary, actor, and writer known as B. Traven (1882–1969). Despite his commercial success as a best-selling writer, Traven managed to keep his identity a secret during his lifetime. It is now generally accepted that Traven was in fact “Ret Marut” (another pseudonym), a German stage actor and editor of an anarchist newspaper in Germany called *Der Ziegelbrenner* (The Brickburner). As Marut he was a major participant in the short-lived Bavarian Council Republic of 1919–20. Barely escaping execution, he fled Germany and lived incognito for the remainder of his life. His entire literary work, a great commercial success in its day, combines lively and often humorous storytelling with radical critique of capitalism and nationalism. His best-known work, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, from 1927, was adapted for film in 1948 by John Huston.

Golo’s account of Traven’s life, rendered with stunning artwork, begins and ends with his ashes being dropped from a plane over the Lacandon jungle in Chiapas, Mexico, just a quarter century before the explosive uprising of the Zapatistas seemed to echo his deepest wishes.

### ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Guy Nadaud, known as **Golo**, was born in Bayonne in 1948. He began his artistic career in 1973 as an illustrator for the music magazine *Best*. In the same year he visited Egypt for the first time, fell in love with Cairo, and has lived there for many years beginning in the 1990s. A prolific cartoonist and comic-book creator, Golo has contributed to many French and Egyptian periodicals, among them *Hara-Kiri*, *Charlie Hebdo*, *Libération*, *Cairo Times*, *L’Association* (Cairo), and *Charlie Mensuel*. In the 1980s his regular collaborator was the late Frank Reichert (“Frank”). His countless comic albums include adaptations of Albert Cossery, travelogues on Taiwan, and a two-volume graphic biography of the Romanian revolutionary vagabond Panaït Istrati.

Born in Manchester, England, **Donald Nicholson-Smith** is a longtime resident of New York City. He has translated many texts of the Situationist International, including Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* and Raoul Vaneigem’s *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. PM Press has also published his translations of Anselm Jappe’s intellectual biography *Guy Debord* and Vaneigem’s *A Letter to My Children and the Children of the World to Come*. Translations of poetry include Guillaume Apollinaire’s *Letters to Madeleine* and the self-selected poems of the dissident Moroccan author Abdellatif Laâbi, *In Praise of Defeat*. Nicholson-Smith has also worked on noir fiction, notably several novels by Jean-Patrick Manchette for New York Review Books. And, among graphic works, Nicole Claveloux’s *The Green Hand* and Yvan Alagbé’s *Yellow Negroes and Other Imaginary Creatures*.

### ACCOLADES

“By dwelling so effectively on Traven’s years as a revolutionary known as Ret Marut, Golo taught me so much about the Bavarian soviet republic of 1919. For that alone this book would have been very precious and profitable for me.”

—Raton-Liseur, *Babelio*



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