

TURKESTAN SOLO

Born in 1903, Ella Maillart is a Swiss national and traveller *extraordinaire* who, when static, makes her home in Geneva. Her occupation is described in *Who's Who* as 'explorer', but she has also achieved success in the guise of a yachtswoman — who sailed for Switzerland in the Olympic Games of 1924 — and a skier.

This book is set in 1932. A time when by normal standards, to someone who was both a Westerner and a woman, extensive travel within central Asia could be only a mystical pipedream. Thus the journeyings Ella Maillart describes so vividly in *Turkestan Solo* are the product of a truly determined traveller's spirit. Like a latterday Marco Polo she spends six months travelling from Moscow through Russian Turkestan, encountering en route difficult terrain as well as the problems engendered by a general food shortage. Throughout she retains her conviction that the life of a nomad is the best life, and never regrets the European civilisation which she has left behind her.

For us, Ella Maillart's observations are full of a beauty that is rendered exotic by the inaccessibility of the far-off lands she travelled over fifty years ago. But *Turkestan Solo* is more than a traveller's tale: it is a record of social history that is still pertinent today about regions in the grip of historical chaos as three great powers — Russia, China and the British Empire — and their peoples struggle to live alongside each other.

This edition of *Turkestan Solo* is introduced by Julia Keay, who has travelled widely in the Indian sub-continent and the Himalayas. Educated in England, Switzerland and France, she has four children and has written a quantity of material for BBC Radio. She is currently researching a book on Mata Hari.

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TURKESTAN SOLO

*One Woman's Expedition
from the Tien Shan to
the Kizil Kum*

ELLA MAILLART

Translated by John Rodker

Introduction by Julia Keay

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"Real strength, real courage, and the only genius in this huge ant-heap of ours, lies in going where one wishes, when one wishes, and as rapidly as one wishes."

GEORGES DUHAMEL

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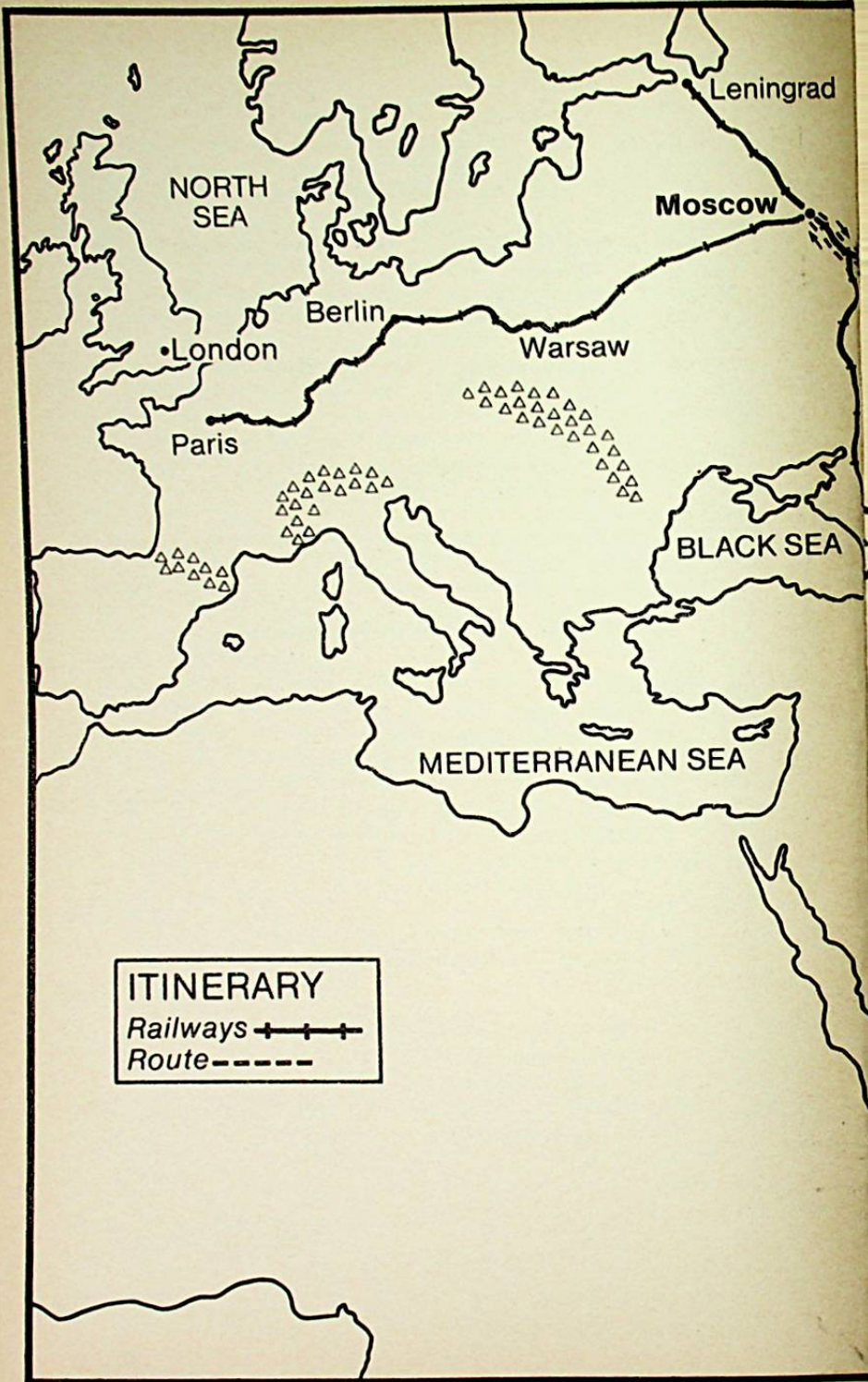
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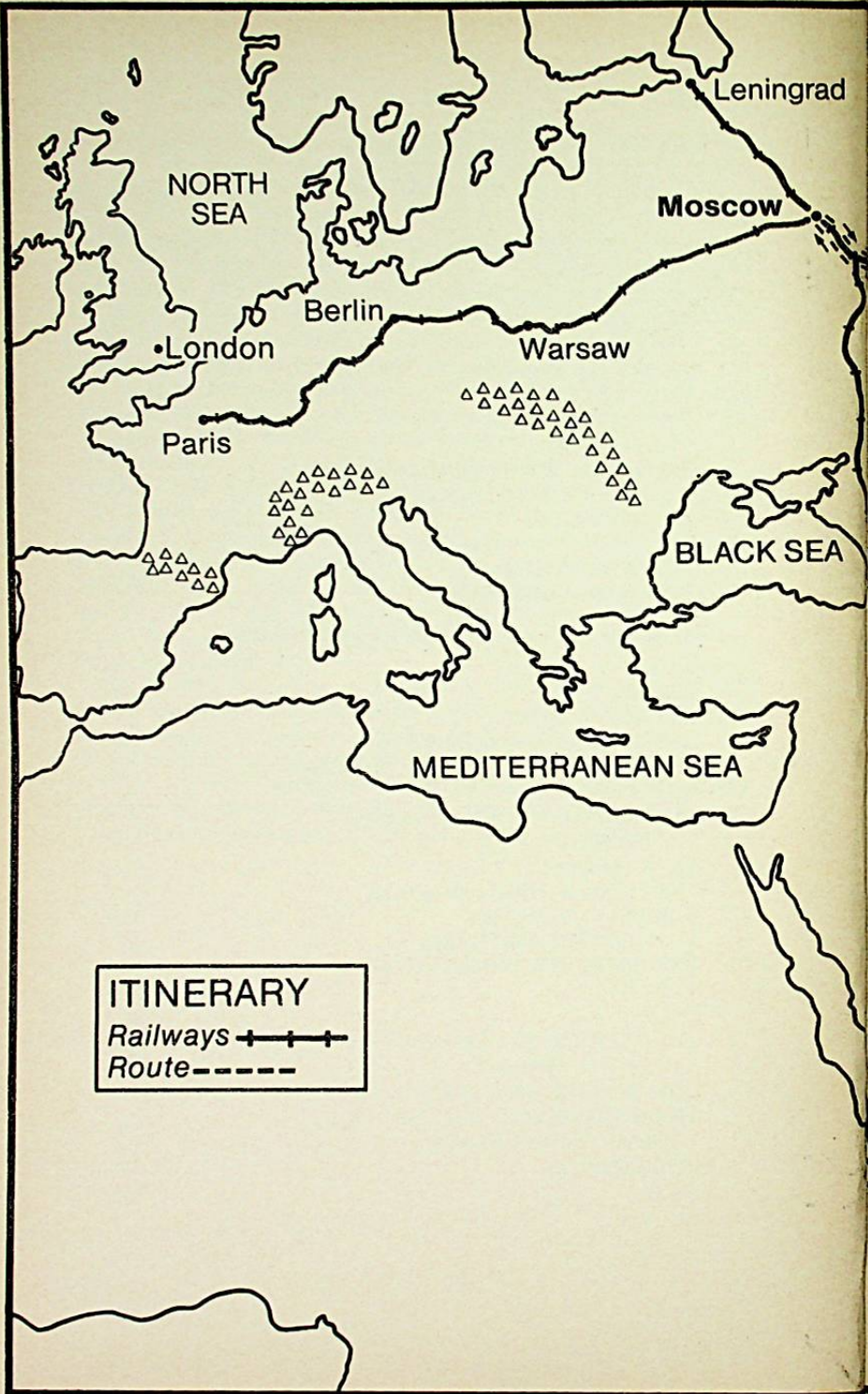


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