MASSES & MAINSTREAM

THUNDER IN THE SOUTH

By ABNER W. BERRY

CHAPTERS FROM A NEW NOVEL

By MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV

TO SOVIET PAINTERS

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THE CHINA I SAW

By JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

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OPEN LETTER

To Soviet Painters

By DAVID ALFARO SIQUEIROS

WHAT can I tell you in this open letter?

In the first place, let me say that I know the development of your work from its earliest beginnings. In 1927, ten years after the triumph of the October Revolution, I visited your country for the first time, as a delegate to the Congress of the trade unions. At that time I was able to study the progress of your art. In 1951, in Warsaw, I visited the exhibition of Soviet painting which had just been shown in a similar art festival in Berlin. Only a month ago I again saw an exhibition of Soviet painting in Warsaw. . . . Now, in the Soviet Union from the end of September until the present, I have visited all the principal museums in Moscow and Leningrad and several private studios, and I feel sure that I am acquainted with the most important of your big works.

There is no doubt that in every way your art fulfills a political role in a manner without parallel in the history of the world. Its total output is at the service of a social movement that has opened a new era for humanity. You can count on the unlimited support of the first working people's state. There can be no doubt that your painting has contributed toward transforming the old Russia of the tsars into a land of the first rank—in industry, agriculture, science, education, sport, as well as in everything else concerned with the happiness and well-being of man.

There is no city, large or small, no town, village, factory, railroad station, recreation center, school, where you have not expressed socialist ideology, commemorated your great men and your heroes, in works of every size. In public squares as well as on the façades of buildings and in the interiors of housing developments, constructed in the hundreds of thousands, you have made your artistic contribution.

In short, within the framework of the liberating conditions of your

new society, you are repeating what other societies, even slave, did in the realm of public art: ancient China, ancient India, ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, as well as the great pre-Hispanic cultures of America. Thus, your art is an art of the state, an art of a public nature, an art with an ideological basis, an art, therefore, with a clearly defined purpose, a realistic intent.

Your art is epic art, heroic art. It is leading you already to the discovery of technical solutions, such as the magnificent enamel mosaics now being made. Naturally, much still remains to be done in this direction, and it is on this point that I should like to say something more.

I HAVE been a member of the Communist Party since 1923, and since that time I have never ceased struggling for its objectives which are my own, and I know that Communists never rest content merely with the analysis of objective fact. Communists always go to the very root of a problem and then proceed to concrete criticism and self-criticism. It is from that premise that I now continue.

Mexican painting is also supported by the government and in part by the general public. It, too, has a definite ideological basis, has realism as its objective and is concerned with exploring new techniques. Nevertheless, it suffers from a formalistic taint inevitable in countries with a bourgeois economy and, in addition, ground down by imperialist exploitation. Your art certainly does not show the results of that corruption which has made of the art of the entire capitalist world a degraded and degrading spectacle. However, it suffers from another form of cosmopolitanism—*academic formalism, mechanical realism.*

If we compare the *Formalism* of the Paris school with *Academicism,* we find an element of similarity in both. They both de-nationalize art and render it impersonal; the *Formalists* in the manner of the Paris School, and the *Academicists* in the manner of the Academy of Rome. In whatever country, each resembles the other like two drops of water.

Between an Argentinian *Formalist* and a Japanese *Formalist* not the slightest difference exists, just as there is absolutely no difference between a Hungarian Academicist and a Guatemalan Academicist. Both produce hybrid art because both adopt a pre-determined style and therefore do not make the style, *the form,* the consequence and result of its purpose.

Our contemporary Mexican painting, with its formalist elements, and as a result of this formalism, suffers in addition from *primitivism* and

from *archeologism*—from which you do not suffer; but your painting does not yet employ your own national genius for the perfecting of your creative art, and thus you continue to be the victims of that stylistic "prejudice" to which I have referred: the use of those *dead laws of international academicists.*

REALISM, you will agree, cannot be a *fixed formula,* an *immutable law.* This is shown by the whole history of art which is precisely the history of the discovery of ever more realistic forms. A simple mental review of painting from the time of cave drawings, through antiquity, the Medieval Christian era, continuing on to pre-Renaissance and Renaissance art should leave not the slightest doubt as to this truth. It can be said that no work of art is superior to another and that in this sense no period of art is superior to another, but this does not disprove in any way the uninterrupted enriching of form toward a realistic and increasingly more civilized, more eloquent language of art.

The need to create beings who are more life-like, more thoughtful, more expressive, as well as the need to make the physical medium in which man moves always more palpable has inspired every period in which art has not been bottled up by sacrosanct formulas. *Realism can only be a means to ever progressing creativity.*

Our Mexican painting has lost sight of this principle because of its formalistic excursions into *archeologism,* and from there along the dead-end road of indigenous *primitivism.* This is a fact of grave significance in that it froze the output of many of its masters in their earliest style, or in the style of thirty years ago. (The contemporary movement in Mexican painting started thirty-three years ago.)

In your painting, Soviet painters, a similar blindspot exists which results in the perpetuation of *representational styles already passé, for example, the styles employed in American advertising at the beginning of the century.* I noted this influence in Polish art, too, as I stated in my open letter to Polish artists.

If we review the development of your work during the past thirty-eight years, we will see that its progress has not been at all in the increasing expressiveness of its *form,* but only in what might be called as technical virtuosity and its improved workmanship. But we must not forget that it is precisely this perfecting of technique within the confines of a limited realistic creativity that has always led to decadence.

The painters immediately following the Renaissance were much more proficient than their predecessors but their work is infinitely inferior to their less clever forerunners. Raphael was terrific, but the Raphaelites who followed him were vile. And that is only one example.

IT IS not at all true that *all stress on form leads to formalism.* If it were we would not be able to understand any of the great Venetian painters, nor Michelangelo, nor Greco, Goya, Daumier, etc., and in Mexico, José Clemente Orozco. The *formalists* exalt form for form's sake as if it were a purely plastic game, but the true realists stress form and will always stress form because of their objective—a greater plastic eloquence. When all is said and done, the language of the realists, our common language, is a plastic language. That is to say our political content, no matter how true and beautiful it may be, cannot be more than a living expression directed to the senses of some human being.

A study of the history of art will show us also that art has always followed the path of constantly perfecting the material means of its expression—the materials and the tools of its work. If we glance, for example, at the four centuries of great Italian art, we will be struck at once by the fact that artists of differing periods never took over the tools of their predecessors. On the contrary, the great artists were the most assiduous seekers and discoverers of new tools and materials. They did not merely parallel the most advanced science and technique of their period, but they were invariably in the forefront of science and technique. We thus see artists perfecting *tempera,* enriching *oil,* finding new and ever better *pigments,* and, why not say it, always adding to their professional "bag of tricks" so as to increase the perfection of their work.

Our Mexican movement has had its innovators of this kind, but at the same time they have had furious opponents, and it is due to the latter that our major production still remains fettered by thousands of different methods, with serious damage to its eloquence.

Painting, like all plastic art, is an art of "materials," a physical art, and therefore subject to the potentialities and limitations of its material means of expression. In your case, Soviet painters, this fact assumes an even greater seriousness, first, because there have not yet appeared among you any advocates of changing technical materials, and secondly, because you can count on a government which, of any period of history, is

he most capable of giving you not only the effective means but the noral support for basic change.

While the great painters of every period of history systematically xpanded the principles of *composition and perspective,* painters bound o the Paris School not only never brought forth anything new, but orgot everything discovered by their predecessors. In our contemporary Mexican movement, confronted as we have been by the systematic pposition of the *traditionalists* who create by formula, we have been orced to find a solution to this problem, as many of our results show. oviet painters, on the contrary, still adhere to the methods of composi- ion and perspective common to all art academies throughout the world, nd they do this in the only country in the world (also true for the nost part in the People's Democracies) where science is at the service f all the people and could be of enormous help in solving this problem.

Neither the forms of realism, nor its tools and materials are static. t would be absurd to think that the final word in the language of realism vas said by the great masters of the past, and just as absurd to think hat the tools and materials discovered hundreds or even thousands of ears ago are the ultimate of their kind.

Now, setting aside the painting which takes its inspiration from vhat we call the Paris School (particularly since this painting has ommitted the folly of denying public art and ideological art, and has ucceeded in expelling the image of man from art, substituting for it a mple *pseudo-liberated geometrical form*), there remain in the entire vorld only two significant fields in art: the Mexican, which is subject o increasingly adverse political conditions, and the Soviet, with its ncreasingly favorable political conditions. (Naturally, in the People's Democracies, an excellent beginning has been made, but this is very ecent and thus still embryonic.)

SINCE the Mexican and the Soviet are the only two vital currents in art, can we not by criticism and self-criticism help each other to do way with the negative aspects of our work and invigorate the positive spects?

Mexican painters depend on their extremely important tradition, and n a people who are vastly gifted in plastic arts. But Soviet painters re no less endowed. Their tradition is magnificent and their painters ossess great talent. Soviet painters have a professional discipline which

our painters lack and an ability to express psychological phenomena which is unequalled. They have already embarked on truly monumental art, art linked to architecture, and now the only thing that remains to do is to shake off the academic tendencies which immobilize them.

I know you will accept these remarks in the spirit in which they are written. They are the words of a staunch comrade in politics as well as in art, one who having seen how the Hermitage Museum has been transformed from the 50 rooms he knew in 1927, to the three hundred and more of today, sees in it the symbol of all that is happening in every field of Soviet life.

(*Translated from the Spanish by Lillian Lowenfels*)

The staff of Masses & Mainstream *regrets that Samuel Sillen is leaving the magazine after many years of fruitful work as its editor. We are pleased, however, that he will continue his close association with the magazine as a member of its board of contributors.*

The staff also wishes to announce the return of Charles Humboldt who will serve as managing editor.

Thunder in the South

By ABNER W. BERRY

THE unmistakable rumblings of a new battle for democracy in the outh have given rise to a number mistaken theories as to why it is ppening. There is the theory that is happening automatically because some "change of heart." This view nits the basic social and historic nderlying causes. There is another ew which is fundamentally just as utomatic" in its assumptions, but hich appears to have a more ma-rialist basis. This view argues that e "plantation system is dying be-use of industrial advances." Hence, ere is a sort of automatic process the dying of the jimcrow system. rhaps even more startling is the planation advanced by a writer the quarterly review, *Dissent,* a blication which says it is Socialist t "anti-Stalinist." Mr. Bob Bone, iting in the Spring edition of the agazine says:

"We are living in a period when reign policy considerations are de-ive in determining the course of mestic events. America must gar-on an empire; therefore some form permanent military conscription is inevitable. . . . America must staff its fighting forces with loyal personnel; therefore important concessions must be made to a disadvantaged minority group which numbers over 15,000,-000. *The Negro question has become a military manpower question—a matter of organizing American resources for war."*

According to Bone we are witnessing a "revolution" in race relations "with the armed forces acting as the vanguard of social progress." Logically, one could conclude from this that the planning for war is "good" for the Negro people. But would Bone dare to assert that his opinion is shared by the Negro people?

Looking at another aspect of the integration drive, Bone asserts that integration is taking place "at a time when reaction has the initiative in all other political spheres." Bone therefore sees it as "paradoxical" that segregation should be receding while political repressions, he predicts, will increase.

The main and most palpable error of Bone is that he overlooks entirely the fact that Negroes throughout

the country have been fighting stubbornly for years against every form of racism. To accept his thesis one would have to believe that the political reactionaries are capable of projecting contradictory programs—one for racial democracy and the other for political dictatorship. Further, we are to believe that integration is inevitable for reasons of foreign policy, and in view of the influx of industry into the South and the increased mechanization of farms in the old plantation belt.

Now it is true that Negroes are being displaced on the old plantations by the introduction of machinery. This process is forcing Negroes into the Southern and Northern towns and cities. *But their leaving the land has not automatically done away with the racist pattern, nor has it reduced the dominance of cotton as a crop.*

Negroes moving to the cities have affected the fight for integration by exercising their political and economic power. Is not this what is happening today in the city of Montgomery? Recently I was told by a leader of the Montgomery bus boycott that the "economic squeeze" of the White Citizens Councils could not work in a city "because the role of the whites and Negroes are too closely intertwined." It is this, along with Negro migration from the farms, rather than any automatic process, which accounts for the connec tion between the growth of Negr city dwellers and the fight for inte gration. The implied decrease o cotton production is refuted by th crop reports. The Jackson (Miss.) *Daily News,* for example, headline a story last December 9:

"Two Million Bales is State Cotto Crop For Year"

And the story astonishingly in forms us:

"This year's crop, boosted by ad vanced farming methods, came fron 1,700,000 *acres, the lowest sinc* 1871. *Last year's harvested acreag totalled* 1,960,000 *acres."*

The figures do not show tha "cotton is not King." They show tha the King is able to get fatter an richer on the labor of fewer subject The mass of sharecroppers, as a lead ing business weekly pointed out re cently, are being turned into da *laborers.* And the remaining cropper work for both wages and "shares, farming reduced acreage. But the ol feudal relationships remain the sam —jimcrow, terror at the polls or eve at the "threat" of Negroes appea ing at the polls. The mass of dis placed former farmers become ne pools of labor for the run-away nort ern industries.

A look at a few of the recent move shows that industries are indeed mo ing into the old plantation belt. Th Alexander Smith Carpet Compan

vent to Greenville, Miss., and Du-ont's largest Orlon plant is located n Camden, S.C. In almost every case, whether it is the manufacture of res, newsprint, artificial fibres or otton textiles, the northern plant moving closer to its basic raw ma-rial. This has tended to bolster the ld plantation, although contributing its "modernization" in every other ay except socially and politically.

THE industries which have come to the Black Belt have not only ven added incentives to the planta-ons for furthering their economic evelopment, but they have tended *take over and strengthen the mi-feudal social relations there.* nce these relations are based, in e main, on the peculiar racist op-ession of the Negro people, they ve offered some measure of protec-on against unionization and labor lidarity in the industries. Just as e plantations had sharecropping the major occupation for Negroes, e industries have set aside special Negro" jobs, with the bosses assum-g the same paternal relationship to egro employees (and whites, too, that matter) as obtained between e plantation owner and his tenants. This is not an entirely new his-ical phenomenon; the Japanese pitalists were able to build an entire tional economy of heavy industry thout carrying through the tradi-tional social and political reforms associated with the bourgeois revolu-tion. There, the landowner-nobles simply built industrial establishments in the feudal domains. The peasant became worker, or worker-peasant within the same old relationships that existed before the industries grew.

But the Japanese feudal capitalists had feudal relations uncorrupted by racist trappings; the southern in-dustrialist depends upon segregation and the super-exploitation of Negroes for his continued enjoyment of feudal privileges. He therefore makes com-mon cause with the plantation own-ers on the economic, social and politi-cal fronts. In Alabama, the industrial barons of Birmingham, led by U.S. Steel and Republic Steel, have teamed up with the rulers of the Black Belt counties of the South to thwart all moves to break the stranglehold of the white supremacy politicians. The textile and tobacco interests of Vir-ginia, North and South Carolina have done the same in relation to the old Tidewater racists. And in Georgia and Mississippi, the power monopo-lies and other industries share the rulership of the state with the big planters.

If industrial concentration, as such, were to lead automatically to Negro emancipation, Birmingham, Ala., should now lead the South in fulfill-ing the promise of the Civil War. For Birmingham is truly the industrial

Capital of the South, the rival of Pittsburgh, itself. Instead, it is a company town where racism is as firmly installed in power as in any smaller Black Belt metropolis.

Moreover, the penetration of industry into the southern Black Belt establishes a political bridge between the plantation economy and its social system and northern reaction. Before the Civil War there was some acute contradiction between the aims of the slaveholders and those of the northern capitalists. The same cannot be said today of the political aims of the Black Belt racist politicians and those who represent the monopolies of industry and finance in the North today. The political expression of this unity between the "backward" South and the "progressive" industrial leaders of the "free world" is the firm alliance in Congress between the so-called "southern bloc" and the right-wing Republicans.

Sen. William E. Jenner, the Indiana Republican, stands shoulder to shoulder with James O. Eastland, of Mississippi, called by some, "Mr. Segregation," and by others, "the voice of the Republican South." Sen. Karl E. Mundt, of North Dakota, as did the late Sen. Robert A. Taft, of Ohio, is now spending most of his spare time stumping Eastland's domain, pleading for a union of southern Democrats and Mid-West reactionaries.

But more people can cross a bridge than those for whom it was built. And organized labor, as well as the independent movement of the Negro people, are coming to see that they, too, must organize nationally against the racist-conservative alliance. Thus, it can be said that the influx of industry into the South is creating the conditions for the break-up of the racist system; that industry multiplies the system's grave diggers.

There are indications that organized labor is slowly rising to this challenge. The elevation of two Negroes to AFL-CIO vice-presidencies, and the strong tone adopted at the founding convention — and since — against all forms of racism, mark a heightened awareness of this age-old stumbling block in the path of southern union drives. However, it depends upon the conscious and determined fight of the Negroes and the organized labor movement to remove the feudal-racist relationships which plague the South and hamper the northern workers. For it is certainly not the intention, nor the tendency, of big and little industry to weaken these racist relationships. And to hold that industrialization automatically weakens or destroys southern racism is worse than gradualism; it is a promise of "pie in the sky." It attributes to monopoly capital a liberating role which both present fact and past history refutes.

THE plantation system is very much alive. This is the core of the evil. In those Deep South states where the White Citizens Councils cast a pall over the hopes for democracy, it is the political representatives from the plantation areas who still dominate, as for example, James O. Eastland of Sunflower County. Such counties are represented in state legislatures far beyond their population proportions. They have been able in these legislatures to block all efforts aimed at a more equitable and democratic reapportionment. The basis of the political strength of these political racists is the absolute denial of the vote to Negro majorities and their alliance with the big industrialists in Southern cities.

Political life in the old plantation belt, and the activities of its representatives in the state and Federal government, belie assertions that we can proceed "paradoxically," as Mr. Bone writes in *Dissent,* toward broader rights for Negroes and greater McCarthy-style repressions against peace advocates, progressives and Marxists.

In Mississippi, where Negroes have not yet enjoyed any of the concessions made by the Federal government (except those on establishments of the Armed Forces), whites, as well as Negroes, are denied freedom of speech by the racist system. An Ohio Episcopal minister, the Rev. Mr. Alvin Kershaw was denied the right to speak at the University on February 19 on the school's "Religious Emphasis Week" program, because he was termed "subversive" by the state legislature. Rev. Kershaw, it seems, had "admitted" membership in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Dr. Norton King, sociology professor and chairman of his department in the university, resigned because he said he would not be allowed to discuss the "segregation question" in his sociology classes. For similar reasons Dr. William Buchanan, a government professor at Mississippi State College, turned in his resignation.

Everyone is acquainted with the public works of Sen. Eastland in the field of political repression and witch-hunting. But almost unnoticed is the quiet work on segregation being done by the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Walter George, the Georgia Democrat. Or that of Rep. Richards, of South Carolina, chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee. The compulsions to liberality on the Negro question, growing out of foreign policy needs, seem not to have affected these two—and there are many others—who have as much to say about foreign relations as any other two men in Washington outside the Cabinet.

THE fact is that "great progress" made so far on the "race relations front" has not gone beyond the periphery. The core of the evil remains.

And it is against this core in the plantation belt that the embattled Negroes in Montgomery, Birmingham, Columbia, S.C., Memphis, Tenn., the Mississippi Delta and points south, are directing their attack.

It was from the heart of the plantation area that the fight for unsegregated schools began—in Prince Edward County, Va., and Clarendon County, S.C. It was—and is—the Delta of Mississippi where Negroes braved murder and armed assault for their right to cast a ballot. Emmett Louis Till is not so much a victim of blind racism, provoked by a "wolf whistle" at a white woman, as a martyr to the *plantation* axiom that a Negro's vote is worth his life. Rev. George Wesley Lee, who was murdered in Belzoni, Miss., a few months before the Till murder in August, and Lamar Smith, shot and killed in Brookhaven while working for Negro votes on August 2, 1955, testify to Negroes' determination in this direction. The battle of the Negro people for political rights — this is what terrifies the racists.

The effect of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling against segregation, and the tremendous effort at popularizing it done by the NAACP, has left its mark on the Southern Negroes. They move into battle against segregation now with the knowledge that jim-crow laws have been declared illegal. And the murder of Till has stiffened the fight. "The law is on our side," is stated alongside the old stand-by "God is on our side," wherever there is a fight.

The vigor of the Negroes' drive for enforcement of the nation's laws has spilled over into the church bodies of all denominations. In turn, the Negro movement has stimulated the churches to act, and the labor movement, turning from its old economism, is developing a program geared to the social and political demands of the Negro people.

Even in the heart of the South, the pressure of the Negroes for economic rights has influenced trade unions. This was seen in the adjustments of the Negro workers' demands in the giant Esso refinery at Baton Rouge, La.; the unexampled Negro-white solidarity displayed in the sugar strike in Louisiana; and in the prompt demand for an apology by the Alabama Rubber Workers Union when officials accused its members of having participated in a mob action directed at Miss Lucy.

Almost everywhere, except in the Federal government agencies, the Negro is finding allies in his fight to realize in life the promise of the law and the U.S. Constitution. J.

Edgar Hoover is asked to do something about terror in Mississippi and he swiftly attacks Dr. T. R. M. Howard, a terror victim, for being dissatisfied with FBI negligence. President Eisenhower is content to let the courts handle the civil rights question. The Democrats are trying to look both ways: towards "party harmony" with the Southern bloc, which means maintaining the status quo, and toward the Negro voters who are insisting that the status quo is inimical to their interests.

But no one can ignore the civil rights question. The Negro movement, now sparked by, but going beyond the organizational confines of the NAACP, has given every indication that Negroes everywhere, and especially in the South, are irrevocably committed to the fight for immediate full equality. Gradualism is out. Men cannot die gradually. Bombs do not explode gradually. Mobs do not gather gradually. And Negroes are dying.

IT IS the aroused mass of Negroes, irrevocably committed and united against "the southern way of life," which constitutes the main factor today in the drive for one America, one American citizenship, a nation truly indivisible with liberty and justice for all. They will not now turn back.

There are other factors, not to be overlooked or underestimated. These include the united labor movement, the re-awakened Church movement promoting the practice of brotherhood here and now on *this* earth, and the general search for an ethic dynamic enough to square the traditional American democratic tenets with American political and social reality.

Overlying this domestic process is the enormous struggle of the colonial and former colonial peoples of the world against imperialism, colonialism and racism everywhere. This world movement has placed the racists on the defensive. It has noticeably accelerated the pace of the entire democratic movement in the United States of which the Negro battle for equality is an inspiring part.

This was reflected in a statement by Rev. King to a February 14 press conference in Chicago when he described the Montgomery bus boycott as a movement of "passive resistance," adding:

"It is a part of something that is happening all over the world. The oppressed peoples are rising up. They are revolting against colonialism and imperialism and all other systems of oppressions."

Rev. King, living in the heart of the old plantation belt, said nothing about the "great progress" being made. His eyes were on the future. For the Negroes in Montgomery, as

well as other plantation areas, still live under the pall of planter rule, with its naked white supremacy dictatorships and the forceful exclusion of Negroes from the mainstream of political, social and economic life.

But the road can never again be back. The door to equality is being kicked open, the road irrevocably taken. It is no corner battle, no "private quarrel" of an oppressed minority. It never was, as the keen mind of Tom Jefferson saw back in the first two decades of the nineteenth century when he called it "a firebell in the night." It was no private quarrel when the generation of Lincoln had to face it and fight it out. It is no private quarrel today. For involved in its outcome is the very existence of the democratic tradition for the entire nation. The Eastlands are enemies of the American nation, no less than of the Negro people. Their racism is the shield for that reactionary conspiracy which allies the Dixiecrats and the top Big Business agents in the Republican Party. The Negro people are turning the fire of their passion for freedom against the core of the evil: the plantation system and its suppression of democracy. Their victory can only be America's victory.

THE CHINA I SAW

By JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, well-known French writers, recently visited China at the invitation of the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. They spent about seven weeks touring the country, after which Sartre wrote the following summary of his impressions in the form of a note addressed to the Chinese people.

THIS immense country never leaves off changing. Things that French friends had told me when they came back from China were already not wholly true when I arrived; and what I shall tell your forthcoming visitors next week will no longer be wholly true when they arrive.

I spent less than a week at Mukden [Shenyang]. When I came back, the face of Peking, certain streets, certain districts, had already changed a little: some buildings had been finished, new ones had been started. When anyone comes, like me, and spends forty-five days in a country with so rich a history and so exciting a present, the best thing would be for him to say nothing. But our Chinese friends keep on asking for my views on China, so I suppose they want to find out what first strikes an extremely ill-informed traveller. If that is the case, ignorance becomes almost an advantage and first impressions convey something of the truth: that one has seen what everybody sees or can see; that China has shown us what she shows the world. As for special truths, they come later, and are a matter for specialists.

As you may imagine, the thing that astonishes us most of all is the immensity of your task. A few years ago your country was, to use your own expression, "semi-feudal and semi-colonial." In many parts the life of your peasants did not differ greatly from what it was ten centuries back. You give yourselves fifty years to catch up on a thousand years of history, to change the economic system, the social structure and even the language of your country, from top to bottom.

In Paris one can imagine the grandeur of what you are doing by reading your reports and books; but

one has to be actually among you to see this thing in its true dimensions. One must have visited your great factories in the Northeast and passed through your countryside on the return journey; one must have seen, on one and the same day, the Anshan blast furnaces and, round some mud-walled village, peasants cultivating the land with their bare hands. One must, every day, at every glance, take in both the age-old China and the China of the future before one can understand that your present is made up of precisely this extraordinary, living contradiction.

THIS is what strikes everybody at once, however superficial and cursory the glance. Right from the start we notice the enormous scope of what you are undertaking. China needs to build her own airplanes, trucks and tractors; but she also needs to get rid of illiteracy; and at the same time her writers have to change themselves so as to change their way of writing and suit their books to the needs of a new public.

But as soon as one goes deeper into your problems, and especially as soon as one starts listening to your technicians, one sees that all your tasks depend one on the other, and that, in the last analysis, everything is interlocked, as if in every case, the effect had to react on the cause and change it. Only the development of heavy industry can give the peasants the tractors that will allow them to achieve collectivization. On the other hand, the socialist industrialization of China would run into serious difficulties if the agricultural collectivization movement were not growing in the countryside.

In quite another sphere, you want to replace your written characters by phonetics which would simplify the study of Chinese and make it easier to borrow or coin technical terms. In that way language reform will serve the needs of production. But, conversely, the introduction of a standard pronunciation as a necessary preliminary to such a change, depends to a large extent on communications — road, rail, and all transport—in a word, on industrial production. All these, in turn, become essential instruments in this reform. One could go on piling up such examples indefinitely, and the poor foreigner would be in danger of getting lost, giddy and puzzled by the way all your undertakings dovetail one into the other, but for the patient way you help him to understand. And after a few days, what surprises him is how clear you make things. Quite quickly he sees that your government, far from seeing this interdependence as an added difficulty, uses it as the surest means of attaining its goal. With your dialectical approach and capacity for seeing

hings as a whole, you tackle all roblems together, refusing to con- ider questions in isolation, linking p the most diverse aspects of your ociety; and one ends up, after listen- ng to you, clearly understanding ow progress made in any sphere llows progress to be made in the thers.

When we come to Peking, you now, we Europeans have already read great many books and articles on New China. But as their writers, who re friendly to you, do not themselves ave to take the decisions on what teps to take, they often, and in spite f themselves, tend to stress the bstacles which strew your route. They worry about things. "China's vritten language," they say "serves as link between the different parts of he country. If our Chinese friends Romanize their writing, the cultural ies between north and south, east nd west, will break down." One omes here full of such worries, veighed down by a thousand ques- ions which one puts to you one by ne. And one discovers that you now very well that such problems xist, but you consider them from practical angle. Instead of trying o find excuses for doing nothing, ou simply work out the order in hich they need to be tackled. The uestions we were going to put to you o longer make sense: the answer omes out in the way you organize your work and the form it takes. If a standardized pronunciation of the written language is the first essential step towards Romanization, that is all there is to it: you will first standardize the spoken language.

IT ALL seems very simple: just a question of method, so to speak. But on second thoughts one reflects that even the preliminary step means an immense amount of work. You calmly say, "It will take fifteen years." And we find we have to respect you as much for your immense patience as for the clear way you put things. Yes, it will take fifteen years to standardize the spoken language, fifteen years before you really get down to the question of Romanization. By the end of that time, some of those who most ardently long to change the way Chinese is written will not be there to see their wish come true! Never mind: it will be enough for them to have worked to make it possible. Since there is only one road which leads to their goal, it matters little to them whether they cover a longer or shorter stretch of the journey: the people do not die and they know that *they* will reach the end.

That is why we were so often moved when engineers, workers and peasants described, with the simplicity of visionaries, a future they would not see, but which their children

would see for them. An engineer at Fushun told me, just like that, "This town is built on solid coal, so we're going to shift it." He grinned as he said it. He was pleased to live in a temporary town . . . temporary, but one which would last longer than he would. In the far south an agricultural expert was telling me his experience in grafting and taking cuttings. "We are going to transplant all the fruit trees," he said, "from the plain to the mountainsides." He pointed out the mountains. He could visualize them covered with banana and papaw trees. I shared his vision. Simone de Beauvoir said to me that day, "In China, a Frenchman feels dead already." It is true, too: for we as well, we shall not be alive when Fushun is shifted and when the banana plants grow on the mountainsides.

And since in China the future is the most immediate truth, we see through your eyes a world which we will have already left. But do not think that that makes us sad—quite the reverse. You pass on to us your patience and your modesty. Thanks to yourselves, thanks to your work and your faith, the future is already a living thing. I always thought that if the whole of mankind died with me, my death would be a hateful thing; but if mankind survives me and if I clearly know where it is going, it will not worry me a jot.

If we put such confidence in you, it is certainly because you speak of your work without ever glossing over your difficulties and mistakes. But more especially it is because the evolution of the Chinese nation strikes a foreigner as having two complementary yet inseparably connected aspects. It is this twofold aspect which I want to dwell on.

You see, on the one hand, it looks as if you cannot do anything other than you are doing. Your march towards socialism is not only a great people's effort to create a more humane, a more righteous social system: in China socialization is a vital need. You will answer, so it is everywhere. And that is true. But nowhere else is the objective necessity of socialization so manifest. It is at one and the same time the culmination of a century of struggle by the Chinese people against their oppressors, and a life-and-death question for the China of today and tomorrow. How can she extricate herself from poverty without raising industrial and agricultural production? And how can she raise production without replacing the capitalist free-for-all by thoroughgoing planning? China must either perish or socialize, either die or become a great power. And it is enough to see your gay young people, your children, to realize that your country is not going to die.

BUT all this construction, so earnestly undertaken, so imperiously demanded by China's history and situation, presents the traveller with yet another aspect—what I will call, for lack of a better term, its profound humanity. And by that I mean not only the wonderful patience of a people who know where they are going and who cannot allow themselves to turn back nor even to stand still, but who at the same time do not want to force anybody, who explain, persuade and reason instead of giving orders. I am particularly thinking of that admirable concern of each for all and all for each, which for you is no virtue fallen from heaven, but a very consequence of your evolution and an essential if you are to make progress. Later on you will raise the standard of living of the people by the strength of your industrial production. But your heavy industry is only just getting started. Close on six hundred million Chinese live entirely off the land. A foreigner crossing the great plain cannot fail to be puzzled by its extraordinary appearance: no tractors, few beasts of burden, only a few trees—just men, nothing but men, their long shadows stretching far, far away towards the horizon.

At the present moment increased agricultural output can come about only through a change in the relations between men themselves. They are first of all set free from serfdom, from exploitation, hunger, insecurity and ignorance. And because they have become free, production grows. But if it is to go on growing, it has to be rationalized; mutual-aid teams and cooperatives have to be set up. Now, if they are producing still more, it is because the ties between man and man have been strengthened.

You don't like unmitigated praise, I know. You talk about "commandism" and subjectivism among certain bureaucrats or the evil intent on the part of some of the rich; you remind me that here and there peasants have been forced to join the cooperatives and that elsewhere collectivization has been held up against the will of the workers. These inevitable mistakes which you keep on denouncing and correcting don't change the essential thing: that friendship becomes the motive force behind production. Today China is still poor and —and this is something that touches us deeply—you have the spectacle of the poor lending one another mutual aid. There has to be a fight against flies, rats, disease, flood and drought. Every time it is a crusade; the people move into action as one; the result of the crusade is not the death of a hundred and twenty million rats alone, but linked bonds of friendship joining together hundreds of millions of people.

I am astonished at the way the

people here in China never leave off working on one another, how they free themselves by a sort of give-and-take action which constantly brings everybody closer together. You still lack schools; but that is not the point; every Chinese who can read can teach another what he knows, and that means that every Chinese who can read will become a teacher of another. That is how it is that socialization presents itself as the most rigorous necessity and at the same time the most human and tender of human relationships. For me, and, I think, for most of your guests, what touches me most profoundly is this two-way aspect of New China.

Need I say that in my own country I shall bear witness, as so many others have done, and despite what a section of the press says, to your universal desire for peace? Here again we seize on one positive fact with two complementary aspects. On the one hand, men who have learnt to love one another could not want to make war. When a country turns bellicose, it is because the regime there has made it so wretched that its citizens hate one another. And, on the other hand, as all evidence shows, the preservation of peace is an overriding necessity for China. The future which it is forging, the one it proclaims, the one which is the sole concern of all its people—that future only peace can assure. For this great people who have suffered so much and which has today to put old scores out of mind, the French people can have but one feeling: Friendship.

Woman Song

By EVA GRAYSON

Subtle strange and delicate
Leafy raindrop clear;
Bark and winey wood he is,
Sun spun air, and dear.

Moving grass to me he is
Ridgy rimy snow;
Meadow brown and meadow green
All the winds that blow.

Reaching seeking urge he is
Greening leafing fire;
Star and water, cloud and stone,
All my life's desire.

Raindrop clear and subtle strange
Stone-old and petalling new;
Frolic foam on winter sea,
Hearthfire and swampfire too.

Man he is turned toward a dream
Road he is and goal;
Life afoot to own its dream,
Man moving toward his soul.

Mountain sweet to me he is
Wind strong along this land;
All love and only love he is,
All possible, this man.

Chapters from a New Novel

By MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV

The Soviet novelist Mikhail Sholokhov is best known to American readers as the author of And Quiet Flows the Don. *Another of Mr. Sholokhov's novels,* Seeds of Tomorrow, *was published here in* 1935. *The author is now completing the second volume of this work, and we take pleasure in presenting two chapters from the forthcoming novel.*

A word about the background of the story. The first volume described a Cossack village on its way to collectivization. The chapters from the sequel appearing below deal with the period of the Thirties. Among the characters portrayed are Davidov, a Communist who headed the struggle for collectivization in the village of Gremyachy Log; Razmyotnov, chairman of the village Soviet; Nagulnov, secretary of the local Party unit; the former Whiteguard officer Polovtsev and the Cossack Yakov Lukich whom he drew to his aid.

1

THE earth swelled with rain, and when the wind parted the clouds, it basked in the bright sun and gave off a bluish vapor. Mists rose in the mornings from the river and the stagnant, marshy lowlands. They rolled in curling waves across Gremyachy Log towards the low steppeland hills and there they melted, dissolving into tender turquoise wisps; while everywhere, on the leaves of the trees, on the rush-thatched roofs of cottages and barns the heavy abundant dew lay until noon like scattered white-hot pellets of shot bowing the grass under its weight.

The couch-grass in the steppe was knee-high. On the edge of the common the melilot bloomed. Toward evening its honey scent pervaded the whole hamlet, filling the girls' hearts with yearning. The winter corn stretched in a solid dark-green wall to the horizon, the spring-sown fields gladdened the eye with young growth of a rare sturdiness. Recently sown millet had pecked its way out of the earth on the slopes and in the dry valleys. The sandy ground bristled thickly with young shoots of maize.

By the middle of June the weather set fair. Not a single cloud ap-

peared in the sky and the flowering rain-washed steppe looked wonderfully beautiful in the sun. Now it was like a young mother with a child at her breast—singularly lovely, calm, a little weary and all aglow with the smiling purity of motherhood.

Every morning, well before daybreak, Yakov Lukich Ostrovnov would throw a shabby tarpaulin coat over his shoulders and go out of the hamlet to look at the corn. He would stand for a long time over the furrow from which the green dew-besparkled sweep of winter wheat began. He would stand motionless, his head drooping, like an old, tired horse, and think to himself: "If a *kalmyk* doesn't blow while the wheat is ripening, if the wheat doesn't get a blast of dry wind soon, the collective farm will be full of grain, God damn it! This damned Soviet government has all the luck! How often in the old days we never had rain at the right time, and this year there's been buckets of it! And if there's a good harvest and the collective farmers get a good return for their work, will you ever be able to turn them against the Soviet of their own accord? Never! A hungry man's a wolf in the forest—he'll go anywhere you like; but a well-fed man's like a pig at his trough—you can't move him. What's Mr. Polovtsev thinking about, I wonder? What is he waiting for? I can't make it out. It's just the time now to give the Soviets a jolt, and he is taking it easy. . . ."

IT WAS bad temper, of course, that gave Yakov Lukich such thoughts; he was tired of waiting for the coup that Polovtsev had promised. He knew very well that Polovtsev was by no means taking it easy and had good reason for waiting. Nearly every night messengers from distant hamlets and *stanitsas* came down the deep gully behind Ostrovnov's orchard. They probably left their horses among the trees at the head of the gully and came down themselves on foot. In answer to their quiet prearranged knock Yakov Lukich would open the door without lighting the lamp and lead them in to see Polovtsev in the cottage back room. The shutters of both windows looking out into the yard were kept shut day and night and masked on the inside with thick grey horse-cloths. Even on a sunny day it was as dark as a cellar, and it smelled like a cellar, of mildew, damp, and stale, exhausted air. In the daytime neither Polovtsev nor Latyevsky left the house; a zinc pail placed under a torn-up floor-board served these voluntary prisoners' natural needs.

Yakov Lukich would light matches in the passage and hurriedly

examine every one of the furtive nocturnal visitors, but not once had he encountered a familiar face; they were all strangers and, by the look of them, from a long way off. On one occasion he dared to ask quietly: "Where are you from, Cossack?"

The flickering light of the match fell on the bearded, good-natured face of an elderly Cossack, and Yakov Lukich saw his eyes wrinkle and teeth gleam in a derisive grin.

"From the other world, Cossack," the visitor replied in the same quiet whisper and added sharply: "Take me to the chief quick and don't ask questions."

And two days later the same man with a beard and another Cossack, rather younger, came again. They carried something heavy into the passage, but their footsteps were quiet, almost soundless. Yakov Lukich struck a match and saw in the hands of the bearded man two officers' saddles, and two silver-embossed bridles hanging over his shoulder; the other was carrying a sort of bundle on his shoulder, long and shapeless, wrapped in a shaggy black cloak.

The bearded one winked at Yakov Lukich as if he were an old acquaintance and asked: "At home? Both of them?" And without waiting for a reply, walked towards the room.

The match burned out, singeing Yakov Lukich's fingers. In the darkness the bearded Cossack tripped over something and swore under his breath.

"Just a minute," Yakov Lukich said, fumbling for a match with fingers that would not obey him.

Polovtsev opened the door himself and said quietly: "Come inside. Come inside, I say. What are you messing about with out there? You come in as well, Yakov Lukich, I shall need you. Keep quiet, I'll light the lamp."

He lighted a candle but covered the top of it with a jacket and only a narrow strip of light fell slantwise on the ochre-painted floor.

The visitors uttered respectful greetings and put down what they had brought by the door. The bearded one took two paces forward and, clicking his heels, held out a packet that he had taken from his breast pocket. Polovtsev opened the envelope, scanned the letter rapidly, holding it close to the light, and said: "Give the grey one my thanks. There will be no answer. I shall expect news from him not later than the twelfth. You may go now. You will be home before dawn, won't you?"

"Yes, we'll manage it. We've got good horses," the bearded man answered.

"Be off, then. Thank you for your services."

"We are glad to do it."

They both turned as one man, clicked their heels and left. There's training for you! Yakov Lukich thought delightedly. Army men of the old school, you can see that by their bearing. But why don't they ever mention his rank?

Polovtsev came up to him and placed a heavy hand on his shoulder. Yakov Lukich involuntarily stiffened, straightening his back and pulling his arms down at his sides.

"There are soldiers for you!" Polovtsev laughed softly. "They won't let us down. They'll follow me through fire and flood, not like some of the scoundrels and faint-hearts of Voiskovoy hamlet. Now we'll have a look at what they've brought us. . . ."

DROPPING on one knee, Polovtsev deftly untied the white raw-hide straps twisted tightly round the cloak, unfolded it and took out the parts of a dismantled sub-machine gun and four dully gleaming disks of ammunition wrapped in oily sackcloth. Then he carefully drew out two sabres. One of them was a plain Cossack weapon in a battered well-worn sheath, the other was an officer's sabre, with a richly silver-ornamented hilt and a tarnished St. George sword-knot; the sheath, engraved in silver and black, hung from a black Caucasian belt.

Sinking on both knees, Polovtsev held out the sword on his upturned palms, his head thrown back as if to admire the dull gleam of the silver; then he clasped it to his breast and in a trembling voice said: "My beloved, my beauty! My true old friend! You shall still render me devoted service!"

His massive lower jaw quivered slightly, tears of frenzied delight welled up in his eyes, but he managed to control himself and, turning a pale, distorted face towards Yakov Lukich, asked loudly: "Do you recognize it, Lukich?"

Yakov Lukich swallowed convulsively and nodded. He recognized the sword. He had first seen it in 1915, on the young and dashing officer Polovtsev on the Austrian front.

Latyevsky, who had been lying on his bed in silent indifference, sat up, letting his bare feet dangle, stretched himself until his bones cracked,

and glanced at the scene with a sombre glint in his solitary eye.

"A touching reunion!" he said hoarsely. "The rebel's romance, I suppose. I don't like these sentimental scenes puffed up with vulgar emotion!"

"Be quiet!" Polovtsev said sharply.

Latyevsky shrugged.

"Why should I be quiet? And what must I be quiet about?"

"Please be quiet!" Polovtsev said very softly, rising to his feet and moving towards the bed with slow, almost stealthy strides.

In his jerking left hand he held the sword, with his right he clawed at the collar of his grey shirt. Yakov Lukich watched in horror as Polovtsev's eyes converged to the bridge of his nose in frenzy and the color of his puffy face became that of his shirt.

Latyevsky lay back calmly on the bed and cupped his head in his hands.

"Pure theatre!" he said, smiling contemptuously, his solitary eye fixed on the ceiling. "I have seen all that before, more than once, in second-rate provincial theatres. I'm tired of it!"

Polovtsev halted within two paces of him, raised his hand with a gesture of utter weariness and wiped the perspiration from his forehead; then his hand fell limply to his side.

"Nerves . . ." he croaked feebly, like a man suffering from paralysis, and his face shifted sideways with a long convulsive shudder faintly resembling a smile.

"And I've heard that before, too. Enough of this woman's talk, Polovtsev! Pull yourself together."

"Nerves . . ." Polovtsev moaned. "My nerves are getting me down . . . I'm as tired as you are of this darkness, this grave. . . ."

"Darkness is the wise man's friend. It promotes philosophical meditation. As a matter of fact, in life the only people who suffer from nerves are anaemic, pimply maidens and women with wagging tongues and migraine. For an officer, nerves are a shame and a disgrace! But you're only pretending, Polovtsev, you haven't any nerves, it's just a whim! I don't believe you! Upon my word as an officer, I don't!"

"You're not an officer, you're a swine!"

"And I've heard that from you many a time before, but I still shan't challenge you to a duel, damn you! It's out of date and out of place and there are more important things to be done. Moreover, as you know, my honored friend, people fight duels with rapiers, not with policemen's

flappers, like the one you so touchingly and tenderly clasped to your bosom just now. As an old artilleryman, I despise such pieces of useless decoration. And there is one more argument against challenging you to a duel: you are a plebeian by birth and upbringing, but I am a Polish aristocrat of one of the oldest families that. . . ."

"Look here, you little Polish squire!" Polovtsev interrupted him rudely, and his voice had suddenly acquired its usual firmness and metallic commanding ring. "You dare to mock the weapon of St. George?! If you say another word, I will cut you down like a dog!"

LATYEVSKY sat up on the bed. His lips had lost all trace of their former ironical smile. Seriously and simply he said: "Now that is something I believe! Your voice betrays the complete sincerity of your intentions. I shall therefore shut up."

He lay down again and drew the old flannel blanket up to his chin.

"I'll kill you all the same," Polovtsev maintained stubbornly, standing over the bed, his head lowered like a bull's. "With this very sword I'll make one aristocratic Polish swine into two, and do you know when I'll do it? As soon as we overthrow the Soviets on the Don!"

"Well, in that case I shall be able to live in peace till a ripe old age, perhaps I shall live for ever," Latyevsky said laughing and with an oath turned his face to the wall.

Yakov Lukich standing near the door shifted from one foot to the other, as if he were standing on hot embers. Several times he attempted to slip out of the room, but Polovtsev restrained him with a gesture. Eventually he could bear it no longer and begged imploringly: "Allow me to go! It'll soon be getting light and I must be out in the fields early."

Polovtsev sat down on a chair, placed the sword across his knees and, resting low over it on his hands, maintained a long silence. There was no other sound save the heavy wheezing of his breath and the ticking of his big watch on the table. Yakov Lukich began to think Polovtsev was dozing, but suddenly Polovtsev jerked his heavy thick-set body off the chair and said: "Take the saddles, Lukich, and I'll take the rest. We'll go and hide all this in a safe dry place. Perhaps in that—what's it called, damn it—in the shed where you keep your dung, eh?"

"Yes, that's a good place," Yakov Lukich agreed gladly, for he was longing to get out of the room.

He was about to lay hands on one of the saddles, when Latyevsky

jumped up from the bed as if he had been scalded.

"What are you doing?" he hissed, his solitary eye glittering madly. "What do you think you're doing, may I ask?"

Polovtsev, who had been bending over the cloak, straightened up and asked coldly: "Well, what's the matter? What's worrying you?"

"Don't you understand? Hide the saddles and that scrap-iron there if you like, but leave the machine-gun and the disks! You're not staying at a friend's country-house, and we may need the machine-gun at any moment. You understand that, I hope."

After brief reflection Polovtsev agreed. "Perhaps you are right, you mongrel. Let everything stay here then. You can go off to bed, Yakov Lukich, you are free now."

And how lasting the old army training turned out to be! Before Yakov Lukich had time to think, his bare feet had of their own accord, quite involuntarily, done a "left about turn" and his calloused heels had come together with a dry, almost inaudible tap. Polovtsev noticed it and smiled faintly, but as soon as he closed the door behind him, Yakov Lukich realized his mistake. That bearded devil got me mixed up with that smartness of his, he thought, grunting in confusion.

He did not close his eyes once until dawn. Hopes for the success of the rebellion alternated with thoughts of failure and belated repentance that he had really been very reckless in throwing in his lot with two such forlorn hopes as Polovtsev and Latyevsky. Eh, I was too hasty, I've put my own neck under the chopper, Yakov Lukich groaned to himself. I ought to have waited, old fool that I am, kept in the background for a bit, not sworn myself like this to Alexander Anisimovich Polovtsev. If they'd got the better of the Communists, I could have joined up with them and reaped the benefit, but as it is, it could easily happen I'll find myself in the cart before I know it. But look at it this way—with me hanging back and others doing the same, what'll happen? Are we to carry this cursed Soviet government on our backs for the rest of our lives? That won't do either! But we shan't get rid of it without a struggle, that we shan't! If only something definite would happen. . . . Alexander Anisimovich promises a landing of foreign forces and help from the Kuban, it all sounds nice enough but what'll it be like? God alone knows! Suppose the Allies give up the idea of landing on our soil? Then what? They'll send us their English greatcoats as they did in 1919 and stay at home themselves, drinking their coffee and having a good time with their

women—much use those greatcoats would be to us then! We'll be wiping the bloody snot off our noses with 'em, and that's all. The Bolsheviks will smash us, sure as God they will! They're good at it. Then it'll be all up with us who rise against them. Everything will go up in smoke in the Don steppes!

Thinking these thoughts, Yakov Lukich felt so sorry for himself that he could have cried. For a long time he sighed and groaned and crossed himself, muttering prayers, then his persistent thoughts brought his mind back to worldly matters. Why can't Alexander Anisimovich and that one-eyed Pole get on together? What are they always at each other's throats about? Such a great task ahead of them and they live like a couple of savage dogs in one kennel! And it's mostly that one-eyed fellow who starts the row. One of the lying kind he is. Now he says one thing, now another. He's a bad lot, I wouldn't trust him an inch. No wonder they say: "Don't trust the one-eyed, the hunchbacked, and your own wife." Alexander Anisimovich will kill him, that he will! Well, good riddance to him, he's not of our faith anyhow.

And lulled by these reassuring thoughts Yakov Lukich at last forgot himself in brief and troubled sleep.

WHEN Yakov Lukich awoke the sun had already risen. In little more than an hour he had managed to have a great number of dreams, each one more absurd and disgusting than the last. He had dreamed that he was standing in church by the pulpit, young and debonair, in full bridegroom's dress, and beside him, in a long wedding gown, shrouded in a cloudy white veil, stood Latyevsky hopping wildly from one foot to the other and boring into him with a lasciviously mocking eye that kept winking a shameless challenge at him.

Yakov Lukich seemed to be saying to him: "Vatslav Avgustovich, it's no good us marrying each other. You aren't up to much, but you're still a man, you know. So what's the use? And besides I'm married already. Let's tell the priest all about it, or he'll pair us up for the whole village to laugh at!" But Latyevsky took Yakov Lukich's hand in his own cold palm and, bending towards him, said confidently: "Don't tell anyone you're married! And I'll make a wife for you that will set you gasping!" To hell with you, you one-eyed devil! Yakov Lukich wanted to shout, trying to tear his hand away from Latyevsky, but Latyevsky's fingers were hard as steel and Yakov Lukich's voice had become strangely sound-

less and his lips seemed to be made of cotton wool. Yakov Lukich spat furiously and woke up; his beard and pillow were sticky with spittle.

No sooner had he made the sign of the cross and whispered "God bless me" than he fell asleep again and dreamed that he and his son Semyon, with Agafon Dubtsov and some other villagers, were wandering about a huge plantation and picking tomatoes, under the supervision of young women overseers dressed in white. For some reason Yakov Lukich himself and all the Cossacks with him were naked, but no one except him seemed to feel any shame at his nakedness. Dubtsov, standing with his back to him, was bending over a tomato plant, and Yakov Lukich, choking with laughter and indignation, was saying to him: "At least you might stop bending down like that, you piebald gelding! Think of the women!"

Yakov Lukich picked tomatoes, squatting embarrassedly on his haunches and using only his right hand; his left he held as a naked bather does before entering the water.

When he awoke, Yakov Lukich sat for a long time on the bed, staring dully in front of him with wildly frightened eyes. Vile dreams like that don't come for nothing. There's trouble ahead! he thought to himself, feeling an unpleasant heaviness over his heart and, wide awake, spat again at the memory of what he had dreamed.

In the blackest of moods he got dressed, kicked the cat that came purring round his legs, at breakfast called his wife an idiot for no apparent reason, and even brandished his spoon at his daughter-in-law, who had inopportunely put in a word about household matters at table, as if she were a little girl instead of a grown woman. Amused at his father's lack of restraint, Semyon made a foolishly frightened face and winked at his wife, who began to shake all over with silent laughter. That was the last straw. Yakov Lukich threw the spoon down on the table and shouted in a voice choking with anger: "You'll grin on the other side of your face one of these days!"

Without finishing his breakfast, he rose demonstratively from the table, but, as luck would have it, he put his hand on the edge of a bowl and spilled the remains of the hot soup over his trousers. His daughter-in-law covered her face with her hands and darted into the passage. Semyon remained seated at the table, dropping his head on his hands; his muscular back and shoulders were shaking violently with laughter. Even Yakov Lukich's ever-serious wife could not restrain her mirth.

"What's taken you, Father, acting like this?" she asked laughing

"Did you get out of bed on the wrong side or was it a bad dream?"

"What do you know about it, you old witch?!" Yakov Lukich shouted furiously and rushed away from the table.

AS HE was going out of the kitchen he caught himself on a nail sticking out of the door-post and slit the sleeve of his new sateen shirt from cuff to elbow. In his room, he began to search in the chest for another shirt, whereupon the lid of the chest, which he had propped carelessly against the wall, descended with a rich thud on the back of his head.

"Oh, curse you! What's happening to me today!" Yakov Lukich exclaimed in vexation, collapsing weakly on a stool and feeling the large lump that had arisen on his skull.

Somehow he managed to change his soup-stained trousers and torn shirt, but being in a great hurry, he forgot to button his trousers. In this unsightly state Yakov Lukich walked nearly as far as the collective-farm management office, wondering to himself why the women he encountered greeted him with rather strange smiles and hastily turned away. His perplexity was unceremoniously dispelled by Grandad Shchukar.

"Getting old, Yakov Lukich, my boy?" Shchukar asked sympathetically, halting in front of him.

"Well, and are you getting younger? I don't seem to notice it by the look of you. Your eyes are as red as a rabbit's and all watery."

"My eyes are watering from reading at night. I've started reading in my old age and getting all sorts of higher education, but I keeps myself tidy. You're getting forgetful though, just like an old man. . . ."

"What makes you think that?"

"You've forgotten to shut the gate, you're letting the cattle out. . . ."

"Semyon will shut it," Yakov Lukich answered absent-mindedly.

"Semyon won't shut *your* gate for you. . . ."

Struck by an unpleasant conjecture, Yakov Lukich looked down, gasped and set to work deftly with his fingers. To complete the sum of his misfortunes on that ill-fated morning, as he was entering the management office yard, Yakov Lukich stepped on a large potato that someone had dropped, and measured his length on the ground.

It was too much! And there was more in all this than met the eye! The superstitious Yakov Lukich felt convinced that some great misfortune lay in wait for him. Pale and with trembling lips, he entered Davidov's room and said: "I'm feeling out of sorts, Comrade Davidov, do you mind if I don't work today. The storekeeper will take my place."

"Yes, you don't look too good, Lukich," Davidov replied concernedly. "Go and have a rest. Will you go and see the doctor yourself or shall I send him round?"

Yakov Lukich made a despondent gesture. "A doctor won't help me, I'll sleep it off myself. . . ."

At home he ordered the shutters to be closed, then undressed and lay down on his bed, patiently awaiting the disaster that hung over him. And it's all because of this damned government, he grumbled to himself. There's no peace from it day or night! At night I get idiotic dreams I never knew the like of before in the old days, and in the daytime its just one long string of troubles. . . . I'll never live the span God allotted me under a government like this!" I'll peg out before my time, I know I shall!

THAT DAY, however, nothing happened to justify Yakov Lukich's apprehensions. Disaster hovered somewhere in the background and descended upon him only two days later, and from a most unexpected quarter.

Before going to bed Yakov Lukich fortified his courage with a glass of vodka, passed the night in comfort, without any dreams, and in the morning recovered his good spirits. It's passed over, he thought joyfully. He spent the day in his usual busy fashion, but on the next day, Sunday, noticing that his wife was worried about something, asked: "You don't seem to be quite yourself today, Mother, what is it? Is there something wrong with the cow? I noticed she didn't seem very happy yesterday when she came back from the herd." His wife turned to their son: "Semyon, go out for a bit, will you, I've got to talk to Father."

Semyon, who was combing his hair in front of the mirror, exclaimed discontentedly: "What are you keeping all these secrets for? Those friends of Father's—the devil brought them here—whispering in the back room day and night, and now you. . . . Soon this house won't be fit to live in with all these secrets of yours. It's not a home, it's a creeping nunnery. Nothing but whispering and muttering all round you. . . ."

"Well, it's nothing to do with your calf-mind!" Yakov Lukich flared up. "You heard what you were told—go outside! You've been getting a lot too talkative lately. . . . Give that tongue of yours a squeeze, or it won't be long before I squeeze it for you."

Semyon blushed fiercely and turned on his father.

"Not so many of your threats either, Father," he said in a muffled voice. "There's no one little enough to be frightened in this family. And

if we start threatening each other, we may all get into trouble. . . ."

He went out slamming the door.

"Well, I hope you're proud of him! Turned out a fine hero, the son of a bitch!" Yakov Lukich exclaimed with chagrin.

His wife, whom he had never known to contradict him, said restrainedly: "It depends how you look at it, Lukich. These guests of yours aren't much of a joy to us either. The shifty way we have to live with them here, it's enough to make you sick! If you don't look out, you'll have the authorities searching for us, then it'll be all up. There's nothing but fear in our life; we're afraid of every rustle, every knock. I wouldn't wish anyone a life like ours! I'm worrying my heart out for both you and Semyon. If they get to know about our lodgers, they'll arrest them and you as well. And then what shall we, women, do on our own? Go out begging?"

"That's enough!" Yakov Lukich interrupted her. "I know what I'm doing without you and Semyon telling me. What did you want to say to me? Out with it!"

He closed both doors firmly and sat down close to his wife. At first he listened to her without showing the alarm that had seized him, but in the end, losing all control of himself, he jumped up from the bench and ran about the kitchen, whispering distractedly: "We're lost. Ruined by my own mother! She's as good as killed me!"

Recovering a little, he drank two large mugs of water one after the other and sank down on the bench in gloomy reflection.

"What shall you do now, Father?"

Yakov Lukich did not answer his wife's question. He had not heard it.

From his wife's account he had learned that not long ago four old women had come to the house and insistently demanded to see the "officer gentlemen." The old women were anxious to know when the officers, with the aid of their host Yakov Lukich, and the other Gremyachy Cossacks would start an uprising and overthrow the godless power of the Soviets. In vain had Yakov Lukich's wife assured them that there were no officers in the house and never had been. In reply to that, Loshchilina, a malicious hunchbacked old crone, said to her: "You're too young to fool me, woman! Your own mother-in-law told us the officers had been living in your house ever since winter. We know they're there, keeping out of sight, but we won't tell anyone about them. Take us to see the head one, the one they calls Alexander Anisimovich."

WHEN he went in to see Polovtsev, Yakov Lukich experienced a familiar feeling of alarm. He thought that, on hearing of what had happened, Polovtsev would fly into a rage and bring his fists into play. He awaited punishment, cringing like a dog. But when, faltering and getting muddled, but concealing nothing, he had told everything he had heard from his wife, Polovtsev merely laughed contemptuously.

"Well, you're a fine lot of conspirators, I must say. I suppose it was only to be expected though. So your mother's let us down, has she, Lukich? What do think we ought to do now?"

"You must go away from here, Alexander Anisimovich!" Yakov Lukich said firmly, encouraged by this unexpectedly favorable reception.

"When?"

"The sooner the better. There's precious little time to spend thinking about it."

"You needn't tell me that. But where?"

"I couldn't say, I'm sure. And where's Comrade . . . I beg your pardon, it was a slip of the tongue. Where is Gospodin Vatslav Avgustovich?"

"He's not here. He'll be back tonight and you'll meet him near the orchard. Atamanchukov lives on the edge of the hamlet too, doesn't he? That's where I'll stay, just for a few more days. . . . Take me there!"

They made their way furtively through the hamlet, and when they parted, Polovtsev said to Yakov Lukich: "Well, good luck to you, Lukich! Just think a little about your mother, Lukich, won't you. . . . She might upset all our plans. . . . Just think about her. . . . When you meet Latyevsky, tell him where I am now."

He embraced Yakov Lukich, brushed his dry, rough unshaven cheek with dry lips and, stepping back, seemed to grow into the peeling plaster wall, and vanished.

Yakov Lukich returned home and, when he had got into bed, pushing his wife unusually roughly towards the wall, said: "Listen to me. . . . Don't feed Mother any more . . . and don't give her anything to drink . . . she'll die soon anyway. . . ."

Yakov Lukich's wife, who had lived a long and difficult life with him, could only gasp: "But Yakov! You're her son!"

And at that, Yakov Lukich, for almost the first time in their united married life, struck his ageing wife with all his strength and whispered hoarsely: "Shut up! She'll be the ruin of us! Shut up! Do you want to be exiled?"

YAKOV LUKICH rose heavily, took a small padlock off the chest by the wall, walked cautiously in the warm passage and locked the door of the room where his mother was sleeping.

The old woman heard his footsteps. She had long been accustomed to telling his presence by that sound. And how could she have failed to learn the sound of her son's footsteps, even from a distance? Fifty years ago or more, then a young and handsome Cossack woman, she would break off from her housework or cooking and listen with a smile of pride and delight to the uncertain faltering patter of bare feet on the floor of the next room, the little feet of her first-born, her one and only darling Yasha, a little toddler who was just learning to walk. Then she heard the clatter of little Yasha's boots as he skipped up the steps coming home from school. In those days he had been quick and merry as a young goat.

She could not remember him ever walking at that age—he only ran. And he didn't just run, he skipped along, yes, just like a young goat. Life rolled on, a life like everyone else's—rich in long sorrows and poor in brief joys—and soon she was an elderly mother, listening discontentedly at nights to the light, gliding footsteps of Yakov, a lithe, sprightly lad of whom in secret she was very proud. When he returned late from courting, his boots seemed scarcely to touch the floor-boards, his youthful tread was so light and rapid. Before she noticed it, her son became a grown-up, family man. His tread acquired a ponderous confidence. For a long time now the house had echoed with the footsteps of a master, a mature man, almost an old man, but for her he was still "little Yasha," and she often saw him in her dreams, a lively little tow-headed boy. . . .

And now too, on hearing his footsteps, she asked in her reedy, old woman's voice: "Is that you, Yasha?"

Her son made no reply. He stood a moment by the door, then went out into the yard, for some reason quickening his pace. "I've reared a good Cossack and a thrifty master, thank God!" the old woman thought as she fell asleep. "Everyone's abed, but he be up and about, looking after the farm." And a proud maternal smile touched her pale wrinkled lips.

After that night the house became a foul place.

The old woman, weak and helpless though she was, still lived; she begged for a crust of bread, a drop of water, and Yakov Lukich, creeping along the passage, heard her stifled and almost inaudible whisper:

"Yasha dear! My own son! What are you doing it for? At least give me some water!"

The big cottage became almost deserted by the family. Semyon and his wife spent their days and nights in the yard, and Yakov Lukich's wife, if she was compelled to enter the house for some domestic purpose, would come out shaking with sobs. But when at the end of the second day they sat down to supper in the summer kitchen and Yakov Lukich after a long silence said, "Let's live out here for the time being," Semyon gave a violent shudder, rose from the table, staggered as if someone had given him a violent push, and walked away.

On the fourth day the house became quiet. With trembling fingers Yakov Lukich unfastened the lock and, accompanied by his wife, went into the room where his mother had once lived. The old woman was lying on the floor near the door; a worn leather mitten that had lain forgotten on the couch since winter had been chewed to shreds by her toothless gums. Apparently she had managed to find some water on the window sill, where a trickle of rain—barely enough to be seen or heard—had fallen through a chink in the shutters, and where during that misty summer there may have lain a sprinkling of dew.

The dead woman's friends washed her dry, withered body, dressed her for burial and wept, but at the funeral there was no one who wept so bitterly and inconsolably as Yakov Lukitch. That day pain, remorse, grief for his loss, all weighed with terrible heaviness upon his soul. . . .

2

DAVIDOV was oppressed with a yearning for physical labor. Every fiber of his strong healthy body cried out for work, the kind of work that by evening would set all his muscles aching in a heavy and sweet exhaustion and at night, when the longed-for time of rest came round, would bring light and dreamless sleep.

One day Davidov looked into the forge to find out how the repair of the collectivized mowing-machines was going. The bitter acidulous smell of incandescent iron and burnt coal, the resonant clang of the anvil and the hoarse complaining sighs of the ancient bellows made him quiver with excitement. For a few minutes, with eyes blissfully closed, he stood silent in the semi-darkness of the forge, breathing in with delight smells that he had known since childhood, smells so familiar they made his heart ache with longing. Then, unable to resist the temptation, he picked up a hammer. . . . For two days he worked from sunrise to sunset without

leaving the forge. His landlady brought him his dinner. But what sort of work was this, when every half hour someone interrupted him and the iron darkened and grew cold in the tongs, and the old smith Sidorovich grumbled, and the young furnace-boy grinned openly, as he watched Davidov's tired hand dropping his pencil on the earthen floor and scrawling instead of legible letters an absurd tangle of wavy lines.

Davidov threw up the work in disgust and, in order not to hinder Sidorovich, left the forge, cursing to himself like a veteran bo'sun, and returned to the management office.

His work there amounted to spending whole days deciding commonplace but essential matters connected with the farm—checking the accounts made up by the bookkeeper, listening to reports from the team-leaders, examining various applications from the members of the farm, presiding at production conferences, in short, all the things without which the existence of a large collective economy was quite unthinkable, and which as work Davidov found least of all congenial.

He began to sleep badly at nights, invariably waking in the morning with a headache. He ate irregularly and without appetite and all day he was troubled by a strange feeling of lethargy that he had never known before. Somehow, without noticing it himself, Davidov had grown a bit slack. An unaccustomed irritability appeared in his character and even outwardly he looked by no means so brisk and sturdy as he had when he first came to Gremyachy Log. And on top of it all there was this Lushka Nagulnova and his constant thoughts about her, all kinds of thoughts. . . . It had been a bad day for him when that cursed woman had crossed his path!

Glancing quizzically into Davidov's gaunt face, Razmyotnov said one day: "Still losing weight, Semyon? You look like an old bull after a bad winter; you'll soon be dropping in your tracks. And you're sort of peeling and scurvy. . . . Are you moulting, or what? You'd better stop casting eyes at our girls, specially wives who've just been divorced. That sort of thing's awfully bad for your health. . . ."

"Go to hell with your stupid advice."

"Don't be angry, old man. I'm only speaking for your own good."

"You're always getting crazy ideas into your head."

Davidov blushed slowly but deeply. Unable to hide his embarrassment, he attempted clumsily to change the subject. Razmyotnov, however, was not to be diverted.

"They must have taught you to blush like that in the Navy or at your

factory—face and neck as well, eh? Or maybe you blush all over? Take off your shirt and I'll have a look."

Only when he noticed a hostile glint appear in Davidov's somber eyes did Razmyotnov abruptly change his line of conversation. He yawned languidly and started talking about the mowing, regarding Davidov from under half-lowered lids with feigned drowsiness, but he either could not or simply would not hide the mischievous grin that showed under his fair moustache.

Did Razmyotnov merely suspect Davidov's relationship with Lushka, or did he know about it? He must know it. Of course, he knew! And how could it be kept secret if the brazen-faced Lushka did not want to conceal it and even went out of her way to make it known to other people? Evidently it flattered Lushka's cheap vanity to think that she, the cast-off wife of the Party secretary, had taken refuge not with an ordinary collective farmer, but with the chairman himself, and had not been turned away.

SEVERAL times she had come out of the management office together with Davidov, taking his arm in defiance of village custom and even lightly pressing her shoulder against his. Davidov would look round harassedly, afraid of meeting Makar, but did not take his arm away. Unwillingly he would fall into step with Lushka, walking with cramped strides like a hobbled horse, and for some reason tripping up over nothing. The cheeky village youngsters—ruthless scourge of lovers—would run after them, pulling all kinds of faces and shouting in shrill voices:

Made of sour dough
Our two lovers go!

They elaborated wildly, producing endless variations of their stupid rhyme, and by the time Lushka and the perspiring Davidov, inwardly cursing the urchins, Lushka and his own weakness, had passed two turnings the "sour dough" had become stiff, flat, rich, sweet, and so on. In the end Davidov's patience would fail him. He would gently loosen the brown fingers that were clasped tightly round his elbow, say to Lushka, "Sorry, I must go, I'm in a hurry," and walk on ahead with long strides. But it was not so easy to escape the teasing of the persistent youngsters. They would split up into two parties, one of which would stay behind to infuriate Lushka, while the other stubbornly accompanied Davidov. There was only one sure means of escaping their attention. Davidov would go over to the nearest fence, pretend to break off a

switch, and the children would vanish like the wind. Only then would the chairman of the collective farm be left in full control of the street and the surrounding neighborhood.

Not so long ago, in the small hours of the night, Lushka and Davidov had run into the keeper of a windmill far out in the steppe. The keeper—the old collective farmer Vershinin—was lying wrapped up in his coat behind the mound of an old marmot burrow. Seeing the couple coming straight towards him, he rose suddenly to his full height, challenged them in strict military fashion: "Halt! Who goes there?" and covered them with a shotgun that besides being very old was not even loaded.

"It's me, Vershinin," Davidov responded unwillingly.

He turned back sharply, pulling Lushka with him, but Vershinin ran after them.

"Comrade Davidov," he begged imploringly, "you haven't got a bit of tobacco you could spare, have you? I'm just craving for a smoke, it's making my ears swell."

Lushka did not turn aside or step back or cover her face with her shawl. She watched calmly while Davidov hurriedly shook some tobacco out of his pouch, then just as calmly said: "Come on, Semyon. And you, Uncle Nikolai, stick to looking out for thieves, not those who're looking for love in the steppe. It isn't only wrong folk who roam the steppe at night. . . ."

Uncle Nikolai gave a chuckle and patted Lushka familiarly on the shoulder. "But you never know what's going on nights, Lushka, my dear. There be some looking for love and others looking for what don't belong to them. I'm a watchman, my job's to challenge everyone and guard the mill, because it's got the farm's grain in it, not just a pile of dung. Well, thanks for the baccy. Good luck to you. Hope you get on well. . . ."

"Why the hell do you have to put your word in? If you'd stepped aside he might never have known you," Davidov said with unconcealed vexation when they were left alone.

"I'm not a kid of sixteen, and no innocent virgin to be afraid of every old fool's tongue," Lushka answered drily.

"But all the same. . . ."

"What's all the same?"

"Why must you make everything so obvious?"

"What is he to me, my own papa or my father-in-law?"

"I don't understand you. . . ."

"Try a bit harder and you'll understand."

Davidov could not see in the darkness, but guessed by the sound of Lushka's voice that she was smiling. Vexed by her indifference towards her own reputation as a woman and her complete contempt for respectability, he exclaimed heatedly: "Look here, you little fool, it's you I'm worrying about."

Even more drily Lushka replied: "You needn't bother. I'll manage somehow. Keep your worrying for yourself."

"I'm worried about myself too."

Lushka stopped abruptly and came up close to Davidov. There was malicious triumph in her voice: "That's what you ought to have started with, my dear! You're only worried about yourself, and you're annoyed because you've been seen out in the steppe at night with a woman. As if Uncle Nikolai cared who you lie with at night!"

"Why do you say that?" Davidov snapped.

"Well, what else is it? Uncle Nikolai has lived in the world, he knows you aren't out here with me at night to pick blackberries. And now you're afraid of what the good folk, the honest collective farmers of Gremyachy, will think of you—that's it, isn't it? You don't care a damn about me! If it wasn't me you were bringing out here, it'd be someone else. But you want to sin on the quiet, you want to keep it dark, so that no one will know about your misdeeds. That's the kind of character you are! But it won't work my dear, you can't keep things quiet all your life. And you call yourself a sailor! How can you be like that? I'm not afraid, but you are. So I'm the man and you're the woman, is that it?"

Lushka sounded more joking than hostile, but it was obvious that she had been stung by her lover's conduct. After a short silence, during which she surveyed him with contemptuous sidelong glances, she suddenly slipped off her black sateen skirt and said in an imperative tone: "Undress!"

"Are you off your head! What for?"

"You can wear my skirt and I'll wear your trousers. That'll be more like it. When people act the way you do, they ought to wear what's made for them. Come on, hurry up!"

Though he was smarting from Lushka's words and the exchange she had offered, Davidov laughed. Checking his annoyance, he said quietly: "Stop playing the fool, Lushka! Pull your skirt up and let's go."

With a careless discontented gesture Lushka pulled up her skirt, straightened her hair under her shawl, and suddenly, in a voice full of

strangely poignant longing, said: "Oh, you are so dull, you stuffed-up sailor!"

Then they walked all the way back to the hamlet without saying a single word. They parted in a side-street still without speaking. Davidov bowed restrainedly, Lushka gave him a brief nod and disappeared through the gate as if she had melted into the deep shade of the old maple-tree.

FOR several days they did not meet at all, then one morning Lushka dropped in at the management office and waited patiently until the last visitor had gone. Davidov was about to shut the door of his room, but noticed Lushka. She was sitting on a bench, her legs planted wide apart, like a man, her skirt drawn tightly over her shapely knees; she was nibbling sunflower seeds and her face wore a placid smile.

"Want some seeds, chairman?" she asked in a low rippling voice. Her fine brows were twitching slightly and there was a frank gleam of mischief in her eyes.

"Why aren't you out weeding?"

"I'm just going. See, I've got my working clothes on. I came in to tell you something. . . . Come out on the common tonight, when it gets dark. I'll be waiting for you by the Leonovs' barn. Do you know it?"

"Yes."

"Will you come?"

Davidov nodded silently and closed the door firmly. He sat for a long time at his desk in gloomy reflection, his cheeks resting on his fists, his eyes fixed on a point in front of him. And, indeed, he had plenty to think about!

Even before their first quarrel Lushka had twice come to his rooms at dusk and, after sitting with him for a little, had said loudly: "Take me home, Semyon, dear! It's getting dark outside and I'm scared to go alone. I'm awful scary. It started when I was little, I got scared of the dark. . . ."

Davidov made a terrible face, rolling his eyes at the partition, behind which his landlady—a religious old woman—was spitting with anger like a cat, and clattering the pots and pans as she made supper for her husband and Davidov. Lushka's well-attuned ear caught the landlady's hissing whisper: "Her—scared! The creature's a witch, not a woman! She'd find her own way to any young devil in Hades itself, without him having to look for her. Lord, forgive me for saying it! Her—scary! I'd like to see her afraid of the dark, the unclean spirit!"

Upon hearing so unflattering a description of herself, Lushka merely smiled. She was not the kind of woman to upset herself over the sneers of some religious old crone. She didn't care two straws for this slobbering goody-goody! In the course of her short married life the intrepid Lushka had been in many a worse mess than this and had survived far fiercer scuffles with the women of Gremyachy. What if the landlady on the other side of the door called her a wanton and a wayward slut? Goodness me, these comparatively inoffensive epithets were not the worst among the choice abuse Lushka had heard, and uttered, in her encounters with indignant wives of Gremyachy who imagined in their blind simplicity that they alone were entitled to love their husbands. At all events, Lushka knew how to stand up for herself and always gave her opponents a sound rebuff. No, never under any circumstances had she been at a loss for a cutting reply, not to mention the fact that there was not a jealous wife in the whole hamlet who could have put Lushka to shame by snatching the kerchief from her head. . . . Nevertheless, she decided to teach the old woman a lesson, just for form's sake, and to uphold her rule in life that she should always have the last word.

On her next visit she hung back for a minute in the passage outside the landlady's room, letting Davidov go on in front, and when she heard the sound of his boots on the creaking steps of the porch, turned round with the most innocent of expressions to face the mistress of the house. Lushka's reckoning proved correct. The old woman licked her already dribbling lips and, without pausing for breath, said: "Well, you are a shameless creature, Lushka! I've never seen the like."

Putting on an air of modesty, Lushka lowered her eyes and halted in the middle of the room, as if in thoughtful repentance. Her lashes were so long and black they looked scarcely real, and when she lowered them a deep shadow fell on her pale cheeks.

Deceived by this pretended submission, the Filimonov woman whispered more tolerantly: "Just look at it yourself, woman. You may be divorced, but how can you think of coming to see a single man at his house, and after dark too! What kind of conscience must you have, eh? Have a little sense and a little shame, for the Lord's sake!"

Imitating the old woman's unctuous tone, Lushka replied: "When God Almighty, our Saviour. . . ." She stopped expectantly and looked up, her eyes glinting in the twilight. At the mention of God's name the devout old woman at once bowed her head and started crossing herself hastily. Then Lushka finished triumphantly in harsh masculine tones:

"When God gave out everybody his ration of conscience, I wasn't at home. I was out courting with the boys, kissing and having a good time. So I missed my share, see? Well, what are you gaping at? Can't you shut your mouth? And now listen to this: while your lodger is out with me, while he's torturing himself in my company, mind you pray for us sinners, you old cow!"

Lushka swept out without conferring so much as a contemptuous glance on the flabbergasted mistress of the house.

Davidov was waiting for her by the porch. "What were you talking about in there, Lushka?" he asked.

"Oh, about God mostly," Lushka replied, laughing quietly and nestling up to Davidov. She had acquired her former husband's habit of dismissing unwanted topics with a joke.

"No, seriously, what was she whispering about? She wasn't rude to you, was she?"

"She couldn't be rude to me if she tried, she hasn't got it in her. But she was hissing with jealousy. She's jealous of me because you love me, my gap-toothed darling!" Lushka said, still laughing.

"She suspects us, and that's a fact." Davidov shook his head despondently. "You shouldn't have come round to see me here, that's the trouble!"

"Afraid of an old woman?"

"Why should I be?"

"Well, if you're such a hero, there's no need to talk about it."

IT WAS hard to argue with the capricious and whimsical Lushka. Taken unawares by his feelings, Davidov had more than once thought seriously about whether he ought not to go and explain things to Makar and marry Lushka. It would be a way out of the ambiguous situation he had placed himself in and put a stop to the gossip that might arise round his name. I'll re-educate her! She won't get up to many capers with me. I'll get her interested in social work and either persuade or force her to study. She'll turn out all right, and that's a fact! She's not a stupid woman, and she'll get rid of her hot temper. I'll teach her not to be so fiery. I'm not like Makar. She and Makar were two extremes; I've got a different character, I'll find a different approach to her. But in thinking thus, Davidov obviously overestimated his own and Lushka's abilities.

As soon as he had finished dinner on the day they had agreed to meet by the Leonovs' barn, Davidov started glancing at his watch. Great

was his surprise, and afterwards his wrath, when an hour before the appointed time he heard and recognized Lushka's light tread on the front steps, and then her ringing voice: "Is Comrade Davidov at home?"

Neither the landlady nor her husband, who both happened to be in, made any reply. Davidov grabbed his cap, dashed to the door and found himself face to face with the smiling Lushka. She stepped aside. They walked out of the gate in silence.

"I don't like this game!" Davidov said roughly and clenched his fists, panting with anger. "Why did you come here? Where did we agree to meet? Answer me, damn it! . . ."

But Lushka did not lose her temper. "What are you shouting at me for? Who do you think I am—your wife, or your driver?" she asked in turn.

"None of that! I'm not shouting, I'm asking you."

Lushka shrugged and with maddening calmness replied: "Well, if you aren't going to shout, it's a different matter. I couldn't be without you any longer, so I came early. You ought to be very glad. Aren't you?"

"Like hell I am! My landlady will spread it all round the village! What did you say to her last time that she doesn't even look at me, but just snorts and gives me a plate of swill instead of proper soup? About God, you say? It must have been a very godly conversation if at the mere mention of your name she starts stuttering and goes blue in the face!"

Lushka laughed so youthfully and unrestrainedly that Davidov felt his heart soften in spite of himself. But this time he was in no mood for joking. When Lushka, her eyes wet with tears of laughter, asked again: "Stutters and goes blue in the face, does she? Just what she deserves, the old hypocrite! That'll teach her to keep her nose out of other people's business. Taking it on herself to watch over my conduct!"

Davidov interrupted her coldly.

"Is it all the same to you what gossip she spreads round the village about us?"

"As long as she finds it good for her health," Lushka answered carelessly.

"If it's all the same to you, it certainly isn't all the same to me! And you can stop playing the fool and making an exhibition of us! Let me speak to Makar tomorrow and either we get married or it's goodbye. I can't live with people poking their fingers at me all the time. The chairman of the collective farm—Lushka's lover! Your carrying on in front

of every one like this is striking at the root of my authority, do you understand?"

Lushka flushed deeply and pushed Davidov away.

"A fine bridegroom you are!" she snapped. "What the devil do I want with a sloppy coward like you? You've got some hopes! Afraid to walk through the village with me and all of a sudden it's 'let's get married!' Scared of everyone he meets, even shakes like a jelly at the sight of a few little boys! Well, you can take your authority with you out on the common, behind the Leonovs' barn, and lie there on the grass with it alone, you miserable lout! I thought you were a proper man but you're like my old Makar. He couldn't think of anything else but world revolution, and you're the same with your authority. Life with the likes of you two would bore any woman to death!"

Lushka was silent for a moment, then said in a voice that had become unexpectedly tender and was trembling with emotion: "Good-bye, Semyon, my dear!"

For a few seconds she seemed to hesitate, then turned quickly and walked away down the street with rapid strides.

"Lushka!" Davidov called hoarsely.

At the corner of the street Lushka's white kerchief gleamed for a moment like a spark, then vanished in the darkness. Passing his hand over his face, which had for some reason grown very hot, Davidov stood still, smiling confusedly. Well, I did choose a fine time to make a proposal, fool that I am, he thought. A fine way of getting married, that's a fact!

THEIR tiff turned out to be serious. In fact, it was not really a tiff, nor even a quarrel, but something very much like a complete break. Lushka steadily avoided meeting Davidov. Soon he moved his lodgings, but even this circumstance, which undoubtedly became known to Lushka, did not dispose her towards reconciliation.

Oh, to hell with her, if she's such a psychological case! Davidov thought angrily, having lost all hope of seeing his beloved anywhere near. But something very bitter wrenched his heart and he felt gloomy and dull as a wet October day. It had not taken Lushka long to find a straight path to Davidov's ingenuous and, in matters of love, unhardened heart.

True, the prospect of a break had its attractive sides: in the first place, there would be no need to make difficult explanations to Makar Nagulnov,

secondly? nothing would then threaten Davidov's iron authority, which had rather suffered of late because of his somewhat immoral carrying-on. These optimistic arguments, however, brought the unhappy Davidov very little consolation. No sooner was he alone than he would begin to stare in front of him with unseeing eyes and a sad smile would appear on his face as he remembered the heart-sweet fragrance of Lushka's lips, always dry and pulsating, the constantly changing expression of her ardent eyes.

Lushka Nagulnova had wonderful eyes! When she lowered her head a little and looked up, there was something touching, an almost childlike helplessness in her glance, and at such moments she herself was more like a girl in her teens than a woman with much experience of life and love. But the next moment, adjusting her always faultlessly clean, bleached kerchief with a light touch of the fingers, she would throw up her head and look at you with challenging scorn, and those same eyes would glint hostilely with frank and brazen cynicism.

This ability to transform herself instantly was not a piece of highly perfected coquetry with Lushka, it was simply a natural gift. So, at least, it seemed to Davidov. In the blindness of love he failed to notice that his beloved was unusually, perhaps more than necessary, self-possessed, and undoubtedly self-admiring. There were many things that Davidov failed to notice.

ONE day, in a flood of lyrical emotion, while kissing Lushka's faintly rouged cheeks, he had said: "Lushka, darling, you're like a flower! Even your freckles have a scent, and that's a fact! Do you know what they smell of?"

"What?" Lushka asked, raising herself on her elbow.

"A sort of freshness, like the dew or something. . . . You know what—like snowdrops. You can hardly smell it, but it's good."

"That's what I should be like," Lushka announced with dignity and complete seriousness.

Davidov said nothing, unpleasantly surprised at such extravagant complacency. A little later he asked: "Why should you be like that then?"

"Because I'm beautiful."

"Do you think everyone who's beautiful has a beautiful scent about them?"

"I can't say about everyone, I've never smelt them. And why should I? I'm talking about myself. Not everyone who's beautiful has got

Freckles. Freckles come in spring. Of course they ought to smell of nowdrops."

"You've got a swelled head, and that's a fact!" Davidov said disappointedly. "If you want to know, your cheeks don't smell of snowdrops at ll; they smell of turnip and onion and sunflower oil."

"Why do you hang around kissing them then?"

"Because I like turnip and onion."

"Oh, you do talk a lot of nonsense, Semyon, just like a little boy," ushka said discontentedly.

"A clever person needs a clever person to talk to, you know."

"A clever person is clever with a fool, and a fool is always a fool hoever he's with," Lushka retorted.

They had quarrelled then too; but that had been a passing quarrel nd in a few minutes it had ended in complete reconciliation. This time was different. Davidov felt that everything he and Lushka had done gether belonged to a wonderful but irretrievably distant past. Losing all pe of seeing her alone and explaining properly the new situation that ad arisen between them, Davidov became seriously depressed. Leaving azmyotnov to look after the affairs of the farm as his deputy, he mself prepared to go out to the second team, which was ploughing up e spring fallow on the farm's distant fields.

It was not any matter of business that had given rise to his departure. e was running away. It was the shameful flight of a man who desired t feared the final untying of a love-knot. Davidov, who every now d then saw himself from the side, as it were, understood all this perfectly ell, but he was at the end of his tether and therefore chose the decision at was most acceptable to himself, if only because "out there" he would unable to see Lushka and could hope to live for a few days in compara- e peace.

ONLY Razmyotnov saw Davidov off on his journey. The cart was making the trip in any case; food was supplied to the ploughmen from e collective-farm store, and their families were sending them a change linen and some clothes.

Davidov sat on the edge of the cart, his legs in scratched, rusty-look- top-boots dangling over the side; his shouders were hunched like an man's and the glances he cast about him were apathetic and indif- ent. His shoulder-blades jutted out from under the jacket that was ped over them, his hair had not been cut for a long time and thick

black curls dangled from under the cap on the back of his head, reaching down his thick swarthy neck to the greasy collar of his jacket. There was something unpleasant and pitiful in his whole appearance.

Razmyotnov regarded him frowning as if in pain. Lushka's pulled him to pieces all right, he thought. Curse that woman! What a wreck she's made of the guy. Why, there's nothing left to him! That's love for you, that's where it gets us, boys. He was a man once, now he's no better than a cabbage stump.

If anyone knew in detail just "where love gets a man" it was Razmyotnov. He remembered Marina Poyarkova and one or two other past experiences and sighed, but a cheerful smile broke out on his face and he went off to see what was happening at the village Soviet. On the way he bumped into Makar Nagulnov. Spare and erect as usual, showing off a little with his perfect military bearing, Makar offered Razmyotnov his hand and nodded in the direction of the departing cart.

"Seen what Comrade Davidov has come to?"

"Lost a bit of weight," Razmyotnov answered evasively.

"When I was in his position, I lost weight every day too. And he's only a weakling! One foot in the grave already. Why, he used to live in my house, he saw what sort of a menace she was, he saw me battling with that domestic counter-revolutionary all the time, and now, there you are—right in a mess! And what a mess! When I looked at him just now, believe me, my heart bled for him. Thin, that guilty look all over him, his eyes darting this way and that, and his trousers—God knows how he keeps them up, the poor feller! The lad's melting away before our very eyes! We ought to have included that former wife of mine in the de-kulakization last winter and sent her off with her Timoshka Rvany to a cold place. Mebbe she'd have cooled off a bit out there."

"But I thought you didn't know."

"Didn't know! Huh! As if I wouldn't know when everyone knew! Do I go about with my eyes shut? It doesn't matter a rap to me who the bitch picks up with, but she's not going to lay hands on my Davidov, she's not going to ruin a friend of mine. That's how the matter stands at the present moment."

"You ought to have warned him. Why didn't you say something?"

"I couldn't do that! Why, you never know, he might have thought I was trying to set him against her out of jealousy or something. But why didn't you, a disinterested party, say something? Why didn't you give him a strict warning?"

"With a reprimand thrown in?" Razmyotnov grinned.

"He'll get himself a reprimand elsewhere if he lets himself slide any farther. It's up to you and me, Andrei, we've got to give him a friendly warning. There's no time to lose. With that Lushka around, she's such a bitch he'll not only miss the world revolution, he may even kick the bucket altogether. He'll get himself a dose of galloping consumption or syphilis or something, mark my words. When I got rid of her, it was like being born again: I'm not afraid of any of those venereal diseases, I'm getting on fine at English, I've achieved a lot by my own efforts without any teachers and I'm putting Party affairs in order and I don't turn my nose up at other work. In a word, being a bachelor as I am, my hands and feet are free and my head's clear. But when I was living with her, though I didn't drink vodka, everyday I felt as if I had a hang-over. Women for us revolutionaries, they're just the opium of the people. And if I had my way, I'd have that statement put into the Party rules in bold type, for every Party member to read it three times over before he went to bed at night, and three times in the morning, on an empty stomach. Then we wouldn't have any poor devil getting into such a tangle as our dear Comrade Davidov has got himself into now. Just think yourself, Andrei, how many good men have suffered in life from that cursed breed of women! You couldn't count 'em! How many cases of embezzlement they've caused, how many drunkards they've created, how many Party reprimands have been served out to good fellows because of them, how many people there are in jail through their doing—why, it's a shuddering nightmare!"

Razmyotnov became thoughtful. For a time they walked on in silence, giving themselves up to memories of the distant and recent past, of women they had encountered on their way through life. Makar Nagulnov distended his nostrils, pressed his thin lips tightly together and marched along as if he were in the ranks, with firm, even tread. His whole appearance was a personification of inflexibility. Razmyotnov, however, now smiled, now waved his hand despairingly, now twirled his fair curly moustache and screwed up his eyes like a contented cat, and sometimes, evidently recalling some particularly vivid memory of one woman or another, he merely grunted, as if he had drained a sizeable glass of vodka, and then between long pauses he would exclaim obscurely:

"Well, I'll be damned! What a woman! That is something! You little witch! . . ."

(*Translated by Robert Daglish*)

A DOCUMENT

The Sweezy Case

(The Supreme Court of the State of New Hampshire has before it the brief filed by Paul M. Sweezy, economist and editor of the Socialist magazine, Monthly Review. *This brief is part of the national fight for the right of Americans to discuss freely and without persecution the ideas of Marxian Socialism as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the American Constitution.*

Sweezy, a student of Marxian economics and author of several works on the subject, refused to answer political questions put to him by the New Hampshire Attorney General. These questions related to knowledge that Sweezy might have about any fellow-Americans he might know who were members of the Progressive Party. They also related to a lecture which Sweezy delivered in 1954 *on the subject of Socialism at the University of New Hampshire.*

Sweezy courageously refused to permit a state police authority to "test" his political and social opinions.

For this, he was adjudged guilty of contempt of court to be jailed in the county court. He was then released on bail pending a high court's opinion on his challenge of the lower court's and the Attorney General's right to ask him such questions.

The editors of Masses & Mainstream *quite naturally may have some differences of opinion with Sweezy on various political questions. But Sweezy's challenge to the arrogance of state police supervision of an American's political opinions and the right to discuss* Socialism *is a challenge in which the political liberty of all of us is involved. We believe that his brief deserves to be widely read and to be supported. The following are excerpts from it.*

—The Editors.

DURING the early years of the 20th century the subject of socialism was widely and eagerly discussed in the United States. Eugene V. Debs, socialist candidate for president, polled close to 1,000,000 votes in 1912—the equivalent of approximately 3,000,000 votes in the 1948 election. The popular interest in socialism was reflected in an enormous

le of socialist literature. *The Appeal Reason,* a weekly, had a circulaon of more than 300,000 for several ears; pamphlets by Oscar Ameringer ere printed in editions of hundreds f thousands; books by Bellamy, Upn Sinclair, and Jack London ranked ith the best-sellers of the day.

This widespread interest in socialm has declined to such an extent at today it would probably not e an exaggeration to say that for e great majority of Americans "soalism" is little more than a dirty ord. This is an extraordinary situaon because it occurs at the very oment that a large proportion of e rest of the world is moving toard socialism at an unprecedentedly pid rate. It is a deeply disturbing tuation because there are still many mericans who believe with us that, the long run, socialism will prove be the only solution to the ineasingly serious economic and soal problems that face the United ates.

It is because we hold firmly to is belief that we are founding *onthly Review,* an independent agazine devoted to analyzing, from socialist point of view, the most gnificant trends in domestic and reign affairs.

By "socialism" we mean a system society with two fundamental aracteristics: *first,* public ownerip of the decisive sectors of the economy and, second, comprehensive planning of production for the benefit of the producers themselves.

The possibility and workability of such a system of society are no longer open to doubt. Socialism became a reality with the introduction of the first Five Year Plan in Soviet Russia in 1928; its power to survive was demonstrated by the subsequent economic achievements of the USSR during the '30's and finally, once and for all, in the war against Nazi Germany. These facts—and they are facts which no amount of wishful thinking can conjure away—give to the USSR a unique importance in the development of socialism and in the history of our time.

We find completely unrealistic the view of those who call themselves socialists, yet imagine that socialism can be built on an international scale by fighting it where it already exists. This is the road to war, not to socialism. On the other hand, we do not accept the view that the USSR is above criticism simply because it is socialist. We believe in, and shall be guided by, the principle that the cause of socialism has everything to gain and nothing to lose from a full and frank discussion of shortcomings, as well as accomplishments, of socialist countries and socialist parties everywhere.

We shall follow the development of socialism all over the world, but

we want to emphasize that our major concern is less with socialism abroad than with socialism at home. We are convinced that, the sooner the United States is transformed from a capitalist to a socialist society, the better it will be, not only for Americans, but for all mankind. . . .

IS THERE a danger sufficiently grave and imminent to New Hampshire to warrant inquiring into the organization of the Progressive party because some Communists may have been active in its affairs during the years 1948 to 1950?

Is there a danger to this state sufficiently grave and imminent to justify compulsive testimony concerning the contents of one lecture on Socialism (speaker's definition of Socialism being public ownership of the means of production and general economic planning to be achieved by constitutional means) given during a term-long course on the humanities by a qualified speaker of high professional attainments, selected by a capable staff of instructors conducting the course, the staff being responsible to the President and Trustees of the institution where the lecture was given?

These questions answer themselves. No shadow of a case is made for any abridgment of the guarantees provided by the First Amendment.

Granting for the purposes of argument that the scope of the investigation authorized by the 1953 Act is as broad as the Attorney General claims it is, i.e., unlimited, are the answers to the questions asked of Sweezy of sufficient importance to overcome the "principles of policy" embodied in the First Amendment? Are the questions a reasonable and non-discriminatory regulation of the guaranteed freedoms?

If Mr. Justice Jackson was correct when he wrote, in *Board of Education v. Barnette,* 319 U.S. 624, 642, "that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein," the answer must be a resounding "No."

> "When personal inquisition and political aggrandizement masquerade as legislative investigation, and when the legislative benefits are trivial as compared to the incursion on the bill of rights, the courts should not lend their aid to force witnesses to answer." *Grand Inquest, Supra,* p. 171.

The issue transcends a determination of whether Sweezy may be punished for declining to answer the questions asked by the Attorney General. An investigation which permits the asking of such questions has a stultifying effect upon freedom

expression. "When the light of ıblicity may reach any student, any acher, inquiry will be discouraged." is not without significance that veezy was not asked to give a lec- re on Socialism at the University New Hampshire in 1955.

The case should be remanded to the Superior Court with an order to vacate the finding of contempt, since the 1951 and 1953 Acts as construed and applied offend the United States Constitution, in that procedural due process and the personal guarantees of freedom of speech and assembly are violated.

The Supreme Court of New Hampshire has just denied Mr. Sweezy's ppeal. The case now goes to the Supreme Court of the United States. —The Editors.

books in review

TRANSVAAL EPISODE

Episode in the Transvaal, by Harry Bloom. Doubleday, $3.95.

The title stopped me before the New Book Shelf in the Public Library. I took up the book though novels about South Africa have been disappointing—not as interesting as newspaper articles coming out of Johannesburg, and totally lacking the passion and sparks so often struck in United Nations debates. I had heard that books written by nationalists of that troubled continent were being published in France, Italy and even in England, but we here in the United States are well protected from such "unafrican" literature. But with the thunder of a thousand years rumbling beneath its mountains, with deep rivers finding new channels and the long pent-up breath of its many peoples merging in a great wind, I had no time to read more about South Africa's leaky church roofs, lost birds and pale, gentle invaders struggling to find misplaced souls.

I turned the book in my hand cautiously, wondering about this Harry Bloom. This author's photograph was on the back jacket with the information that Harry Bloom "was born in South Africa and has lived there most of his life. He is one of the few lawyers in South Africa who has defended civil rights cases. Although he has had previous experience as a journalist, *Episode in the Transvaal* is his first novel." I liked Harry Bloom's face.

Late that night I began reading about Nelstroom, "a fictional town" in the Transvaal. Very soon I recognized the author's ability as a journalist. "Nelstroom, like many other Transvaal towns, is old and new, old-fashioned and modern, a market town, a mining town, and an industrial town, all at one time." You see the "clean, tidy town" proudly shown to visitors, the town the traveler describes as evidence of the Afrikander's "enterprise." Then another town emerges, the town citizens seldom speak about, prefer not to think about and never show visitors. "And the people of both towns walk the streets, but nobody sees the black people. . . . Yet they are always there

. . part of the natural surroundings ike shrubs." Then you are taken down the long, dusty road to the nuge, barbed-wired compound where native Africans live "like a captured people." You smell the decay and you look into the crowded huts.

This is the way it's been for a long time. This is the way the town intends it to be forever.

But, during the hot, dusty fall of 1952 two men arrived in Nelstroom. The first was Hendrick Du Toit, new location superintendent, more than any other official responsible for enforcing apartheid (separation of the races). "He was forty-two years old, a big man, restless, full of undirected energy that found outlets in little movements of his head, hands and shoulders. He had pale blue eyes that bopped a little and gave him an air of prowling alertness. His nose was large, heavy-looking, duller in colour than the rest of his face. He had thin sandy hair, through which one could see his freckled scalp and the silvery scar of a bullet graze that he received in a hunting accident. The scar seen in certain lights, had the curious effect of a white cross chalked on his head." He was a religious man and saw his job as part of the divine plan.

The second man came to live in the location. He carried a pass stating that the "boy, known as Walter Masco, had been hired in a garage" in Nelstroom, but his arrival was unusual because it was keenly awaited by a certain section of the location people. "There was something about this man that drew eyes to him, hard to say just what it was. He was tall, heavily built about forty-five years old. He had a strong-growing black beard and a shrewd, wide-eyed face and he wore a weather-beaten black leather cap. Perhaps it was that, the beard and the cap which gave him the jaunty, seasoned look of a barge skipper. Or perhaps it was the feeling of casual strength about the huge body, or perhaps the air of self-assured style."

One of these two men was to die so purposefully that a new thing would be born in the location—a hardness, a defiance, a resistance to being fooled by baby talk, by old tricks, a bold new way of action—something so startling and unexpected that it swept away with dramatic suddenness the whole facade for maintaining white rule. The other was to dissolve in such weakness, would run away so ignominiously that the whole ruling class was forced to combine in an elaborate conspiracy of silence in order to suppress the truth.

Episode in the Transvaal has no contrived plot. The author modestly explains in his Foreword, "I have merely tried to describe the kind of things that happen when, in the peculiar setting of South Africa,

racial tensions reach breaking point." To do this he has assembled people he knows very well, described them intimately and then lets them go their own way.

And sometimes their way is good and sometimes bad, sometimes wise and sometimes foolish, but this is how it is. Mary Lukhele, washwoman, trudging along the dusty road that August day, with the last load of clean clothes on her head for delivery did not know she would light the fires of rebellion, but she did. Nobody really planned the defiance campaign—it sprang from the being of the people. There is Andries Gwebu, B.A., chief clerk in the location office whose superior learning bewildered Du Toit: he knew how to use words as weapons; and the Reverend Samson Shongwe, whose threadbare, loose-hanging garb concealed from the town a shrewd and courageous organizer; there is Mrs. Ross, Chairwoman of the Native Affairs Committee; the Mayor and the corrupted old chief.

Harry Bloom moves easily and naturally across that line separating the black and white world. He knows all these people, he understands and he has deep compassion. Only once there is no compassion or sympathy —that is in the delineation of the Nationalist Lt. Swanepoel. Him, the author treats with savage contempt.

The "problem" isn't solved in *Episode in the Transvaal.* Dawn doesn't come up in a blaze of glory that morning when Reverend Shongwe raises his hand in farewell to Mabaso. But everybody knows nothing would be the same—not ever—for now more people were coming from Johannesburg — and from even further away. For the winds are rising!

When you finish this novel you know that its plot was fashioned hundreds of years ago, that its course has been running through the centuries and that the plot will be resolved only when the people are free. And you have met some of the people who are on the move.

Episode in the Transvaal is well worth your time.

SHIRLEY GRAHAM

A COMMUNICATION:

Democracy and the Left

Unfortunately, our April 1 issue was completed before we could comment on the new world situation noted by the recent 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. We will discuss the immense new perspectives, generalized by the Congress from the experiences of the peoples of the world, in our next issue. We are, however, publishing a communication we received as we were going to press which attempts to apply some of the conclusions of the Congress to the American scene. Though we are not the organ of a political party, and the communication deals with political-organizational matters, we are presenting it as one view in the discussion now going on in the press of the Left.—The Editors.

Editors, *M&M*:

It is now recognized that Stalin's one-man rule of the USSR for 20 years was harmful. Khrushchev said: "Making a hero and miracle worker of a particular leader . . . belittles the role of the party and the masses and *tends to reduce their creative efforts.*" Mikoyan said: "For about 20 years we had, in fact, no collective leadership. The cult of personality . . . could not but exert an *extremely negative* influence on the situation within the party *and on its work.*" Malenkov's words were: "great harm to the guidance of the party and the country."

Ten years ago it was recognized in the United States that Browder's rule of the CPUSA, likewise, was harmful.

How is this to be prevented from happening ever again? To say "we've learned our lesson" is childish. Collective leadership was an established and fundamental principle, both of the experienced Soviet, and the inexperienced, American Party, before either the Stalin or Browder periods. And no one suggests that the U.S. Party, today, has experience or theoretical soundness comparable to that of the Soviet Party in 1935.

To know how to prevent a repetition requires an understanding of *why* leadership could have been surrendered to individuals in the first place. In the Soviet Union, this question has not even been raised, unfortunately. But it should be clear now that one cannot wait for the Soviet Party to offer answers. The

admission that no one was allowed to think but Stalin means that it will take some time to get back into practice. Said Mikoyan: "We tend to use the Short Course History of the Party as our sole textbook in the study of Marxism-Leninism," (Stalin wrote it). And the fact that *why* this happened was not raised from the floor by any rank-and-file delegate, and there was no word of self-criticism by Mikoyan or Khrushchev for having made Stalin-knows-everything speeches up to his death, indicates that not all is well yet.

One thing is beyond argument. The original reason for the dominance of Stalin and Browder, respectively, was the particular concept of discipline then, and now, governing all Communist Parties. To differ out loud meant being accused of factionalism, or, in the Soviet Union, treason (Mikoyan said: "individual party leaders . . . unjustly dubbed enemies of the people many years after the events"). To carry the difference to the membership would have meant, in the U.S., as Foster said, splitting the Party. In the USSR it carried graver personal consequences to the individual or group concerned: Bela Kun, Antonov-Ovseyenko, dissolution of the Polish Communist Party in 1938, etc.

Does the Communist Party need discipline? Every organization needs discipline. No three human beings think exactly alike, even when they agree on basic principle. There must be some way of getting the third to go along with what the other two decide on, if he be outvoted, and if he wish to remain a member of the same organization. But the decision must be made by two, and not by one alone. There must also be some way for the minority to re-open questions so as to attempt to win a majority if the previous policy seem unsuccessful, or circumstances change.

In organizations of thousands, or millions, the matter is not simple. Power of decision must be delegated to small, workable bodies. And if the organization is an embattled minority, either in its own country or on the world scene, it can only win out if its organizational strength can outweigh the greater numbers or funds or governmental authority, or arms, or all combined, of those currently in power or seeking to dominate the world. This strength can be obtained by absolute unity of action: iron discipline. And when decisions must be made quickly, or secretly, due to the odds against this organization, the power to make them must be in the hands of its leadership, and all members agree to obey. If that leadership has, however, been elected by the membership, and elections occur at proper intervals unless repression from without prevents this, the result is democratic centralism.

Democratic centralism is a con-

tradiction, a dialectical contradiction, a unity of opposites, which is at the same time and always a struggle between those opposites. If one wins out, you have factionalism or anarchy; if the other, bureaucracy, or one-man rule.

Objective circumstances: the danger of war, war itself, and then cold war, provided the basis on which one-man rule was permitted to triumph, to the detriment of the Party, in the Soviet Union. The example of the Soviet Union was a prime factor in the similar development in this country, because the Browder period was one of considerable democratic freedom in the U.S., and there were no objective excuses for his dictatorship. *Have objective conditions changed so as to permit a lessening of centralism, and an increase in democracy, in Communist Parties?* Khrushchev states, for the Soviet Party, that socialism is now the stronger of the two major social systems in the world,* and capitalist encirclement of the USSR no longer exists. The change is so far advanced, he says, that war is no longer a fatal inevitability. *On this basis of judgment,* the Soviet Party now grants that parties not agreeing with the decisions of the Communist Information Bureau (or the CPSU) no longer are to be considered enemies of socialism for breaking the monolithic unity necessary under the former objective conditions. Yugoslavia was the first, and it is still the prime example. But the CPSU invites delegations from the Socialist Party of France, today bitterly anti-Communist. It holds that the roads to socialism are varied. It has further developed Stalin's concept at the 1952 Party Congress that Communists must uphold the banner of bourgeois democracy, advancing it to the new level that where capitalism is weak, bourgeois parliaments may become instruments of genuine democracy by the creation of stable pro-socialist majorities. That this includes non-Communist parties is exemplified by the process in Czechoslovakia as it actually occurred.

Communist discipline having been developed, both in theory and in practice, as the necessary weapon of a minority fighting a preponderance of force, it *must* be re-examined in view of the present concept that the forces of socialism and peace now predominate in the world. The Soviet Party has drawn certain new conclusions.

Sidney Silverman, British Labor Party MP quotes Georgi Malenkov as saying: "Mr. Malenkov told us that collective leadership had been established—and this is very important— that the Soviet Union had

* 1,307,000,000 people live under Communist governments, or governments that are actively anti-imperialist, warmly friendly to the USSR, and call socialism their goal: India, Burma, Yugoslavia. In addition, there are 70,000,000 in anti-imperialist Indonesia, whose government convened the Bandung Conference. 1,070,000,000 live in imperialist states and their seething satellites. CP's & SP's are strong.

now established the right of dissent outside the collective leadership without being branded a traitor to that leadership, the Party or the people."

The new discipline cannot be the same in all countries, although the objectively favorable world situation must be the governing factor, as wes the objectively unfavorable world situation until now. Logically, discipline can be weakest where socialism is strongest, and must be strongest where the repressive forces of the capitalist state are strongest. For the USSR, this simply means the very first step toward the theoretically desired, but certainly distant goal, of no Party at all, when Communist consciousness is universal in the population.

Abroad, it means that discipline must be pretty much as it is today in a Party functioning under conditions of no democratic liberties: Formosa, South Korea, the Dominican Republic, certain other Latin American states, Kenya, the Belgian Congo and other colonies under direct imperialist rule. Among imperialist states, discipline has to be strongest where capitalism is strongest: the United States.

But here, too, qualitative changes in the objective situation must be recognized. We are no longer in even a Korean War, nor on the verge of World War III. McCarthy is just a Senator. As noted in John Gates' Carnegie Hall speech, grass-roots democracy has expanded in recent years, in the size of the trade unions, and the rights and organization of the Negro people.

Most important, the atmosphere is *fundamentally a new one.* Walter Lippmann's statement that we are in the early stages of a deep-going popular revulsion against McCarthyism has been accepted as accurate by U.S. Communist leaders. If the people of the U.S. refused to give way to McCarthyism, it was largely because the experience of Hitler and Mussolini had driven home the vital need for democratic rights and parliamentary institutions as the Revolutionary War and Civil War had never done. Nations have won independence under the leadership of kings, and monarchies have abolished slavery. But the world-wide advance of democracy today, including that in the USSR, is in large part a recoil from the horrors of the fascist state in its home and in conquered lands.

The American people crave democracy. They are highly conscious of its shortcomings in our government today. Any Party that wishes to command Americans' allegiance for a new social order must be a model of democracy, the more so because socialism *has* become identified with Stalin's one-man rule, and because the absence of initiatives from the floor in the recent Soviet Party Congress have not been lost on the American people.

To say that the Communist Party is democratic by its very nature because it speaks for the interests of the working class and the Negro people is no longer enough. The Soviet Party in the period of one-man rule furthered socialism and national equality, it brought culture to the masses, but it slowed the qualitative advance of culture (the trashy films of recent years, the half-empty theaters, the moral tracts instead of literature, the kow-towing to Lysenko) and did not help the dignity of man by centering *all* wisdom, from linguistics to economics, in a single individual.

The people of the world are not satisfied with this, great as is their admiration for the achievements of socialism, and it is to the credit of the present Soviet leaders that they are taking world opinion, socialist and non-socialist, into consideration in both home and foreign policy, in the sphere of the Party as well as of the state.

The American Communist Party will best advance socialism, democracy in the U.S., and its own legal status, by making permanent the kind of freedom of discussion that existed in the *Worker* and in Communist Party branches during the post-Browder discussion. Yet the Party was not drifting at that time. It had a line, and that line was wholeheartedly supported because the membership felt that it played a part in shaping it. And the Party could proclaim, rightly, that this proved it to be the most democratic party in the country, because none other would permit such discussion. But that was only an episode. It must become permanent.

Even today the situation differs as between the East and West Coast. The *People's World* prints letters differing with its policies, and offering serious political thinking along independent lines, to a degree that the *Worker* never has. Perhaps there is a relation between that and the greater circulation of the California paper.

To fight for democracy in the country means to set an example of it, *as the American people understand it,* in one's own Party. If that is done, the people will understand, and no anti-socialist propagandists will be able to make hay out of necessary exceptions, such as the type of centralized, well-protected organization required in the South not only by Communists, but by the NAACP and trade unions in certain cases.

Some may regard the foregoing as "liberalism." I would say that that is the mildest criticism that would have been made, a few short years ago, of the new Soviet policies toward dissident Communists and socialists, and such frank admissions as that certain deeds of Soviet foreign

policy helped aggravate relations between states or, in plainer language, worsened world tensions.

Should the concepts offered above be accepted, it is clear that organizational changes will have to be made to render them effective.

WILLIAM MANDEL

As we have said in our introduction to the above communication, our going to press has prevented us from making an adequate comment on it in this issue. We feel it necessary, however, to make a few observations.

We do not presume to pass judgment, at this moment, on the problems of political parties which have always to re-examine how well their organizations meet the needs of their respective countries. We have no disagreement with Mr. Mandel on this point.

There is, however, a curious note of impatience in Mr. Mandel's demands. He wants to know why leadership in the Soviet Union could have been surrendered to individuals, and says that the question has not even been raised there. Therefore, one cannot wait for the Soviet Party to offer answers. Now, first of all, it is not true that the "question" has not been raised, as we can see from documents and editorials published in the Soviet Union subsequent to the Congress. Secondly, if "one cannot afford to wait," what is preventing Mr. Mandel from giving the answers? Could it be that they are difficult to arrive at, considering the complexity of the circumstances which contributed to the undue elevation of Stalin? We do not ask Mr. Mandel to provide the answers for which he cannot wait. We do, however, urge him to pause a few moments for the answers which are apparently on their way from the people who are in the best, if not only, position to give them: the present leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. For the sake of truth, we must have the facts before we analyze our speculations.

The same haste which threatens to cloud Mr. Mandel's apparent friendliness toward the Soviet Union and its leadership also disturbs his analysis of the American political scene, at least insofar as it deals with the record and character of the Communist Party of the United States. It is true that "to say that the Communist Party is democratic by its nature" is not enough, though its long history of struggle in the interests of the working class, the Negro people, as well as its denunciation of the Cold War, the Korean War, McCarthyism and our ruinous atomic policy would tend to make one believe that it is more predisposed to democracy than other parties which do not have so honorable a record. If Mr. Mandel is so eager to have the Communist Party become even more democratic, "in its very nature," as he puts it, why does he ignore one of the very phenomena which he demands as evidence? We suggest that he read the unfettered discussion on the part of readers and editors that has been going on in the Daily Worker. Surely he cannot find in the furious division of opinion there expressed so much window-dressing put on just to deceive him.

In all friendliness, we must point out that the letters written to the Daily Worker did not wait for Mr. Mandel's call to be written or released. We hope that he will welcome them with the same modesty and eagerness to right errors that the Worker shows in publishing them. It is much less important for us to be proud of being, or having been right, than it is for all of us to be attentive to the needs, the hopes and the thoughts of people—*The Editors.*

Letters

Editors, *M & M:*

Your December 1955 issue contains a letter from Herbert Aptheker objecting to certain symbols in Martha Millett's poem entitled "Mississippi." I for one find his objections most objectionably out of place. He is trying to make a polemical work out of a poem.

Please do not jump to any art-for-art's-sake conclusions. Along with Mr. Aptheker, I am firmly opposed to such false abstractionism. Of course a poem has content, and bears responsibility for that content. But the question here is one of degree. Just how much intellectual freight can a single poem expected to carry? Every aspect of a political situation cannot possibly be incorporated in one piece of writing.

Mr. Aptheker complains that the poem weighs against Mississippi as "an undifferentiated mass," and does not take into account the different strata of population in that state; in his own words, "the workers and tenant farmers and small farmers and petty business men and students and professionals, as well as bankers and large plantation owners and jackals for Wall Street lions. . . ." (From this last image, one can be pleased that Mr. Aptheker, a brilliant historian and polemicist, is not interested himself in the writing of poetry.)

He complains further that "the poem so ignores the fact that it is Big Business —and basically, *Northern* Big Business— which dominates the economy of Mississippi and which is the real force behind the terror now raking its inhabitants." He goes on, giving Miss Millett material for a documentary, for a lecture, for a book, for a lifetime of study.

To fulfill his comprehensive all-in-one and one-in-all theory, poetry will be forced to heavy footnotes rather than grace notes. For to follow Mr. Aptheker's reasoning, one can imagine his annotating Shakespeare's sonnets, scattering asterisks lavishly along the way.

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"*

*Ah, what kind of summer's day, and for whom? The poet presents a summer's day as one undifferentiated mass; does not take into account the worker's sweating day, the farmer's fruit-gathering day, the student's summer school day, the banker's basking on the beach day, the jackals for Wall Street lions howling for their gin-and-tonics at the commuters' air-conditioned bar day. And furthermore, how can the poet reflect on a summer's day without being aware of winter: of slush, galoshes, sniffles, mufflers, clanking radiators, landlords refusing heat . . .? *Ad astra per asterisks.*

EVE MERRIAM

A reply: My letter did not "object to certain symbols" in Mill Millet's poem. I was not "trying to make a polemical essay out of a poem."

I found in the poem a point of view which, in my opinion, is false and harmful; it is a view which equates "Mississippi" with all that is evil. It is a view which misses the truth about the present situation in Mississippi and in the South. That was and is my opinion of the poem and I expressed, within the limits of a letter, some of the reasons for this opinion.

Miss Merriam's letter reduces to absurdity in order to deny a principle: the idea of a poem, its content, is of supreme consequence, in terms of poetry; hence criticism of the idea-content of a poem is a legitimate and necessary function in criticism of poetry.

There is no intent to suggest what the poet write; there is no intent at making poetry into history-writing. There is in-

sistence on subjecting all writing including poetry, which deals with social questions, to the supreme test: accordance with social reality.

HERBERT APTHEKER

Editors, *M & M:*

May I have the courtesy of the use of your columns to express my feelings of deep loss at the death of the progressive English art critic and historian, Dr. Francis D. Klingender. I have just learned of his death last summer at the early age of 48 at Hull, England, where he was teaching at University College.

Francis Klingender should not be unknown to America, for in 1945 International Publishers issued his booklet on *Marxism and Modern Art,* with an introduction by Prof. Benjamin Farrington. The booklet was received here quite favorably.

My wife and I made the acquaintance of Francis Klingender in London during the war. We knew him to be a tireless and devoted fighter against fascism. He was one of the organizers of the Artists International Association which arranged exhibitions and encouraged progressive and working class artists. It sought to bring the best of contemporary art to the English people, and especially to encourage art expression in the armed forces and among the working people.

Francis Klingender deeply realized that art (and cultural expression in general) were essential to the people in their effort to understand and change the world. During the war he had published a book of political cartoons, "Russia—Britain's Ally—1812-1942," bringing to life again the virile cartoons of Cruikshank and Rowlandson in 1812-13, and bringing to the attention of the English public the militant and inspiring cartoons of the Soviet Artists of World War II. As Ivan Maisky, then Soviet Ambassador to Britain, wrote in his introduction to this book,

> "A common danger and a common enemy linked together the peoples of Russia and Great Britain 130 years ago. A common danger and a common enemy today (August 1942) link together the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and of Great Britain. This collaboration of both countries manifested itself then and manifests itself now in various spheres of life —military, political, economic, cultural. One of the most interesting illustrations is this book."

In 1944 he published his *Hogarth and English Caricature,* a picture book about popular art in England during the 18th and early 19th centuries. In this work he shows "that Hogarth, like his friend Fielding, was advocating the point of view of the most progressive elements in that society."

In 1947 he published a book that was inspired and sponsored by the powerful British trade union, the Amalgamated Engineering Union. The book, entitled *Art and the Industrial Revolution,* aims to show how engineers ("mechanics" in our country) played an important role in the development of British art. As a matter of fact, Klingender makes the interesting comment that "the richly decorated emblems and banners of the trade unions are the true folk art of nineteenth century Britain." Klingender also published an interesting work on the great Spanish artist Goya.

He had a remarkable capacity for scholarly research, combined with a good grounding in materialist historical criticism, and an ability for popular exposition. In bringing to life some of the best of the artistic and cultural heritage of the British people, he joined all those who "grasp the weapon of culture" in the struggle for a better world.

JACK W. WEINMAN